

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY OUTREACH

*January 20, 2016-February 18, 2016*

Jennifer Terry met with the following water quality stakeholder groups to identify areas of collaboration, as well as potential shared advocacy efforts, for clean water:

- Raccoon River Watershed Association; Iowa Learning Farms (ISU Extension)
- Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture
- Environmental Working Group
- Iowa Environmental Council
- Walnut Creek Watershed Management Authority
- Representative Chuck Isenhardt (D-Dubuque)
- Sustainable Iowa Land Trust
- Iowa Farmers Union
- Representative Todd Prichard (D-Charles City)
- Dr. Peter Levi, Drake University, Environmental Science and Policy program regarding his research on migration of nitrate through waterways
- Madeline Meyer, Drake Environmental Policy student
- Bri Farber, doctoral candidate, Environmental Policy, University of Ohio.

Jennifer also presented a legislative update to the Central Iowa Regional Drinking Water Commission meeting; attended the Practical Farmers of Iowa conference; attended the Iowa Farmers Union lobby day; met with state legislators at the Capitol regarding bills affecting water quality; and assisted with the legislators' tour and presentation held at DMWW on January 25.

Jennifer engaged the following groups in clean water efforts by presenting at recent meetings: Iowa Department of Natural Resources Swan Soiree, swan viewing event at Walnut Woods State Park; Polk County Court Reporters annual meeting; Des Moines Men's Garden Club.

Please note on the attached water quality proposal spreadsheet that we have slightly altered the criteria for assessing each proposal. We are using a "matrix" of three key elements in deciding whether DMWW will consider supporting a particular proposal. Those key elements are:

1. Does the strategy/program stop the pollution at its source?
2. Does the proposal include a sustained funding mechanism?
3. Does the proposal include accountability? i.e. water quality monitoring with data accessible to the public; scientifically legitimate data collected, analyzed and reported by a neutral party; ties subsidies to appropriate practices; includes a timeline, benchmarks and local goals for pollution reductions, etc.

PROPOSAL	WHO IS PROPOSING	SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL	KEY PROVISIONS	HOW WILL THE PROPOSAL BE FUNDED & WHO WILL ADMINISTER THOSE FUNDS? IS THERE A SUSTAINED FUNDING MECHANISM?	DOES THE PROPOSAL SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS DMWW ISSUES?	IN GENERAL, IS THE PROPOSAL ABOUT IMPROVING WATER QUALITY?	DOES THE PROPOSAL INCLUDE TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY?
Fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (or IWILL - Iowa's Water and Land Legacy).	Ron Corbett, Cedar Rapids Mayor and Board Member of the Iowa Partnership for Clean Water (the Farm Bureau's group) has endorsed this proposal, as have numerous environmental and conservation groups.	The trust fund was created in 2010 when 63 percent of Iowa voters approved it through a statewide ballot initiative. The next step is to fund the trust through the state sales tax, an action that must be taken by members of the Iowa Legislature.	Funds would be generated by the legislature passing a 3/8 cent sales tax.	The approved formula would disperse money as follows: 23% natural resources; 20% soil conservation and water protection; 14% watershed protection; 13% Iowa Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP); 13% local conservation partnerships; 10% trails; and 7% lake restoration.	Most likely, not.	Partially. The funds would also be used for trails, parks, public lands, habitat, and soil conservation among other priorities.	There are no specifics as to how this money and any results will be allocated, administered or tracked, so not sure at this time.
"SAVE" - "Support Our Education Infrastructure & Water Quality Efforts"	Governor Branstad, 1/2016, "SAVE" or Support Our Education Infrastructure & Water Quality Efforts	The SAVE program was enacted in 2008, and the funds are allocated to K-12 school infrastructure needs and school district property tax relief. This funding source expires on Dec. 31, 2029. The plan proposes to take annual revenue increases and divide them between WQ and ed. infrastructure. Iowa State Education Association opposes. Currently, this proposal is simply being monitored at the capitol. No lawmakers have explicitly supported. Endorsed by US Sec. of Ag Tom Vilsack.	From the Governor's fact sheet: By extending the expiration date to 2049, superintendents will have predictable, stable funding for education. Education infrastructure funding will increase. Twenty year extension with growth, taxpayers will know their taxes will not be increased to meet education building needs.	Extend the SAVE program through 2049, and through a \$10 million increase in growth each fiscal year, beginning in fiscal year 2017, and on top of a minimum projected base of \$458 million, this proposal would provide \$100 million in new dollars each decade for school infrastructure. The sales tax was originally approved by voters in countywide referendums and educators believe the funds should be used for this purpose. No specifics as to who would administer WQ funds.	Not sure at this time.	There are no specifics as to how this money will be allocated, so not sure at this time.	There are no specifics as to how this money and any results will be allocated, administered or tracked, so not sure at this time.
"Strategic Direction, Implementation and Recommendations from Iowa's Soil and Water Future Task Force"	Greater Des Moines Partnership Soil & Water Task Force, Co-Chairs Larry James, Jr. and Steve Bruere; 1/2016; released to the media and legislators	Iowa offer low-interest loans or grants tied to conservation efforts to improve the state's water quality. The group recommends granting more authority and funding to watershed management authorities to develop plans across the state to improve the water and soil. Execute an implementation plan for the NRS, similar to MN's plan, a holistic, statewide "watershed approach". A 2030 deadline to meet the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, which is designed to reduce the nitrogen and phosphorous levels that contribute to the Gulf of Mexico dead zone.	From the recommendation document: Create a 'culture of measurement' to quantify and adaptively manage implementation; Identify significant measurable watershed results by 2030. Establish financial resources at scale (anticipated \$4 billion over 10-15 years). Grow an effective implementation infrastructure--outreach, technical, watershed coordinators, planners, construction team. Use Minnesota model to assess, implement, monitor and adaptively manage.	Use public dollars to leverage private investment, e.g. create an Iowa Soil and Water Health Revolving Loan Fund. Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) fund up-front costs of enacting the NRS implementation plan. Loan fund planning and implementation. Landowners share costs, but encouraged to use low cost loans from IFA. Lists possible options: 3/8 cent sales tax increase to fund the natural resources and outdoor trust fund; Gov. Branstad's SAVE proposal; tax credits to landowners who install conservation BMPs House Bill 251; nutrient trading or "water quality offset exchange" proposed by League of Cities. Iowa Department of Land Stewardship and Iowa Department of Natural Resources are listed as possible administrators; no specifics given.	The proposal uses public funds to address unregulated, nonpoint sources of pollution that directly impact DMWW, so no.	Yes.	There are no specifics as to how this money will be allocated, so not sure at this time. The document mentions a "culture of accountability" but no safeguards.

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Secure pot of money to implement water quality efforts in central Iowa in exchange for dropping the DMWW lawsuit.	Iowa State Senator Rob Hogg; 1/2016	No specifics are available at this time.	No specifics are available at this time.	No specifics are available at this time.	No specifics are available at this time.	No specifics are available at this time.	No specifics are available at this time.
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Infusion of Funds for WQ Efforts in Iowa.	USDA Sec. of Agriculture Tom Vilsack; 1/2016. Note this is not an actual Iowa legislative proposal, but the funds would be administered and co-mingled with state funds.	USDA will expand access to its signature conservation programs for Iowa farmers, making available up to 85,000 additional acres for sensitive lands and better target grants and loans for technical assistance and capital improvements while working with state partners to more closely align priorities in an improved "watershed based" strategy for nutrient management.	Invest an estimated \$660 million over the next decade to ensure USDA's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) (which collectively invest an average of \$66 million per year in Iowa conservation efforts at the current funding levels appropriated by Congress) are coordinated and complimentary; Over the next decade, USDA will partner with organizations to promote and target wetland restoration to address water quality and habitat needs; Additionally, USDA will work with Iowa's government to identify and remove barriers to the full use of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) funding; Enhance outreach and education efforts to Iowa partners to ensure they are fully utilizing and leveraging USDA's Regional Conservation Partnership Program, or RCPP; USDA will work with Iowa's state government, other federal agencies, and local and municipal governments to ensure the \$25 million in existing and available USDA resources for water and wastewater treatment facilities in Iowa are being fully utilized.	Federal funding as indicated above; administered by USDA offices in cooperation with farmers, cities, IDALS, other partners.	No.	Yes.	Not specifically, no. From the USDA press release: "Help to identify an independent body to track coordinated investments, monitor results, and report to the public and stakeholders."