

CEDAR RIVER WATERSHED COALITION

WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE FLOOD RISK AND IMPROVE WATER QUALITY FOR A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE CEDAR RIVER WATERSHED.

Cedar River Watershed Coalition Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 16, 2014 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Black Hawk County Conservation Board Office

Attendees:

See participant list following these meeting notes

Overview of new projects in the Cedar River Watershed

Miller Creek Water Quality Improvement Project (Shane Wulf, Black Hawk County SWCD)

Shane informed the group that their project uses a variety of education and outreach techniques to build support for agricultural conservation. In addition to various on-line strategies, such as the Digital Learning Commons and social media, face-to-face opportunities such as Coffee Shop Hours are also being used to reach different producers in different ways. The project also is providing producers with financial assistance to adopt farm conservation practices. Other project highlights include:

- Recent cover crop workshop
- Utilizing an advisory board with different watershed stakeholders
- Upcoming webinar on denitrification bioreactors
- Submitted an RCPP proposal in collaboration with partners working in the Middle Cedar and the Benton / Tama WQI project

Rock Creek Watershed Project (Kari Marketon, Mitchell County SWCD)

This project has just recently received funding so it is not quite up and running. There is very strong interest from the local landowners; less than 5% of all the landowners / operators in the watershed are absentee. They have a watershed improvement plan, which was developed with assistance from the Iowa Soybean Association. They have an advisory board as well, and are working to get various agricultural conservation practices implemented using cost-share dollars and outreach. Two dam removal projects are also being looked at in the watershed. Continuous water sampling is an important part of the project, with support from Iowa DNR and Iowa Soybean. They hope to add tile outlet monitoring in the future. Ponds / wetlands are being promoted, as is CRP.

Benton/Tama Nutrient Reduction Project (Bruce Gardner, Benton County SWCD)

Bruce had a conflict for the first part of the meeting, and provided a short update later in the meeting. He informed the group that a field day with Ray Archuleta will be held October 1 near Garrison. For more information on the Benton/Tama project visit <http://www.bentontamanutrientreduction.org/>.

Cedar River Watershed – 2014 Flood Updates

The City of Cedar Rapids provided an update on the deadly flash flooding that was experienced in late June. At least \$1.8 million in infrastructure damages were sustained. An important note here is that most of the damages were due to flash flooding, not necessarily riverine flooding, so neighborhoods that were not affected during the 2008 floods were severely damaged during the massive storms.

Other communities were severely affected as well, including West Branch and West Liberty in the Lower Cedar (as well as many communities in the Iowa River watershed, including Iowa City / Coralville).

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Another discussion that came up was how to quantify savings from mitigation actions across multiple years. In Waverly, the inflatable dam significantly lowers the flood crest. In Waterloo / Cedar Falls, buy-outs now converted to greenspace have had positive benefits on flood levels. Quantifying the benefits of these could help make the case for future mitigation activities.

Fall Meeting of the Cedar River Watershed Coalition

Several topics were discussed. “Selling the Solutions that Work” was a topic that many agreed was needed. Presentations could focus on specific, straightforward strategies for farms, communities, and businesses. A presentation on ‘urban-rural partnerships’ should also be included. Targeting mayors, and asking the farm groups to help promote and participate, is also a priority for the meeting, to promote the concept of partnering upstream/ downstream. Identifying the topics that are generating buzz (such as the Nutrient Reduction Strategy) and discussing the corollary benefits that present win-win solutions could also help get the target groups together.

Updates

- Charles City & The Nature Conservancy: a kick-off meeting was held 7/1 with urban and rural stakeholders to discuss opportunities for making investments in upstream conservation, using TNC’s RIOS tool to identify high priority locations
- Dry Run Creek: the project continues to implement urban conservation practices to reduce runoff. They are looking at how best to track the comprehensive results of all practices in the watershed.
- Trees Forever: Continuing the Upper Cedar Education workshops regarding forested buffers and CRP. They are looking for potential partners for agroforestry field days.
- Iowa Soybean Association: on-going involvement in various projects located in the Upper Cedar watershed; worked with the City of Cedar Rapids, the two WQI initiatives, and multiple partners in the Middle Cedar to develop a proposal for the USDA-NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program to help fund additional conservation practices that would reduce nitrate loading and mitigate flood impacts in the Middle Cedar
- Iowa DNR: The next round of funding for Watershed Management Authority planning grants will be available soon (scheduled release for early August). Look for details in an upcoming Coalition email newsletter.
- FEMA: The Risk MAP project will sponsor a Middle Cedar Coordination meeting on July 23 in Waterloo. The goal of the meeting is to work with local communities to provide technical assistance for mitigation projects. A variety of maps and flood risk reports and data will be developed. For more information contact Mark Pearson - Marc.Pearson@stantec.com.



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Participants

Name	Affiliation
Ashley Kittle	Black Hawk SWCD / Dry Run Creek
Shane Wulf	Black Hawk SWCD / Miller Creek
Jeff Jensen	Trees Forever
Robin Kash	Neighborhood Network News
Clark Rieke	Cedar Rapids
Kari Marketon	Mitchell County SWCD / Rock Creek
Sandy Pumphrey	City of Cedar Rapids
John Miller	Black Hawk Supervisor
Leland Freie	Linn County
Martin Smith	Cedar Rapids
Bill Arndorfer	Waterloo
Mayor Jim Erb	Charles City
Colleen Simmons	INRCOG
Allie Arp	Iowa Soybean Association
Daniel Gilles	Iowa Flood Center
Melissa Miller	Iowa Water Center
Rob Hogg	State Senate
Steve Main	Waverly
Jim Fitkin	Cedar Falls, farmer
Wayne Fitkin	Cedar Falls, farmer
Dick Sloan	Lime Creek Watershed, farmer
Jennifer Fencil	Indian Creek WMA
Chad Ingels	ISU Extension
Sherm Lundy	Black Hawk SWCD
Frank Magsamman	Black Hawk Supervisor
Bruce Gardner	Benton / Tama Nutrient Reduction Strategy
Jack Gregersen	Dry Run Creek / Cedar Falls
Vern Fish	Black Hawk CCB
Mary Beth Stevenson	Iowa DNR
Tariq Baloch	City of Cedar Rapids