

Budget Unit Brief

FY 2017



Watershed Protection Fund

Purpose and History

The Watershed Protection Fund (WSPF) is also known as the Flood Water Erosion Control Fund. The purpose of the WSPF is to provide financial assistance for projects that establish permanent soil and water conservation practices. Project practices are integrated into a larger watershed plan and meet multiple objectives. The Fund offers watershed grants to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) for locally led watershed projects.

Grants

The Fund awards two different grants and each funds different stages of development. Development grants, called Watershed Development and Planning Assistance Grants, are used by the SWCDs to conduct watershed assessments and develop strategies for watershed improvement. In addition to grant support, a watershed planner provides direct technical expertise in analyzing the watershed and producing a watershed plan. The other type of grant awarded by the Fund is referred to as an Implementation Grant. These grants provide financial assistance to the SWCDs during the implementation of local watershed projects. Individual project goals may differ or integrate several objectives; examples include: reducing soil erosion, protecting drinking water supplies, providing flood control, restoring wildlife, and protecting other natural resources.

Application Approval

The Watershed Protection Fund is administered by the Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) in the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (DALs). Each year the Division makes a public Request for Applications. Responding to this request, the SWCDs may submit grant applications to the DSC. Grant applications follow a standard format and describe concerns, goals, and the level of community involvement. Though applications are submitted by the SWCDs, individual landowners are encouraged to bring potential projects to District Commissioners. After applications are submitted, the DSC, the Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Iowa State University, the Leopold Center, and other agencies meet periodically to review applications and determine if assistance is appropriate. Once grants are awarded, the SWCD may allocate funds and watershed planners may begin analyzing watershed. Despite DSC and SWCD involvement, landowner initiative is required to carry out watershed plans or implement practices.

Funding History

The Watershed Protection Fund receives an annual appropriation from the Environment First Fund (EFF). The annual amount appropriated for the past five years is \$900,000.

Related Statutes

Iowa Code chapter [466.7](#)
[27](#) Iowa Administrative Code chapter [21](#)

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More Information

DALS Water Quality Project: <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/fieldServices/waterQualityProtectionProjects.asp>

Iowa General Assembly: <http://www.legis.iowa.gov/index.aspx>

LSA Staff Contact: Deb Kozel (515-281-6767) deb.koze@legis.iowa.gov