

Board Spring Quarterly Meeting Thursday, April 19, 2018

4:00-5:30 PM Boone County Courthouse 201 State St Boone, IA 50036

Board Members Present: Rick Sanders, Bob Kindred, Steve Carlson, Harold Hove, Selden Spencer, and Tanner Scheuermann

Also Present:

Penny Brown Huber, Kayla Bergman, and Aimee Burch, Prairie Rivers of Iowa Cindy Hildebrand, interested citizen

Welcome Rick Sanders

Introductions and Board Member Updates

WMA Board Members

Each person in attendance introduced themselves and the jurisdiction they represent. Rick followed up with a note that Jean Eells, chair was out of town and unable to make it to the meeting. He had a great conversation with her via phone and she was excited about the tour and to have new board members added and excited about Squaw Creek.

Water Sample Testing

Kayla Bergman, PRI

Kayla Bergman administered test strips from the RetaiN kits to each of the board members that brought in water samples. Sanders, Kindred, Carlson, Scheuermann, and Hildebrand brought in water samples from their local creeks, tile outlets in their area, and tap water.

Bergman discussed the importance of knowing your water nitrate levels and how important protecting our watershed from nutrients via conservation practice implementation is. She also went into detail about the importance of the automated sampler in Squaw Creek and thanked City of Ames for their leadership and partnership on this project that brings great transparency to the watershed.

Review and Approve January 18, 2018 Minutes

Steve Carlson made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 18, 2018 meeting of the board. Selden Spencer seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Old Business:

- Prairie Rivers of Iowa Watersheds Program Update
 - o Squaw Creek Water Quality Initiative Grant

Kayla Bergman, PRI

- Bergman shared with the group that the Water Quality Initiative Grant received another year of funding with a heavy emphasis on practice implementation of cover crops, conservation tillage, and edge-of-field practices. There will be field days, workshops, mailings, and education in Boone and South Hamilton schools this year. A successful first event of the year was in March at Stanhope City Hall where PRI and Hamilton SWCD brought in farmers that have used cover crops together to discuss their successes, challenges, and tips for using cover crops. There were 23 farmers in attendance and the conversations lasted past the intended time frame of the meeting. The group will be coming together again this summer.
- Bergman shared a project Prairie Rivers of Iowa is working on in the watershed and all of the HUC 10 watersheds in Story County a watershed signage project. This is in partnership with Story County Conservation, Story County Soil & Water Conservation District, and Story County Board of Supervisors. The sign was shown at the meeting with a note of an unveiling event that is happening this summer sometime to bring press awareness to the project. Scheuermann noted he would love to continue the project into Boone County.
- o Iowa Partners for Conservation/Conservation Innovation Grants
 - Bergman shared the history and update of the PRI project that provides direct technical assistance to a subset of landowners in the fringe around Ames. The project is going well and continues to bring stakeholders in the watershed to the table. PRI is now adding a new focus to the watershed work by building a technical assistance program to landowners with riparian areas in Story County while piloting a private lands assistance program. Funding is being applied for through a Conservation Innovation Grant from the Iowa NRCS.
- Water Quality Monitoring Report
 - Bergman handed out the monitoring report for the 2017 monitoring year for both Squaw Creek and East Indian Creek watersheds. The report is located on the PRI website with Squaw report starting on Page 10. Bergman noted a couple of highlights from the report: there was high precipitation in the spring of 2017 while there was a very dry fall, the reports of high nitrate loading in the spring confirm the importance of cover crops in the watershed to prevent nitrate from leaching into the waterways, storm events were when we saw the high phosphorus levels, and the less total nitrogen we observed in 2017 compared to 2016 is probably due in part to the less total precipitation in 2017. Spencer asked about the e.coli levels in Squaw Creek and what can be done about that. Bergman and Scheuermann both responded with the various sources of e.coli being livestock, wildlife, leaky septic systems, etc. and that is something that would make a great project in the future.
 - Bergman added the comment that PRI and City of Ames have come a long way in the process of learning about data collection and monitoring all thanks to the leadership of the City of Ames.
- Watershed Maps
- Stanhope Sourcewater Protection Plan

- Hove shared the latest implementation that Stanhope has been implementing for the Sourcewater Protection Plan. Projects include working with a landowner northeast of town to put a buffer along his field border that is close to the wellhead, working with a group of horse farmers to remove the manure piles from close to the wellhead, a rain barrel workshop for the community, and installing perennial plants in the parks and along the roadside.
- Board members all commended Hove for his leadership in the watershed and the importance of thinking about practices that have dual benefits for the watershed and the town like he and Stanhope have done in their community.
- Statewide WMAs Group

Kayla Bergman, PRI

Bergman commented that she and Brown-Huber presented and attended the latest statewide WMA meeting that was hosted in Toledo last month. Squaw Creek isn't a formal member of the group, but Bergman proposed that a board member goes with her to the biannual meeting to learn about what is going on across the state. The group agreed on a rotation schedule to attend.

New Business:

• Hamilton County Board of Supervisors

Rick Sanders

- Sanders announced that the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors has agreed to sign on board for the Squaw Creek 28E. Story County will take the lead on the request for amendment paperwork that will need to be filed. Timeline agreed upon for Hamilton County is June with the other members voting at their July meeting to amend the 28E agreement.
- Squaw Creek Watershed WMA Format

Penny Brown Huber, PRI

- o Brown-Huber shared that PRI has had conversations with a few of the WMA board members individually and that the proposed next step would be to consider a larger area as an alliance to include Keigley and the two HUC 10 watersheds in Hamilton that comprise the Headwaters of the South Skunk. More conversations will be had, but the group all agreed that it is a logical next step in the watershed work.
- Board Member Comments/Updates
 - Hildebrand asked about what the Ames city council was planning to do about stormwater regulations. Kindred replied that the regulations have been in place for approximately four years and the last administration at the city was very in favor of these guidelines. He expects that the new councilmen and mayor will still support the guidelines outlined.
 - o Sanders added that from his perspective, the council is really in favor of continuing the stormwater and that there will be no changes as the *Ames Tribune* alluded to.
 - O Sanders told the group he is meeting with landowners that have stover bales on their land that were going to be used for the Dupont Cellulosic Ethanol Plant that recently closed and is up for sale. He posed the question of using the bales for conservation practices possibly bioreactor carbon source. Bergman responded that it would be good to check with Matt Helmers at Iowa State University on that, but wondered if the stover bales would decompose too quickly to be a viable, cost effective option.

Adjournment

Field Tour: Caravan to Squaw Creek site in Boone County for watershed observation

• At the site, Scheuermann outlined the characteristics of what made him select the site. A gravel mining pit, meandering stream, wildlife, and intense tillage all lined the site. Board members observed the site, asked questions of Scheuermann, and posed questions for the future of the site.

Next Meeting: July 19, 4PM @ Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District