

# Iowa's Watershed Management Authorities

PARTNERSHIPS FOR WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND FLOOD RISK REDUCTION  
AG AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE- FEBRUARY 26, 2015

## The Current Condition of Iowa

- ▶ Communities devastated by flooding
- ▶ 100-year or 500-year floods are happening **Annually**
- ▶ Stream banks eroding
- ▶ Habitat lost
- ▶ Ecosystems destroyed
- ▶ County roads/bridges destroyed
- ▶ Water quality degrades
- ▶ Millions of private and public dollars spent on recovery



## The State of Iowa and Flooding Costs

- ▶ 17 presidential disaster declarations in Iowa since 2001
- ▶ 2008 Flood - State of Iowa
  - ▶ 3 billion dollars in crop damage
  - ▶ 10 billion dollars in property damage
- ▶ 2008 Flood - Cedar River
  - ▶ 3.5 billion dollars in damages
- ▶ Dubuque alone has had 69.8 million dollars in damage in the past 12 years



## What is a WMA?

- ▶ Formal agreement (Chapter 28E) amongst two or more political subdivisions
  - ▶ Cities, Counties, SWCDs
- ▶ Allows for cooperation at watershed scale
- ▶ Activities include:
  - ▶ Watershed planning & management
  - ▶ Education
  - ▶ Grant writing & administration



## Who can Join a WMA?

- ▶ All Eligible Entities Must be Invited to Participate
  - ▶ Cities
  - ▶ Counties
  - ▶ Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- ▶ Other Interested Public and Private Participants
  - ▶ Producers
  - ▶ Land Owners
  - ▶ Non Profit Organizations
  - ▶ Businesses
  - ▶ Colleges
- ▶ Nobody is Required to Participate



## When did WMAs Start Forming?

- ▶ 2010 Watershed Management Legislation
  - ▶ HF 2459
  - ▶ Added provisions for WMA formation to the Surface Water Protection & Flood Mitigation Act
  - ▶ Watershed Planning Advisory Council
  - ▶ Iowa Flood Center



## WMA Activities

- ▶ Iowa Code Chapter 466B Subchapter II
- ▶ WMAs May:
  - ▶ Assess flood risk
  - ▶ Assess water quality
  - ▶ Assess options for reducing flood risk and improving water quality
  - ▶ Monitor federal flood risk planning and activities
    - ▶ Develop and Implement a Local Watershed Plan
  - ▶ Educate residents of the watershed regarding water quality and flood risks
- ▶ WMAs Shall Not:
  - ▶ Acquire property by eminent domain

## Previous Funding Opportunities

- ▶ 2011 – IEDA / CDBG funding provided to establish six WMA pilots
  - ▶ \$158,010
- ▶ 2012 - IEDA / CDBG Funding for Watershed Management Plans
  - ▶ \$1,091,325
- ▶ 2013-2014 – IDNR Funding for Watershed Management Plans
  - ▶ \$475,620
- ▶ These funding sources were all one time Federal and State dollars allocated to WMAs. These dollars were crucial to the formation of WMAs.

## Why Form a WMA?

- ▶ Allows water resource problems to be addressed at the watershed scale
- ▶ Develop partnerships to leverage resources and create efficiencies
- ▶ Build support for conservation in urban and rural areas
- ▶ Develop and Implement Watershed Management Plans



## How Do You Form a WMA?

- ▶ Organize within a Watershed
  - ▶ (HUC-8 or Smaller)
- ▶ Notify all eligible entities with invitation to participate
- ▶ Create a Chapter 28E agreement, including a map
- ▶ A single entity can be involved in multiple WMAs, but participation is not required



## Current Accomplishments

- ▶ WMAs...
  - ▶ Bring together cities, counties, SWCD's to better understand how all political entities can work together to reduce flooding
  - ▶ Many have included producers, private land owners, developers, and other stakeholders in the planning process
  - ▶ Meet regularly as Boards and Committees to educate ourselves and watershed residents
  - ▶ Meet with and learn from other WMAs in Statewide meetings
  - ▶ Have completed extensive water quality/quantity monitoring and modeling
  - ▶ Involve the public through education, outreach, and partnerships
  - ▶ Work with the Iowa Flood Center to understand the science behind nutrient loading in streams, rivers, and ground water
  - ▶ Develop plans and policies that include specific information about actions that will reduce flooding and improve water quality
  - ▶ Have implemented a number of projects already
  - ▶ Prepare grant applications for education, outreach, planning, and project implementation

## Current Difficulties Facing WMAs

- ▶ No Sustainable Funding Mechanism for WMAs
  - ▶ Many areas of the State not represented
  - ▶ No future dollars available for WMA planning
  - ▶ Many WMAs lack funding for administration to keep things moving
  - ▶ Those with a plan lack funding for projects
- ▶ No Sustainable Funding for State Leadership and Technical Assistance
  - ▶ Flood Center and DNR monitoring is crucial to WMA success
  - ▶ WMAs do not have the capacity for real-time hydrologic monitoring and modeling

## Future of the WMAs and Iowa

- ▶ Legislation passed because the state saw a need for change
- ▶ WMAs have made great strides in a short time
- ▶ We need help to continue!
- ▶ How the Joint Sub-Committee can support WMAs
  - ▶ Sustainable Funding
  - ▶ Funding Pool for WMAs
  - ▶ Dollars for all facets (Formation, Administration, Public Education and Outreach, Planning, Projects)

## Outline of Sustainable Funding

- ▶ \$4,000,000 per year to support Watershed Management Authorities in forming, planning, and implementing
  - ▶ \$600,000 allocated to monitoring, modeling, and statewide technical assistance
  - ▶ \$3.4 million allocated to a competitive grant program available to WMAs for all aspects of their work (Admin, Education, Planning, Projects)

## Questions?

- ▶ Lora Friest
  - ▶ Turkey River Watershed
  - ▶ 563-864-7112
- ▶ Dean Mattoon
  - ▶ Catfish Creek Watershed
  - ▶ 563-543-8460



## Iowa Watershed Management Authorities

**Severe flooding is financially impacting Iowa's citizens, communities, county and state governments.** There have been 17 presidential disaster declarations in Iowa related to flooding since 2001. The Governor declared disasters in 86 counties in 2008 when Iowa suffered \$3 billion in crop damage and \$10 billion in property damage. Flooding has impacted a significant number of cities. They include high profile communities like Cedar Rapids, which in 2008 had more than 10 square miles, 14% of its city, impacted by floodwaters, and Dubuque, which has had \$69.9 million in flood damage in the past 12 years. Small communities have been just as vulnerable, including those in the Turkey River Watershed, where flooding has wiped 4 communities off the map and crippled several others. County engineers report severe consequences to aging road and bridge infrastructure. Flooding impacts, in lost agricultural crop sales and related economic activity, in 6 southwestern Iowa counties during 2011 was estimated at \$207 million. Efforts and funding for flooding have been reaction/recovery based rather than prevention based. Policies support moving water downstream as quickly as possible. Communities have been forced to invest in sandbags and flood walls, such as Iowa City, which spends over \$4 million to protect important infrastructure during one rainfall event.

**Iowans are ready for change.** A study of 1,500 residents in the Turkey River Watershed found that 70% of urban residents and 59% of rural landowners felt that more should be done to address flooding; 66% of rural landowners and 56% of urban residents were interested in learning more about what they could do to reduce flooding and/or improve water quality. Surveys in Indian Creek and the English River watersheds agree with those findings.

**Following the devastating floods of 2008, the Iowa Legislature took formal action to understand and prevent flooding.** They passed HF 2459, which added provisions to Iowa Code 466B, the Surface Water Protection and Flood Mitigation Act. They established a State Watershed Planning Advisory Committee (WPAC), authorized the creation of Watershed Management Authorities (WMAs) and WMA Watershed Demonstration Pilot Projects in partnership with the Iowa Flood Center (IFC). Dozens of cities, counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) across Iowa took up the call and united to form watershed based WMAs.

**Eleven very unique WMAs have been formed in Iowa.** Some WMAs encompass rural watersheds of greater than 1 million acres; others unite large metropolitan areas with nearby rural partners. 28e agreements formally united as many as 35 jurisdictions within one watershed to create WMAs. Iowa's WMA Boards, their committees and partners meet regularly to educate themselves and the public. WMAs are creating watershed plans that will reduce flooding, improve water quality, encourage new policy and save money. WMA member communities, county Board of Supervisors and SWCDs are investing a great deal of time in developing WMAs and plans, traveling long distances for WMA meetings, working with city and county attorneys to draft 28e agreements, and formulating new policies. The Iowa Economic Development Authority, the IFC, Iowa DNR and WMA leaders work collaboratively to ensure WMA plans are based on sound hydrologic modeling and nutrient management strategies. WMAs are working with the IFC and other partners to document existing conditions, quantified change and inform the public. The Watershed Improvement Section of the Iowa DNR provides leadership and a forum for WMAs to learn from each other. The State's investment of federal funding has been substantial and local leaders have maximized that investment.

**WMAs are at a critical juncture.** Five of the WMAs will complete their plans in 2015, two in 2016. These WMAs will be ready to take action to prevent floods. Other WMAs are just forming and want to develop plans. Funding is needed for WMA formation, planning, plan implementation and technical assistance from the Iowa DNR and the IFC. The federal HUD-CDBG funding set aside by the Iowa Legislature has run out and the Iowa DNR 319 and 604(b) programs may have very limited funding for WMAs. WMAs are usually not eligible to apply for IDALS or WIRB grant funding, which is generally targeted toward water quality rather than flood prevention.

**WMAs are requesting \$4 million annually in State funding dedicated to WMAs.** This funding will help sustain existing WMAs and help new WMAs form. It will provide dollars for WMA planning and plan implementation. It will provide leadership at the state level and help all the partners prove benefits. WMAs need a reliable funding stream that promotes cooperation amongst multiple member entities and other public private partners.

- \$3.4 million for competitive grants available to WMAs for all aspects of their work (administration, education, planning and projects)
- \$600,000 for statewide administration, technical assistance, river stage and water quality monitoring.

**For further information** regarding this request please contact one of the following WMA Representatives:

- Dean Mattoon – Catfish Creek WMA - 563-543-8460 or Lora Friest – Turkey River WMA - 563-864-7112

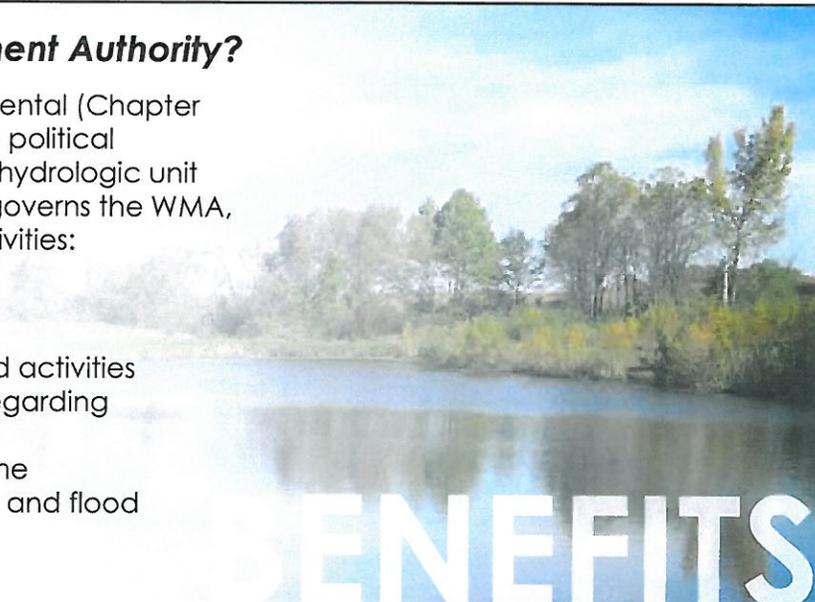
# WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

In 2010, Iowa lawmakers passed legislation authorizing the creation of Watershed Management Authorities. A Watershed Management Authority (WMA) is a mechanism for cities, counties, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and stakeholders to cooperatively engage in watershed planning and management.

## **What is a Watershed Management Authority?**

The WMA is formed by an intergovernmental (Chapter 28E) agreement by two or more eligible political subdivisions within a specific eight-digit hydrologic unit code watershed. A board of directors governs the WMA, which may undertake the following activities:

- Assess and reduce flood risk
- Assess and improve water quality
- Monitor federal flood risk planning and activities
- Educate residents of the watershed regarding flood risks and water quality
- Allocate moneys made available to the Authority for purposes of water quality and flood mitigation



## **Requirements of a WMA:**

(per Iowa Code Chapter 466B Subchapter II)

- Must be located within an 8-digit HUC watershed
- All eligible political subdivisions (cities, Counties, SWCDs) must be notified and provided the opportunity to participate within 30 days prior to WMA organization
- A Chapter 28E agreement that includes a map of the watershed must be filed with the Secretary of State
- The WMA must be governed by a Board of Directors and adopt by-laws
- WMAs may not acquire land through eminent domain and do not have taxing authority

## **Benefits of forming a WMA:**

There are multiple benefits to cooperating with other jurisdictions within a watershed:

- Conduct planning on a watershed scale, which has greater benefits for water quality improvement and flood damage reduction
- Foster multi-jurisdictional partnership and cooperation
- Leveraging resources such as funding, technical expertise
- Facilitate stakeholder involvement in watershed management

**More information about forming a WMA is available on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) website:**

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/WaterQuality/WatershedManagementAuthorities.aspx>

The website includes:

- A complete listing of the existing WMAs in Iowa
- Example 28E agreements and by-laws
- More information on setting up a WMA
- Contacts for technical assistance



<b>NAME</b>	<b>WMA</b>	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
Dean Mattoon	Catfish Creek WMA	<a href="mailto:dmattoon@cityofdubuque.org">dmattoon@cityofdubuque.org</a>	563-543-8460
Eric Schmechel	Catfish Creek WMA	<a href="mailto:schmechel@yousg.net">schmechel@yousg.net</a>	920-327-0908
Jody Bailey	English River WMA	<a href="mailto:jbailey@cityofkalona.org">jbailey@cityofkalona.org</a>	319-241-0966
Dan Pritchard	Fourmile Creek WMA	<a href="mailto:dwpritchard@dmgov.org">dwpritchard@dmgov.org</a>	515-323-8163
Cindy Valin	Fourmile Creek WMA	<a href="mailto:valinpaul-cindy@msn.com">valinpaul-cindy@msn.com</a>	515-265-4632
Jennifer Fencil	Indian Creek WMA	<a href="mailto:jennifer.fencil@ecicog.org">jennifer.fencil@ecicog.org</a>	319-365-9941
Brad Golightly	Middle / South Raccoon WMA	<a href="mailto:brad.golightly@co.dallas.ia.us">brad.golightly@co.dallas.ia.us</a>	515-993-5806
Robert Rice	Mud, Spring, Camp WMA	<a href="mailto:robert.rice@polkcountyjowa.gov">robert.rice@polkcountyjowa.gov</a>	515-875-5516
Leanne Harter	Squaw Creek WMA	<a href="mailto:lharter@storycounty.com">lharter@storycounty.com</a>	515-382-7247
Ross Evelsizer	Turkey River WMA	<a href="mailto:ross@northeastiowarcd.org">ross@northeastiowarcd.org</a>	563-864-7112
Lora Friest	Turkey River WMA	<a href="mailto:lora.friest@northeastiowarcd.org">lora.friest@northeastiowarcd.org</a>	563-864-7112
Laurie Simpson	Upper Cedar WMA	<a href="mailto:lsimpson@floydcoia.org">lsimpson@floydcoia.org</a>	641-257-6145
Mark Kuhn	Upper Cedar WMA	<a href="mailto:mdkuhn@hughes.net">mdkuhn@hughes.net</a>	641-330-4910
Ralph Kremer	Upper Wapsipinicon WMA	<a href="mailto:rkremer@indytel.com">rkremer@indytel.com</a>	319-334-3578
Teva Dawson	Walnut Creek WMA	<a href="mailto:tdawson@dmampo.org">tdawson@dmampo.org</a>	515-334-0075