

Infrastructure Status Reports

12/31/2025

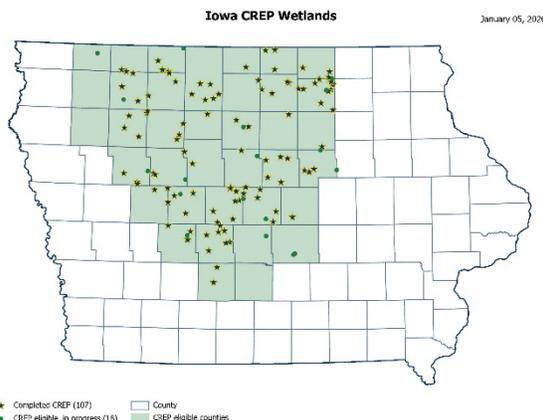


**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE &
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

**Division of Soil Conservation
& Water Quality**

Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was initiated in 2001 and is a joint effort of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the USDA Farm Service Agency to protect Iowa drinking water and reduce hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. It is a highly targeted water quality program focusing on the reduction of nitrate loads to surface waters through the restoration of strategically located and designed wetlands that intercept tile-drainage water from upper-lying cropland.



- Research and monitoring by Iowa State University has shown that CREP wetlands remove 40-90% of the nitrate in tile-drainage water
- Program-eligible wetlands restored to date and those currently being designed (125 total) are estimated to remove over 1,629,000 lbs of nitrogen annually. Roughly 121,819 tons of nitrogen will be removed over their design life. These wetlands will provide water quality protection for 160,537 acres of land.
- Hundreds of potential wetland locations exist for landowner consideration
- Average lifetime nitrogen removal costs: \$0.26/lb.
- State funds are matched with Federal funds
- FY27 appropriation request = \$1,000,000



Fund Status

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| FY26 appropriation | \$1,000,000 |
| Balance 6/30/25 Brought Forward | \$2,491,248 |
| Reimbursements | \$0 |
| Expenditures to Date | \$136,403 |
| Obligated/Encumbered | \$3,354,845 |
| Unobligated | \$0 |

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Conservation Buffer Strip Program

The Conservation Buffer Strip Program (District Buffer Initiative) was established in 2000. Through this program, conservation buffer strips are established or enhanced through initiatives led by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These locally-led initiatives prioritize and target sensitive areas by providing technical support and practice funding to protect our soil and water resources.



- District Buffer Initiative funds are used to fund both conservation projects and technical assistance with practice implementation to assist Iowa farmers in establishing practices and enhancing conservation lands.
- Programs are offered as part of the Conservation Buffer Strip Program to establish new buffer practices, incentivize enhancements of CRP (new or re-enrollment), or transition expiring CRP acres to pasture, tree planting, contour buffers, pollinator habitat, and field border practices.
- FY27 appropriation request - \$900,000

Fund Status

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|---------------------------------|--------------|
| FY26 Appropriation | \$ 900,000 |
| Balance 6/30/25 Brought Forward | \$ 626,237 |
| Refunds/Reimbursements | \$ 32,446 |
| Expenditures to Date | \$ 467,968 |
| Obligated/Encumbered | \$ 1,090,715 |
| Unobligated | \$0 |

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Iowa Conservation Cost Share Program

Iowa's Conservation Cost Share program (Iowa Financial Incentive Program) was established in 1973 to protect the soil and water resources of the state from erosion and sediment damage. The program encourages the adoption of land stewardship and conservation practices that sustain agriculture and preserve our state's natural resources.

Technical assistance is provided by IDALS-DSCWQ and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and practices are designed to NRCS technical standards. Applicants are required to enter into maintenance agreements to ensure long-term success and performance. Practices are approved locally by Iowa's 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).



- From July 1 to December 31, 2025, IDALS processed landowner payments for 254 soil and water conservation practices totaling over \$2.23 million in dollars expended.
- 5,869 acres have been protected from excessive soil erosion
 - Includes 187,384 feet of terraces, 104 acres of waterways, 2,573 acres of cover crops, 52 water and sediment control basins, and 28 grade stabilization structures.
- Landowners invest a minimum of 50% of their own money implementing these practices
- As of September 2025, 40 SWCDs which requested supplemental funding through this program had completed practice applications for \$7.83 million with only \$2.6 million available, leaving \$5.23 million in potential unmet demand for valuable conservation practices.
- FY27 appropriation request = \$8,325,000

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|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Fund Status | FY26 Appropriation | \$8,325,000 |
| | Balance 6/30/25 Brought Forward | \$8,662,584 |
| | Refunds & Reimbursements | \$500 |
| | Expended | \$2,862,651 |
| | Obligated/Encumbered | \$14,125,433 |
| | Unobligated | \$0 |

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Soil and Water Conservation Administration

There is a need to improve soil quality, maintain productivity, enhance water quality, manage nutrients properly, and provide flood protection. To do so and ensure program dollars are spent effectively, IDALS must provide the best administrative and technical assistance possible for the Iowa Financial Incentives Program, Resource Enhancement and Protection Program, Watershed Protection Fund, Water Protection Fund Projects, Water Quality Initiative and State Revolving Fund Programs. Staff also assist with implementing projects and practices funded by the federal government; including the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Wetland Reserve Program, and other programs in all 99 counties and 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



Administrative and technical staff are vitally important to the 100 field offices to ensure IDALS is fully functional and able to communicate and provide assistance to implement soil conservation and water quality practices across the state.

- Staff assist landowners in applying over \$34.3 million in state funded conservation practices
- Staff helped USDA/NRCS apply approximately \$75.3 million in federally funded conservation practices
- FY27 appropriation request = \$3,800,000

Fund Status

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|---------------------------------|-------------|
| FY26 Appropriation | \$3,800,000 |
| Balance 6/30/25 Brought Forward | \$3,800,000 |
| Expenditures to Date | \$3,800,000 |
| Obligated/Encumbered | \$3,800,000 |
| Unobligated | \$0 |

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Watershed Protection Fund

The Watershed Protection Fund was initiated in 2000 as part of the broader Iowa Water Quality Initiative. Watershed development funds are available to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) for that first important step of identifying problems in the watershed and creating a sound plan for improvement. Implementation of watershed protection projects brings together the community, both rural and urban, to target resources to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality, provide flood reduction, and protect natural resources. IDALS-DSCWQ, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) work together in the support of these projects in order to achieve the maximum watershed improvements and water quality benefits with the state and federal program funds available to each agency.



- 11 watershed projects are underway in 25 SWCDs
- State funds are cost-shared at rates up to 75% with applicants assuming at least 25% of the cost
- 25 watershed project practice claims were reimbursed totaling \$167,231 and leveraging \$142,160 from other sources including applicant contributions
- 3,036 acres were protected with a soil erosion reduction of 4,860 tons/year
- Sediment delivery to the state's water bodies was reduced by 1,493 tons/year along with 1,946 lbs/year of Phosphorus and 3,732 lbs/year of Nitrogen
- Projects have leveraged state funds with over \$1,128,764 of DNR Section 319 federal program funds
- FY27 appropriation request = \$900,000

Fund Status

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|---------------------------------|--------------|
| FY26 Appropriation | \$ 900,000 |
| Balance 6/30/25 Brought Forward | \$ 794,136 |
| Refunds & Reimbursements | \$ 1,711 |
| Expenditures to Date | \$ 212,231 |
| Obligated/Encumbered | \$ 1,483,616 |
| Unobligated | \$ 0 |

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Iowa Water Quality Initiative (WQI)

The Iowa Water Quality Initiative was established in 2013 to help implement the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS), which is a science and technology-based approach to achieving a 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus losses to our waters. The strategy addresses both point sources, such as municipal wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities, and nonpoint sources, including farm fields and urban stormwater runoff.

The WQI seeks to harness the collective ability of both private and public resources and organizations to rally around the NRS and implement proven conservation practices to reduce nutrient loss from non-point sources and improve water quality.

A total of 24 demonstration projects were operational in FY 2025 across the state to help implement and demonstrate water quality practices. This includes 19 targeted watershed projects, and 5 projects focused on expanding the use and innovative delivery of water quality practices. More than 400 public and private organizations are participating in these projects.

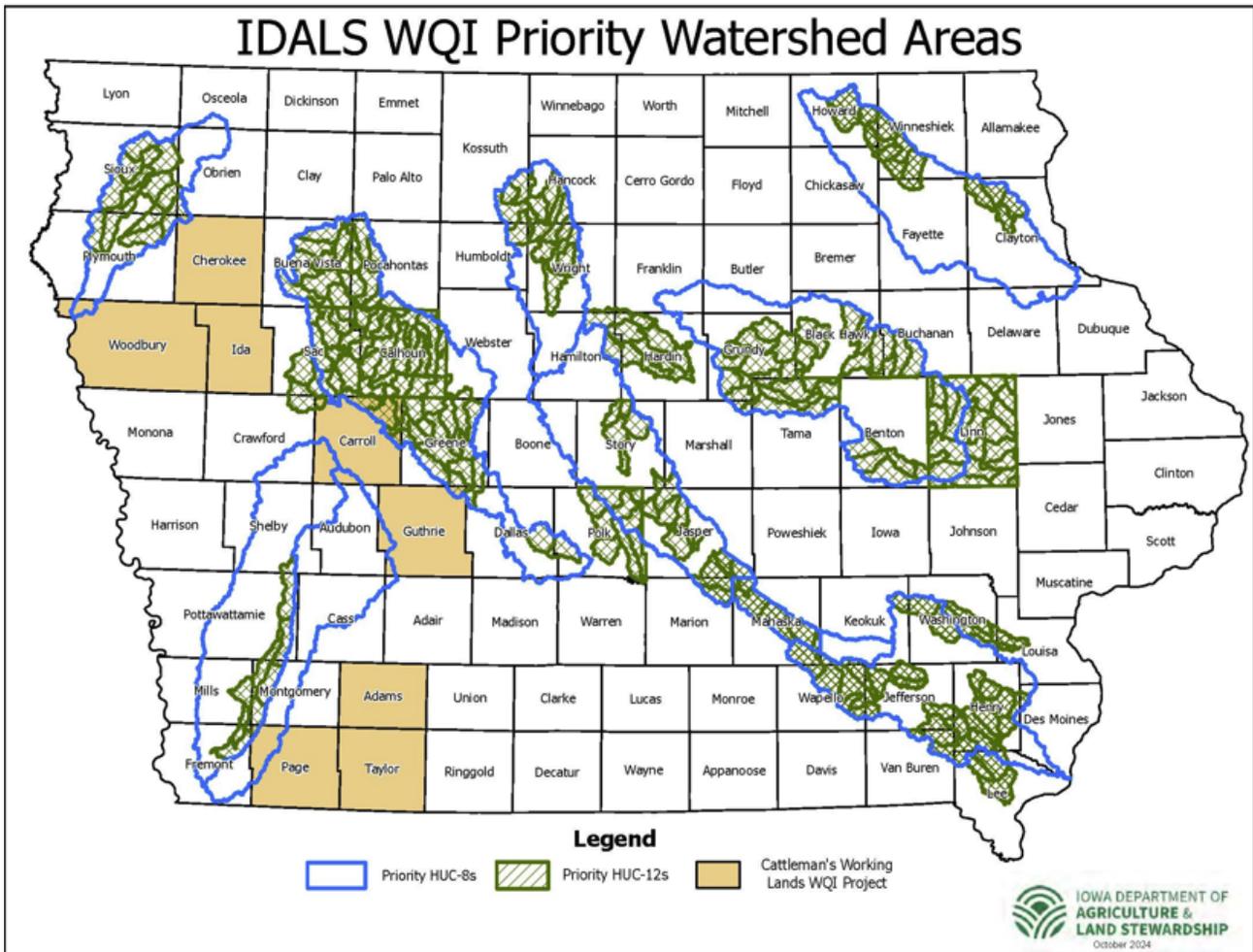
More information about the initiative can be found at www.CleanWaterIowa.org.

- 5,000 farmers enrolled \$13.3 million in cost share funds in FY2025 to install nutrient reduction practices. The practices that were eligible for this funding are cover crops, no-till or strip till, or using a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer. Farmers using cost share funding contribute an estimated \$23.2M of their own funding for these practices.
- Continued public-private partnerships with Ducks Unlimited and Iowa Soybean Association to expand delivery of priority NRS practices, particularly edge-of-field nitrogen reducing practices like water quality wetlands, multi-purpose oxbows, saturated buffers, etc.
- 62 urban conservation demonstration projects have been completed since FY 2015. Funding for urban conservation transitioned to Water Quality Infrastructure Program-Urban Fund in FY2021.
- IDALS has successfully leveraged state funds to bring in several federal grants through the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and, Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) and EPA-Gulf of Mexico and Gulf Hypoxia Programs.
- FY27 appropriation request = \$10,575,000 (\$8.2 million requested from RIIF & \$2.375 million requested from EFF)

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Fund Status

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|---|--------------|
| FY26 RIF Appropriation | \$8,200,000 |
| FY26 Env. First Fund Appropriation | \$2,375,000 |
| FY26 Ag Management Acct Transfers to Date | \$82,411 |
| Balance 6/30/25 Brought Forward | \$4,913,726 |
| Interest to Date | \$110,923 |
| Refunds & Reimbursements | \$2,367,361 |
| Expenditures to Date | \$6,864,736 |
| Obligated/Encumbered | \$11,184,685 |
| Unobligated | \$0 |

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