

Watershed Planning Advisory Council Areas of Agreement

January, 2017

The Watershed Planning Advisory Council (WPAC) was established by the Iowa Legislature to assemble a diverse group of stakeholders to make recommendations to state and federal agencies to protect water resources in Iowa. The following are areas of agreement following the 2016 meetings of the council.

Ongoing & continuous funding

- Continuous & dependable support is needed to make long-term progress & grow successes.
- State support of local leaders & staff – for training & funding – remains a high priority.
- Increased technical assistance is needed to successfully deliver programs & build relationships; it takes more than knowledge to create change.
- Iowa's Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which provides loans for the design and construction of publicly owned wastewater facilities & storm water quality improvements, is widely considered one example of a successful funding model.

Local works with adequate capacity

- Watershed planning is gaining widespread acceptance & needs greater support.
- Local groups need state support & greater flexibility in identifying & solving local issues.
- Initiatives are more likely to gain support when communities can see the benefits locally.
- The Watershed Academy is considered a “bright spot” to train & support local leaders such as watershed coordinators & volunteer leaders.
- It is time to scale up the local watershed approach & move beyond demonstration to more systemic implementation.
- The local approach sets the stage for multi-stakeholder partnerships & for leveraging urban & rural resources.
- There needs to be a path for the Watershed Management Authorities to make recommendations to the state, possibly through a seat on WPAC.

Measurement is essential for long-term progress

- Goal setting allows for accountability.
- More training for stakeholders to effectively measure outcomes & communicate progress.
- The goals of measurement need refining in order to gauge progress & increase credibility.
- The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy's logic model is valuable, but work is needed to improve & grow acceptance of measures so it can be widely recognized as meaningful.

Communication & outreach are vital to building support

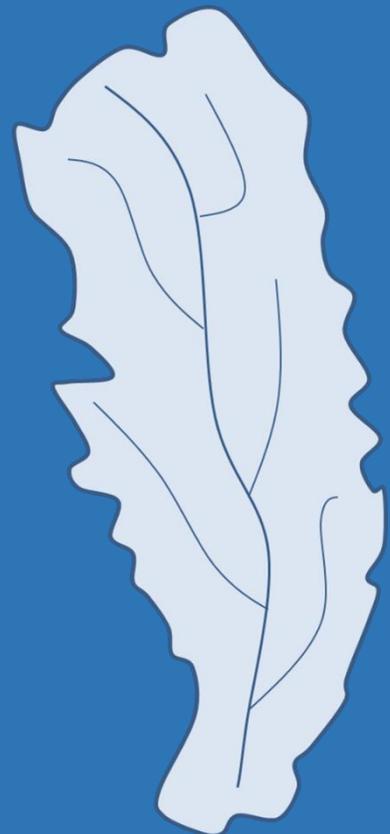
- Clear communication should be valued and supported.
- Communications & other outreach efforts need to be streamlined in order to highlight successes, educate landowners & demonstrate to the public how funds are being spent.
- Communications should help the public understand the importance of our natural resources to their local communities.

WPAC voting members: iowa association of municipal utilities | iowa league of cities | iowa association of business and industry | iowa water pollution control association | iowa rural water association | growing green communities | iowa environmental council | iowa farm bureau | iowa corn growers association | iowa soybean association | iowa pork producers council | conservation districts of iowa | iowa department of agriculture and land stewardship | iowa department of natural resources | iowa conservation alliance | iowa drainage district association | agribusiness association of iowa | iowa floodplain & stormwater management association | iowa rivers revival

WPAC non-voting members: two members of the iowa senate | two members of the house of representatives

A watershed is an area of land – both urban & rural - which drains into a local water body.

WATERSHED PLANNING
ADVISORY COUNCIL
2016 ANNUAL REPORT



Summary

The Watershed Planning Advisory Council (WPAC) was established by the Iowa Legislature (see Appendix A: Iowa Code 466B.31) to assemble a diverse group of stakeholders to make recommendations to state and federal agencies to protect water resources in Iowa. At the final meeting of 2016, WPAC members decided to focus on the partners, programs and policies that are actively improving water quality in Iowa. WPAC members were organized into three breakout groups: (1) Measurement and Reporting, (2) Partnerships for Progress, and (3) Water Quality Economics. By focusing on “bright spots” within these topics WPAC members were able to find common ground and discover many areas of agreement. Following the meeting the WPAC Chair, Vice-Chair and facilitators noted common themes across breakout groups. These four themes are listed below and described in greater detail in the *Areas of Agreement* section. We ask the Legislature to consider these areas of agreement during the 2017 session:

- Ongoing, continuous and protected funding
- Local works
- Measurement is essential for long-term progress
- Communication and outreach is vital to build support

A Positive Conclusion to 2016

A survey was sent out to WPAC members following the last meeting of the year in October. Survey respondents, overall, had positive reviews. Some highlights include:

- 89% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the meeting allowed them to better understand others’ perspectives on the addressed topics.
- 78% felt that progress was made in achieving the meeting’s goals.

Background

The Watershed Planning Advisory Council (WPAC) was established by the 2010 Iowa Legislature (see Appendix A: Iowa Code 466B.31) to assemble a diverse group of stakeholders to review research and make recommendations to state and federal agencies regarding methods to protect water resources in Iowa, assure an adequate supply of water, mitigate and prevent floods, and coordinate the management of the state’s resources in a sustainable, fiscally responsible, and environmentally conscientious manner.

The voting members of WPAC (see Appendix B) consist of representatives of designated nongovernmental organizations as well as representatives appointed by the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Department of Natural Resources. Nonvoting members include two members of the Iowa Senate and two members of the Iowa House of Representatives.

Many of the organizations that make up WPAC were involved in the Watershed Quality Planning Taskforce (WQPTF) that was called for by the Iowa Legislature in 2006 to make recommendations on water quality programs and needs to improve water quality and reduce pollution from both point and nonpoint sources (Senate File 2363). In November 2007, the WQPTF produced a consensus report: <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/WPAC/pdf/finallegislativereport2007.pdf>. The WQPTF

recommendations were considered by the Iowa Legislature in 2008, resulting in the creation of a Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC): <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/466B.pdf>.

WPAC continues to consult with WRCC, other governmental and non-governmental organizations and provides recommendations on watershed planning and effective implementation.

Recent Activity

In 2016, WPAC met in February, April, July and October. In February, Evan Del Val (ISG Engineering) and Vanessa Fixmer-Oraiz (HBK Engineering) presented on a Minnesota Watershed Tour taken by Iowa legislators and others. In April, Clare Lindahl (Conservation Districts of Iowa) and Ann Robinson (Iowa Environmental Council) were elected as WPAC chair and vice-chair, respectively. In July, Adam Schneider (Iowa Department of Natural Resources) presented findings from the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy's Stream Water Quality Monitoring Report, a project recommended in the 2015 WPAC Annual Report (<http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/WPAC/pdf/2016/WPAC2015annualreport.pdf>). A version of the finalized report can be found here:

<http://www.nutrientstrategy.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Water%20Monitoring%20and%20the%20NRS%20-%20Final%208-24-16.pdf>

WPAC work groups continued to meet throughout the year and gave updates on their work at each of the meetings in February, March, July and October.

In October, WPAC convened their fourth and final meeting of the year. With facilitation from the Iowa Water Center, this meeting followed a nontraditional structure in comparison to prior meetings. The goal was to engage WPAC members in an interactive way in order to understand where there was agreement on water issues under WPAC's legislative charge. WPAC members were organized into three breakout groups and were instructed to engage their topic through individual and group exercises. These breakout groups were: (1) Measurement and Reporting, (2) Partnerships for Progress, and (3) Water Quality Economics. The topics were distilled from the seven recommendation areas listed in Iowa Code 466B.31 (see Appendix A). After a two-hour block of small group activities, WPAC convened as a whole to discuss the conclusions from the above breakout sessions.

#1 Measurement and Reporting

Charge: To discuss the current "bright spots" in water quality measuring and reporting in the state. What is effective and why is it effective?

Participants discussed components of successful measurement and reporting in the state including clear communication of goals and holding participants accountable to those goals; multi-stakeholder input and collaboration (urban and rural, state and local); standards and a baseline for recording data. The group discussed some useful tools in achieving the above model such as watershed planning and the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy's logic model.

#2 Partnerships for Progress

Charge: To discuss the current "bright spots" in partnerships focused on water quality. What are the components that make these partnerships effective?

Participants discussed successful components of water quality-focused partnerships such as diverse stakeholders; locally led initiatives that can grow a sense of ownership; and streamlined messaging to accomplish goals. The group discussed some useful tools in achieving the above components such as watershed planning and increased technical assistance

#3 Water Quality Economics

Charge: To discuss the current “bright spots” in terms of economically incentivizing water quality improvements. What are the components of successful programs and initiatives?

Participants discussed components of successful financing of water quality projects and programs including the importance of continuous funding; multi-stakeholder investment with a local focus; clear eligibility; clear communication of funding division and impact. Taking all this into account, the group discussed the need to move beyond demonstration projects to a more systemic approach.

Areas of Agreement

Following the October meeting the WPAC Chair, Vice-Chair and facilitators noted common themes across breakout groups. Discussion points of general agreement were grouped under these themes, found below, and sent to WPAC membership to review. Members who did not respond via email were contacted by phone. The review process resulted in the following areas of agreement amongst voting members of the WPAC:

Ongoing and continuous funding

- Continuous and dependable support is needed to make long-term progress and grow successes.
- State support of local leaders and staff – for training and funding – remains a high priority.
- Increased technical assistance is needed to successfully deliver programs and build relationships; it takes more than knowledge to create change.
- Iowa's Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which provides loans for the design and construction of publicly owned wastewater facilities and storm water quality improvements, is widely considered one example of a successful funding model.

Local works with adequate capacity

- Watershed planning is gaining widespread acceptance and needs greater support.
- Local groups and communities need state support and greater flexibility in identifying and solving local issues.
- Initiatives are more likely to gain support when communities can see the benefits locally.
- The Watershed Academy is considered a “bright spot” to train and support local leaders such as watershed coordinators and volunteer leaders.
- It is time to scale up the local watershed approach and move beyond demonstration to more systemic implementation.
- The local approach sets the stage for multi-stakeholder partnerships, and for leveraging urban and rural resources.
- There needs to be a path for the Watershed Management Authorities to make recommendations to the state, possibly through a seat on WPAC.

Measurement is essential for long term progress

- Goal setting allows for accountability.
- More training is needed for stakeholders to effectively measure outcomes and communicate progress.
- The goals of measurement must be refined in order to gauge progress and increase credibility.
- The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy's logic model is valuable, but we need to continue to work on improving and growing acceptance of measures so it can be widely recognized as meaningful.

Communication and outreach are vital to build support

- Clear communication should be valued and supported.
- Communications and other outreach efforts need to be streamlined in order to highlight successes, educate landowners and demonstrate to the public how funds are being spent.
- Communications should help the public understand the importance of our natural resources to their local communities.

Appendix A: Iowa Code 466B.31

WATER PROTECTION AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT, §466B.31

466B.31 Watershed planning advisory council.

1. A watershed planning advisory council is established for purposes of assembling a diverse group of stakeholders to review research and make recommendations to various state entities regarding methods to protect water resources in the state, assure an adequate supply of water, mitigate and prevent floods, and coordinate the management of those resources in a sustainable, fiscally responsible, and environmentally responsible manner.

The advisory council may seek input from councils of governments or other organizations in the development of its recommendations. The advisory council shall meet once a year and at other times as deemed necessary to meet the requirements of this section. The advisory council may appoint a task force to assist the advisory council in completing its duties.

2. The watershed planning advisory council shall consist of all of the following members:

a. The voting members of the advisory council shall include all of the following:

- (1) One member selected by the Iowa association of municipal utilities.
- (2) One member selected by the Iowa league of cities.
- (3) One member selected by the Iowa association of business and industry.
- (4) One member selected by the Iowa water pollution control association.
- (5) One member selected by the Iowa rural water association.
- (6) One member selected by growing green communities.
- (7) One member selected by the Iowa environmental council.
- (8) One member selected by the Iowa farm bureau federation.
- (9) One member selected by the Iowa corn growers association.
- (10) One member selected by the Iowa soybean association.
- (11) One member selected by the Iowa pork producers council.
- (12) One member selected by the soil and water conservation districts of Iowa.
- (13) One person representing the department of agriculture and land stewardship selected by the secretary of agriculture.
- (14) One person representing the department of natural resources selected by the director.
- (15) Two members selected by the Iowa conservation alliance.
- (16) One member selected by the Iowa drainage district association.
- (17) One member selected by the agribusiness association of Iowa.
- (18) One member selected by the Iowa floodplain and stormwater management association.
- (19) One member selected by Iowa rivers revival.

b. The nonvoting members of the advisory council shall include all of the following:

- (1) Two members of the senate. One senator shall be appointed by the majority leader of the senate and one senator shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate.
- (2) Two members of the house of representatives. One member shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives.
- (3) By December 1 of each year, the watershed planning advisory council shall submit a report to the governor, the general assembly, the department of agriculture and land stewardship, the department of natural resources, and the water resources coordinating council. The report shall include recommendations regarding all of the following:

- a.* Improving water quality and optimizing the costs of voluntarily achieving and maintaining water quality standards.
- b.* Creating economic incentives for voluntary nonpoint source load reductions, point source discharge reductions beyond those required by the federal Water Pollution Control Act, implementation of pollution prevention programs, wetland restoration and creation, and the development of emerging pollution control technologies.
- c.* Facilitating the implementation of total maximum daily loads, urban storm water control programs, and nonpoint source management practices required or authorized under the federal Water Pollution Control Act. This paragraph shall not be construed to obviate the requirement to develop a total maximum daily load for waters that do not meet water quality standards as required by section 303(d) of the federal Water Pollution Control Act or to delay implementation of a total maximum daily load that has been approved by the department and the director.
- d.* Providing incentives, methods, and practices for the development of new and more accurate and reliable pollution control quantification protocols and procedures, including but not limited to development of policy based on information and data that is publicly available and that can be verified and evaluated.
- e.* Providing greater flexibility for broader public involvement through community-based, nonregulatory, and performance-driven watershed management planning.
- f.* Assigning responsibility for monitoring flood risk, flood mitigation, and coordination with federal agencies.
- g.* Involving cities, counties, and other local and regional public and private entities in watershed improvement including but not limited to incentives for participation in a watershed management authority created under this chapter.

(4) Each year, the voting members of the advisory council shall designate one voting member as chairperson.

2010 Acts, ch 1116, §1; 2011 Acts, ch 131, §98, 158

Appendix B: WPAC Membership

Organization	Member Name or Delegate
Senate Seat 1 (non-voting member)	Senator Joe Bolkcom
Senate Seat 2 (non-voting member)	Senator Dan Zumbach
House of Representatives Seat 1 (non-voting member)	Rep. Charles Isenhardt
House of Representatives Seat 2 (non-voting member)	Rep. John Wills
Agribusiness Association of Iowa	Joel Brinkmeyer Shawn Richmond (alternate)
Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship	Jim Gillespie Matthew Lechtenberg (alternate) Will Myers (alternate) Jake Hansen (alternate)
Department of Natural Resources	Bill Ehm Tim Hall (alternate) Allen Bonini (alternate) Adam Schneiders (alternate)
Growing Green Communities	
Iowa Association of Business and Industry	Jessica Harder
Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities	Tim Whipple Bill Stowe (alternate)
Iowa Conservation Alliance Seat 1	Steve Roe Glenn Vondra (alternate)
Iowa Conservation Alliance Seat 2	Jeremy Rosonke Randy Taylor (alternate)
Iowa Corn Growers Association	Ben Gleason
Iowa Drainage District Association	John Torbert
Iowa Environmental Council	Ann Robinson (vice-chair) Susan Heathcote (alternate)
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation	Rick Robinson
Iowa Floodplain and Stormwater Management	Mark Land
Iowa League of Cities	Dean Mattoon
Iowa Pork Producers Association	Tyler Bettin
Iowa Rivers Revival	Robin Fortney Molly Hanson (alternate) Jerry Peckumn (alternate)
Iowa Rural Water Association	Emily Piper
Iowa Soybean Association	Roger Wolf Todd Sutphin (alternate)
Iowa Water Environmental Association	Greg Sindt Jay Brady (alternate)
Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Iowa	Clare Lindahl (chair) Catherine DeLong (alternate)