

# USDA STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Des Moines, Iowa

## **MICROSOFT TEAMS**

### **Teleconference Coordinates:**

**Dial:** 1-202-650-0123

**Passcode:** 861818169#

September 16, 2021

1:00 P.M.-3:00 P.M.

## Minutes

### Welcome/Opening Comments

State Conservationist

- Approval of Minutes from June 17, 2021  
STC asked if there any additions or corrections to the minutes. There were no additions or corrections, and the June 17, 2021 minutes were approved.
- Agency Updates
  - An overview of the FY21 budget was provided which ended in an overall good year on dollars. The FY22 proposed budget was discussed and potential indications for program funding. NRCS might have a strong role in the President's Infrastructure Bill which would provide more focus on watershed operations and planning, as well as other flood planning preventions measures.
  - Official action has been taken on 10 priority practices and these have been moved forward as proposed.

### Farm Bill Programs - Anand Hase

#### EQIP (includes Derecho Contracts)

- Total EQIP FY21: \$32,019,341.14
- # Acres
  - Acres under contract 111,461.7 acres at 93% obligated
- # contracts
  - 971 applications funded
- Meeting targets
  - Livestock 59.42%
  - Wildlife Habitat 10.49%
  - Source Water Protection 10.14%
  - Beginning Farmer 22.43%
- Gearing up for RCPP FB14 & FB18
- Oct. 1, 2021 1<sup>st</sup> round batching date for EQIP

#### CSP

- FY21 Total Allocation = \$19,907,787.42
- Total Planned Contracts = 389
- FY2021 CSP-GCI = 13 Contracts, \$39,780.00 Obligations, 441.7 Contracted Acres
- FY2021 CSP Renewal = 171 Contracts, \$9,308,956.42 Obligations, 91,913.2 Contracted Acres
- FY2021 CSP Classic = 205 Contracts, \$10,559,051 Obligations, 84,407 Acres
  - For CSP Classic, 38 of the 205 applications are still yet to be obligated this Fiscal Year
- Oct. 1, 2021 1<sup>st</sup> Round batching date for CSP

#### ACEP-WRE

- 8.2 million received (3 agreement to purchase Two in Woodbury and one in Hancock)

- 1.6 million in stewardship going into a new restoration implementation cooperative agreement with Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance (not signed yet)
- Oct. 1, 2021 Application cut-off for FY22 funding consideration

### **ACEP- ALE**

- Funded two parcel contracts with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in FY21, Winneshiek and Madison

### **WREP**

- FY19 agreement applications are progressing. We have had challenges with these enrollments, but progress is being made. Funding will be rolled to FY22.
- FY21 agreement that was approved will also receive funding in FY22.

### **Partnership Update- Scott Cagle**

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program – We are continuing to develop and initiate Supplemental Agreements for the 5 RCPP projects awarded in 2020. Currently the RCPP #2166 Soil and Water Outcomes Fund project is being implemented by Iowa Soybean Association.
- The following RCPP Projects will have a batching date scheduled for October 22, 2021:
  - #1894 Turkey River
  - #1896 Iowa Systems Approach to Conservation Drainage
  - #1976 North Raccoon
  - #2266 Midwest Ag Water Quality Partnership Renewal
- We currently have 3 new classic RCPP agreements in development, which should be implemented by early Spring.
- EWP Recovery – The Emergency Watershed Protection Recovery program has obligated over \$15 Million to 123 Damage Survey Reports that have transpired into 53 agreements with county entities and expending a little over \$12.7 Million so far. The EWP Recovery for the derecho event generated 34 Damage Survey Reports and has over \$7.5 million obligated for removal of debris from rivers and creeks.
- IPC and State CIG – The 2021 Iowa Partners for Conservation grant and the Conservation Innovation Grants applications are being reviewed for processing with final action, hopefully by the end of September.
- WFPO – We have three Watershed Flood Prevention Operation agreements that are now active and all of them have initiated watershed planning in Polk, Clarke and Dubuque counties. All future WFPO opportunities will be required to first have a Preliminary Investigation and Feasibility Report completed at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Currently, we have one PIFR being implemented as soon as final guidance is issued.
- All partners are encouraged to visit the Farmers.gov website for updates to funding opportunities.
- There was discussion surrounding whether we should create an RCPP subcommittee now that it is no longer part of the EQIP budget. More feedback will be needed on this.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

#### **CSP- Anna Johnson**

- The CSP subcommittee brought forth recommendations for any questions or comments on the 8 priority resource concerns that are listed within the packet and highlighted in yellow. The committee had no questions or comments, priority resources can move forward.

#### **EQIP- Steve Hopkins**

- August meeting minutes were discussed.
- FY21 EQIP allocation and obligation to date:

- \$8.8 million obligation in 333 contracts
- Iowa received an additional \$3,571,000 for EQIP after the April funds assessment
- EQIP 10% Source Water - \$2.4 million obligated in 11 contracts.
- Soil Health Initiative – 8 applications (3 grazing, 5 non-grazing) for \$456,000. 6 additional selected in other funding pools for \$1.7 million.
- 10 Priority Practices: 90% cost share rate – Further information was requested by the STC at the last meeting. After further review and discussion, the subcommittee is recommending retaining the previously recommended 90% cost share rate for the 10 priority practices for one year and to evaluate how well it worked within that year.

### **State CIG- Steve Hopkins**

- The subcommittee reviewed 6 applications that were considered eligible, and the subcommittee recommended to approve the top three applications and recommend that if any leftover funding is available to allow the STC at his discretion, fund all or a portion of the remaining applications. That was provided to the STC, but we are currently waiting on some final things at the State office level before announcing.

### **ACEP-WRE - Kelly Smith**

- No significant changes.

### **CRP- Sean McMahon/Curt Goettsch**

- Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs)
  - The CRP Subcommittee met again on September 3<sup>rd</sup> to review Iowa DNR's proposed plan for establishing state Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs) and wildlife and water quality zones. Vince Sitzmann motioned to approve Iowa DNR's proposal to expand Iowa CPAs by 2.2 million acres, Todd Bogenschutz seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. Iowa DNR will provide the necessary shape files to Iowa FSA for them to submit final recommendations to FSA headquarters by the deadline of September 30, 2021.
  - Last day to submit for general CRP sign up is July 23, 2021 with the ranking to follow.
  - FSA is taking offers on reenrollments through August 6, 2021.
  - Clear30 – this is a new pilot program that is offered to clear practices that are expiring September 30, 2021, 30-year contract option. Clear30 offers an incentive of 27.5% rental rate. Everything seems to be moving pretty smoothly and the continuous CRP seems to be moving forward.

Action: STC will consider this recommendation as it stands.

### **SWP- Christina Murphy/Bridget Durst**

The source water protection subcommittee brought forth several recommendations which led to a discussion on source water local priorities for fiscal year 2022. The subcommittee is recommending the following priority areas for fiscal year 2022:

- The SWP committee is still recommending that 55% of funds be distributed to the protection of groundwater sources and groundwater-influenced sources, as defined by the 2018 Iowa Drinking Water Compliance Report. 45% will be distributed to surface or surface influenced groundwater sources. If available funds are not able to be used in one priority area, additional applications could be funded in the other category until all funding sources are exhausted. Groundwater applications outside the wellhead protection area but within the HUC 12 should be given a lower ranking than those surface priority areas. The committee believes there is still benefit to practices outside the wellhead protection area but at a lower ranking than our surface water priority areas.
- All groundwater priority systems are outlined and have approved Phase 2 plans or are a high nitrate community water system (>5 mg/l). Applications within a groundwater wellhead protection

area (outlined in red) should be prioritized within the Iowa Ranking process over applications outside this area within the priority HUC12 to help ensure funds are being targeting where they will have the most impact. This can be done by a GIS layer that has been developed for this use.

- All surface or surface influenced priority HUC12s have approved watershed management plans or have TMDL Water Quality Improvement Plans.
- The source water protection subcommittee would like to recommend to the State Conservationist that they allow 75% cost share initiative for eligible conservation practices that will address source water protection as outlined in the proposal.
- New this year: The Subcommittee would like consideration to be given to cap applications requests at \$100,000. There was much discussion about the pros and cons of this approach. The vote for a cap represented the majority recommendation of those voting. The rationale is that more applications could be funded, and more practices would be funded instead of several large applications, particularly manure storage tanks that may have access to other funding mechanisms. There was consideration for allowing a higher cost share for the first \$100,000 and then a lower cost share threshold after but the NRCS scoring system software does not allow for that provision.
- New this Year: The subcommittee would like there to be consideration for giving credit to EQIP applicants that have existing maintained stream buffers as part of their score for ranking. The rationale is that in southern Iowa, applicants from landowners tend to leave a natural stream buffer but score lower in ranking because their application does not include the creation of buffer zones. The specific question this is addressing is the following, “Does the EQIP schedule of operations include practices that will result in creation of buffer zones that will mitigate offsite contaminants from entering the water bodies (practices: 390, 391, 393, 604, 605, 657, 658, and/or 659).”

Action: STC will consider this recommendation as it stands.

### **Future Meeting Dates**

December 16, 2021

March 17, 2022

## September 16, 2021 State Technical Committee Meeting- Programs Report

Anand Hase, Acting ASTC-P, NRCS

### EQIP (includes Derecho Contracts)

- Total EQIP FY21: \$32,019,341.14
- # Acres
  - Acres under contract 111,461.7 acres at 93% obligated
- # contracts
  - 971 applications funded
- Meeting targets
  - Livestock 59.42%
  - Wildlife Habitat 10.49%
  - Source Water Protection 10.14%
  - Beginning Farmer 22.43%
- Gearing up for RCPP FB14 & FB18
- Oct. 1, 2021 1<sup>st</sup> round batching date for EQIP

### CSP

- FY21 Total Allocation = \$19,907,787.42
- Total Planned Contracts = 389
- FY2021 CSP-GCI = 13 Contracts, \$39,780.00 Obligations, 441.7 Contracted Acres
- FY2021 CSP Renewal = 171 Contracts, \$9,308,956.42 Obligations, 91,913.2 Contracted Acres
- FY2021 CSP Classic = 205 Contracts, \$10,559,051 Obligations, 84,407 Acres
  - For CSP Classic, 38 of the 205 applications are still yet to be obligated this Fiscal Year
- Oct. 1, 2021 1<sup>st</sup> Round batching date for CSP

### ACEP-WRE

- 8.2 million received (3 agreement to purchase Two in Woodbury and one in Hancock)
- 1.6 million in stewardship going into a new restoration implementation cooperative agreement with Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance (not signed yet)
- Oct. 1, 2021 Application cut-off for FY22 funding consideration

### ACEP- ALE

- Funded two parcel contracts with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in FY21, Winneshiek and Madison

### WREP

- FY19 agreement applications are progressing. We have had challenges with these enrollments, but progress is being made. Funding will be rolled to FY22.
- FY21 agreement that was approved will also receive funding in FY22.

## **EWP-FPE**

- 54 applications moving forward (9,582.93 acres and approximately \$50 million for enrollment costs)
- 24 active obligated agreements
- 30 pending review and approval
- A few challenges with landowners are cancelling due to dry conditions, crop prices, low offers by NRCS appraisals, and time of the process

**September 16, 2021**

**Iowa NRCS State Technical Committee Update - Partnerships**

Regional Conservation Partnership Program – We are continuing to develop and initiate Supplemental Agreements for the 5 RCPP projects awarded in 2020. Currently the RCPP #2166 Soil and Water Outcomes Fund project is being implemented by Iowa Soybean Association.

The following RCPP Projects will have a batching date scheduled for October 22, 2021:

#1894 Turkey River

#1896 Iowa Systems Approach to Conservation Drainage

#1976 North Raccoon

#2266 Midwest Ag Water Quality Partnership Renewal

We currently have 3 new classic RCPP agreements in development, which should be implemented by early Spring.

EWP Recovery – The Emergency Watershed Protection Recovery program has obligated over \$15 Million to 123 Damage Survey Reports that have transpired into 53 agreements with county entities and expending a little over \$12.7 Million so far. The EWP Recovery for the derecho event generated 34 Damage Survey Reports and has over \$7.5 million obligated for removal of debris from rivers and creeks.

IPC and State CIG – The 2021 Iowa Partners for Conservation grant and the Conservation Innovation Grants applications are being reviewed for processing with final action, hopefully by the end of September.

WFPO – We have three Watershed Flood Prevention Operation agreements that are now active and all of them have initiated watershed planning in Polk, Clarke and Dubuque counties. All future WFPO opportunities will be required to first have a Preliminary Investigation and Feasibility Report completed at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Currently, we have one PIFR being implemented as soon as final guidance is issued.

All partners are encouraged to visit the [Farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov) website for updates to funding opportunities.

Present: Curt Goetsch, Jorgen Rose, Todd Bogenschutz, Will Myers, Anna Johnson, David Brommel, Anand Hase

Notes:

1. Review the status of FY21 CSP obligations
  - a. Obligations status
    - i. CSP-GCI – 13 contracts, \$39,780, 441.7 acres - final numbers
    - ii. CSP renewals – 171 contracts, \$9,308,956, 91,913.2 acres - final numbers
    - iii. CSP Classic – 196 contracts, \$10,319,051, acres not yet finalized - preliminary numbers
  - b. Note: the cost per contract has increased this year, although the amount paid per acre hasn't changed. A full picture will be available when all contracts are obligated.
  - c. Historic IA CSP funding review:

Year	New & renewed contracts	Acres	Obligations
2015	1008	578,411	\$58m
2016	628	374,065	\$31m
2017	537	321,467	\$27.6m
2018	499	263,623	\$28.6m
2019	412	118,739	\$16m
2020	395	187,891	\$17.4m
2021	380 ( <i>not final</i> )	tbd	\$19.7m ( <i>not final</i> )

Discussion:

- 2015 figures are high because they include renewals from two years' worth of contract signups (2009 and 2010)
  - 2018 farm bill decreased CSP funding nationally for 2018 and recovers some of that decrease through stair-step increases over the five years of the farm bill (2018 – 2023)
2. Make Recommendation for FY22 State Priority Resource Concern Categories
    - The committee supports retaining the Priority Resource Concern Categories (RCC) for FY2022. See attached list.
    - The committee will re-consider this recommendation if additional NRCS guidance is released incorporating climate considerations into these RCCs.
  3. Review status of CART processes
    - Iowa NRCS staff are considering tweaks to CART to improve it, including considering reinstating ranking questions, considering different weighting.
    - Note CART doesn't track the number of acres enrolled in a particular practice, ProTracts/CD manage that information.

4. Status update on farm bill implementation of higher payments for particular practices – cover crops, resource conserving crop rotations (RCCR), advanced grazing management (AGM), comprehensive conservation planning
  - Cover Crops – of the contracts obligated so far in 2021, 82 have cover crops. A rough estimate is that these contracts have cover crops for three of their five years, but this needs more studied analysis to confirm. These contracts include several of the dozen or so cover crop enhancement options (some are for multi-species cover crop mixtures, some are to address erosion, etc). 340A (addresses erosion) is popular.
  - RCCRs – enhancements 328A and 328B – see 361 acres on 8 contracts so far in FY21 contracts. Not heavily used, usually used on a small parcel as part of a larger operation.
  - AGM – qualifying for this increased payment this requires a contract to include several enhancements: first selectin one of three Prescribed Grazing enhancement options, then three additional enhancements from a list of 9 eligible options. No contract this year is meeting this bar and receiving the higher payment, but some contracts include a few of the options, i.e. are part of the way there. Note that some of the enhancement options are particularly labor intensive.
  - Comprehensive conservation planning – this option is not yet available.

Agland RCCs

<b>Resource Concern Category</b>	<b>Percent/ Category</b>
<i>Concentrated erosion</i>	12%
<i>Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss</i>	12%
<i>Terrestrial habitat</i>	12%
<i>Wind and water erosion</i>	12%
<i>Livestock production limitation</i>	10%
<i>Soil quality limitations</i>	10%
<i>Degraded plant condition</i>	8%
<i>Pest pressure</i>	8%
<i>Weather resilience</i>	3%
<i>Air quality emissions</i>	2%
<i>Aquatic habitat</i>	2%
<i>Field Pesticide loss</i>	2%
<i>Inefficient energy use</i>	2%
<i>Source water depletion</i>	2%
<i>Storage and handling of pollutants</i>	2%
<i>Fire management</i>	1%
<i>Salt losses to water</i>	0%

100%

Non-Industrial Private Forestland-(NIPF) Priority RCCs

<b>Resource Concern Category</b>	<b>Percent/ Category</b>
<i>Concentrated erosion</i>	12%
<i>Degraded plant condition</i>	12%
<i>Pest pressure</i>	12%
<i>Soil quality limitations</i>	12%
<i>Terrestrial habitat</i>	12%
<i>Fire management</i>	10%
<i>Livestock production limitation</i>	6%
<i>Aquatic habitat</i>	5%
<i>Field Pesticide loss</i>	4%
<i>Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss</i>	4%
<i>Storage and handling of pollutants</i>	3%
<i>Wind and water erosion</i>	4%
<i>Air quality emissions</i>	2%
<i>Inefficient energy use</i>	2%
<i>Salt losses to water</i>	0%
<i>Source water depletion</i>	0%
<i>Weather resilience</i>	0%

100%

**EQIP Subcommittee Meeting Notes**  
**Virtual Meeting by Google Meet & Phone**  
**June 2, 2021**  
10:00 am – 11:40 am

Members Present: Andrew Di Allesandro, USFWS; Emily Martin, INHF; Will Myers, IDALS; Omar de Kok Mercado, ISU; Jorgen Rose, PFI; Nick Baumgarten, Iowa DNR; Jeff Jensen, Trees Forever; Alicia Vasto, IEC; John Whitaker, CDI; Susanne Hickey, TNC; Sean McMahon, Iowa Ag Water Alliance; Keegan Kult, Iowa Ag Drainage Alliance; Alicia Vasto, IEC; Jeff Jensen, Trees Forever; Cody Smith, Center for Rural Affairs; Suzan Erem, SILT; Steve Hopkins, Iowa DNR, EQIP/CIG Subcommittee Chair.

NRCS Staff advisors/assistance: Jeff Matthias, Acting EQIP Coordinator; Kevin Kuhn, Resource Conservationist; Alan Lange, Resource Conservationist; Kate Timmerman, Acting Asst. St. Con for Programs .

**Meeting Notes**

**Program Updates:**

Jeff Matthias provided program updates on the number of contracts and obligations to date for the following EQIP programs:

FFY21 EQIP allocation and obligations to date:

--\$8.8 million obligated in 333 contracts (43% of original funding to date)  
--Iowa received an additional \$3,571,000 for EQIP after the April funds assessment

**EQIP 10% Source Water—\$2.4 million obligated in 11 contracts**

NWQI regular & NWQI Source Water obligations to date:

--Wall Lake Inlet: none due to highest rank application more than initial funding  
--Rathbun Lake: none obligated, but \$362,000 moving towards obligation, more applications for round 2 will use up remaining funding.  
--Silver Creek: \$132,000 obligated to date. Need additional funding for next app.  
--Spirit Lake (SW): no applications in first round  
--Cedar Lake (SW): one application for \$21,000 obligate, no other application in first round.

Soil Health Initiative:

--8 application selected (3 grazing, 5 non-grazing) for \$456,000 in this funding pool  
--6 additional applications selected in other funding pools for an additional \$1.7 million.

MRBI—FY22—similar process as before—will be soliciting watershed recommendations from IDALS – Due July 9th

NWQI FY22—similar process as before—will be soliciting watershed recommendations from the state water agency – Due July 9th

**Discussion Topics:**

CPS 810 Annual Forages in Grazing Systems—In response to question submitted by producer Bruce Carney prior to the meeting, Jeff Matthias stated that he has been working on a new CPS 810 standard for Iowa, which may be completed for next year. This has already been approved in other states, including Indiana.

EQIP Soil Health Initiative—Kevin Kuhn stated that NRCS staff have been receiving training on implementing the new SH Initiative. He expressed disappointment that there was currently so little extra EQIP funding available to enable the program to spread to his stated goal of 2 producers per county as a demonstration, as discussed in the March 2021 subcommittee meeting. There was discussion about forming a subgroup to look into ways to expand funding options for this program in Iowa.

EQIP CIC--(Continued from last meeting)

--High Priority Areas and Priority Resource Concerns for FFY22—Jeff Matthias restated that the subcommittee could recommend up to 3 priority resource concerns for CIC. Jeff suggested the committee begin thinking about additional Priority Areas/Land Uses/Resource Concerns for FFY22. (After the meeting, NRCS HQ made a decision that CIC would not be available in Iowa for FFY21, so no immediate decisions were needed). NRCS HQ suggested that EQIP-CIC will be revisited in about 6 months.

**Prairie STRIPS:**

Al Lange of NRCS said he was still working on a draft technical note for Prairie STRIPS, but it was not yet ready, and that prairie strips fit under the existing practice standard in Iowa, and that it was expanding in the number of acres.

Sean McMahon again (as stated in previous meetings) made the case that developing new NRCS stand-alone practice standard for prairie strips would greatly enhance the understanding and marketability of prairie strips in Iowa. Omar de Kok Mercado also pointed out that there were differences between the new planting standards for prairie strips and those of CRP that provided a scientific basis for a new prairie strips practice standard.

Sean made a motion for the subcommittee to formally recommend that NRCS adopt a new stand-alone practice standard for prairie strips (seconded by Omar), and the motion was approved by the majority of the voting members (non-NRCS) of the subcommittee.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 am.

Submitted by:

Steve Hopkins, Iowa DNR, Chair EQIP/CIG Subcommittee

**EQIP Subcommittee Meeting Notes**  
**Virtual Meeting by Google Meet & Phone**  
**August 8, 2021**  
10:00 am – 11:40 am

Subcommittee Members Present: Gregg Pattison, USFWS; Will Myers, IDALS; Catherine DeLong, ISU; Jorgen Rose, PFI; Alicia Vasto, IEC; John Whitaker, CDI; Amy Crouch, TNC; Paige Frautschy, TNC; Rick Robinson, Iowa Farm Bureau; Allie Rath, Pheasants Forever; Sean McMahon, Iowa Ag Water Alliance; Keegan Kult, Iowa Ag Drainage Alliance; Kate Hansen Center for Rural Affairs; Suzan Erem, SILT; Jeff Hastings, Trout Unlimited; Bruce Carney, producer; Matt Dvorak, Iowa DNR Source Water Coordinator; Steve Hopkins, Iowa DNR, EQIP/CIG Subcommittee Chair.

NRCS Staff advisors/assistance: Jeff Matthias, Acting EQIP Coordinator; Rubyana Neely, incoming EQIP Coordinator; Kevin Kuhn, Resource Conservationist; Anand Hase, Acting Asst. St. Con for Programs; Jon Hubbert, State Conservationist.

**Meeting Notes**

**Program Updates:**

Jeff Matthias provided program updates on EQIP and MRBI allocations and obligations (shown below in red highlights), and Kevin Kuhn provided updates on the Soil Health Initiative (shown below in red highlights):

EQIP Final FFY21 allocation and obligation summary

- Total Allocation \$32,201,283.00
  - Will be in about 970 contracts
  - Derecho Disaster 143 contracts for \$1,886,116.28
  - CIG 2 contracts for \$299,411.88

Targets:

- Livestock (59%) 526 contracts for 59.5%
- Socially Disadvantaged Producers (5%) 26 contracts for 1.5%
- Beginning Farmer/Rancher (5%) 191 contracts for 22.4%
- Wildlife Habitat (10%) 221 contracts in Wildlife/Prairie Pothole Funding pools plus additional contracts with 16 core practices for 10.5%
- Source Water Protection (10%) 35 contracts for 10.1% (Includes 5 NWQI SWP contracts)

--FFY22 Projected Allocation – not known at this time.

NWQI & NWQI Source Water—update (Jeff, NRCS)

- 1) FFY21 Final Obligations
  - Final Obligation \$1,210,596.00 (\$6,860 over initial allocation)
  - All NWQI and NWQI SWP applications were selected this year.
  - \$1,093,711 went to non-SWP NWQI project areas (original allocation for these 3 was \$801,550)
  - \$116,885 went to SWP NWQI project areas (original allocation was \$402,186 or 29%)
    - o 1 SWP application included Prairie Pothole Initiative.
- 2) FFY22 Allocations not known, later in September it should be announced

MRBI—FY22 Update (Jeff, NRCS)

- 1) FFY21 Final Obligations

Final Obligation \$4,777,185.00 (\$61,452 over initial allocation).  
10 of the 15 watersheds had all applications selected.  
6 watershed did not use 100% of earmark allocation

2) FFY22 Allocations not known, later in September it should be announced

10% Source Water Funding (Jeff, NRCS)

1) FFY21 Final Obligations

Ended up at 51% Groundwater/49% Surface Water with \$3,130,328.00  
\$116,885 was in NWQI-SWP to get to 10.1%  
All Groundwater Applications (19) were selected.  
11 of 143 Surface Water Priority Applications were selected.

2) FY22 update

EQIP Soil Health Initiative--update (Kevin Kuhn, NRCS)

\$806,054 selected for funding in ranking pool

Additional selections were selected in other ranking pools

All 5 Grazing Applications Selected (\$303,590.00)

10 non-grazing applications were selected for \$502,464.00)

7 non-grazing still eligible stopped selecting due to the next application  
having an estimated cost of \$450,000.

**Discussion Topics:**

Cost-Share Rate for 10 Priority Practices—Jon Hubbert requested feedback from the EQIP Subcommittee on whether the 90% cost-share rate for the previously-recommended 10 priority practices was still being recommended over a lower (75%) cost-share rate. His primary concern was that a 90% cost-share rate meant fewer practices and contracts being funded compared to the 75% rate, since the higher rate would consume funds faster. A lower cost-share rate (75%) would spread the funds out to more practices. It was also noted that it's already difficult for Iowa to reach its program targets, given the number and percentages of the targets.

There was much discussion among the Subcommittee over the higher vs lower cost-share rate, as well as about the 10 practices which had been recommended. The Subcommittee ultimately recommended retaining the previously-recommended 90% cost-share rate for the 10 priority practices for FF22 (one year), and to evaluate how well it worked at the end of the year.

EQIP Soil Health Initiative (SHI)—Kevin Kuhn stated that he is working on forming a subcommittee to look at ways to expand the SHI and SHI practices in Iowa. Steve Hopkins has agreed to set up a subcommittee meeting for an initial discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 am.

Submitted by:

Steve Hopkins, Iowa DNR, Chair EQIP Subcommittee

**CRP Subcommittee Meeting**  
**July 13, 2021, 1:00-2:30 pm**  
**ISA/IAWA Bayer Conference Room**  
**1255 SW Prairie Trail Pkwy / Ankeny, IA 50023**  
**Agenda**

**I. Update Iowa Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs)**

Curt Goettsch with Iowa FSA updated the subcommittee on guidance from FSA Headquarters to revise and expand Iowa CPAs, water quality and wildlife zones and potentially establish additional priority water quality and wildlife zones within the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR). Todd Bogenschutz with Iowa DNR briefed the subcommittee on our efforts to revise the Iowa CPAs and water quality and wildlife zones in 2019 and indicated that we have an opportunity to create approximately 2.2 million acres of additional zones in the PPR.

After much discussion, it was agreed that Iowa DNR will propose new priority wildlife and water quality zones in the PPR and share that draft proposal with the subcommittee no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>. The subcommittee will either meet again the first half of September to discuss the revised proposal or vote on it via email no later than September 15<sup>th</sup>. A final submission is due back to FSA Headquarters by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**II. CRP Updates**

**Curt Goettsch**

**A. General Sign Up**

- Last day to submit an offer is July 23, 2021.
- Ranking to follow.

**B. Continuous Enrollment**

- FSA is taking offers on reenrollments through August 6, 2021,
  - i. New land offers are ongoing.

**C. Climate Smart Practices**

- Review FSA Notice CRP-933 Exhibit 2 for a listing by practice (emailed)

**D. CLEAR 30**

- Reviewed new pilot CLEAR30, this program is offered to CLEAR practices that are expiring 9/30/2021, a 30-year contract option.
- CLEAR30 offers an incentive of 27.5% on the rental rate.
  - i. In parts of Iowa this incentive may have limited impact due to the \$300 per acre cap for Continuous CRP.

**E. Changes to Payment Rates, Incentives, etc.**

- Discussed many incentive and rental rate changes made to CRP in Notice CRP-933. (emailed)

**III. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**IV. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 pm.

To: Jon Hubbert, Iowa State Conservationist

From: Source Water Protection Subcommittee Members

Date: September 16, 2021

RE: FY 22 High Priority Areas for Source Water Protection

NRCS issued a National Bulletin on June 2<sup>nd</sup> on source water local priorities for fiscal year 2022. Basically, the bulletin was very similar to the prior year.

The full subcommittee met on June 1, 2021 and to review the previous year's recommendation and begin discussion on Priority Area Recommendations. The committee met again on August 5, 2021 and had several follow up email correspondence.

### **Recommendations from the Source Water Protection Committee**

- The SWP committee is still recommending that 55% of funds be distributed to the protection of groundwater sources and groundwater-influenced sources, as defined by the 2018 Iowa Drinking Water Compliance Report. 45% will be distributed to surface or surface influenced groundwater sources. If available funds are not able to be used in one priority area, additional applications could be funded in the other category until all funding sources are exhausted. Groundwater applications outside the wellhead protection area but within the HUC 12 should be given a lower ranking than those surface priority areas. The committee believes there is still benefit to practices outside the wellhead protection area but at a lower ranking than our surface water priority areas.
- All groundwater priority systems are outlined and have approved Phase 2 plans or are a high nitrate community water system (>5 mg/l). Applications within a groundwater wellhead protection area (outlined in red) should be prioritized within the Iowa Ranking process over applications outside this area within the priority HUC12 to help ensure funds are being targeting where they will have the most impact. This can be done by a GIS layer that has been developed for this use.
- All surface or surface influenced priority HUC12s have approved watershed management plans or have TMDL Water Quality Improvement Plans
- The source water protection subcommittee would like to recommend to the State Conservationist that they allow 75% cost share initiative for eligible conservation practices that will address source water protection as outlined in the proposal.
- **New this year: The Subcommittee would like consideration to be given to cap applications requests at \$100,000. There was much discussion about the pros and cons of this approach. The vote for a cap represented the majority recommendation of those voting. The rationale is that more applications could be funded, and more practices would be funded instead of several large applications, particularly manure storage tanks that may have access to other funding mechanisms. There was consideration for allowing a higher cost share for the first \$100,000 and then a lower**

cost share threshold after but the NRCS scoring system software does not allow for that provision.

- **New this Year:** The subcommittee would like there to be consideration for giving credit to EQIP applicants that have existing maintained stream buffers as part of their score for ranking. The rationale is that in southern Iowa, applicants from landowners tend to leave a natural stream buffer but score lower in ranking because their application does not include the creation of buffer zones. The specific question this is addressing is the following, *“Does the EQIP schedule of operations include practices that will result in creation of buffer zones that will mitigate offsite contaminants from entering the water bodies (practices: 390, 391, 393, 604, 605, 657, 658, and/or 659).”*
- The attached listing of approved practices is unchanged from 2020 and continue to be the recommendation of the subcommittee.
- The attached map outlines the Source Water Protection Areas Priority HUC12s

**Enclosures**

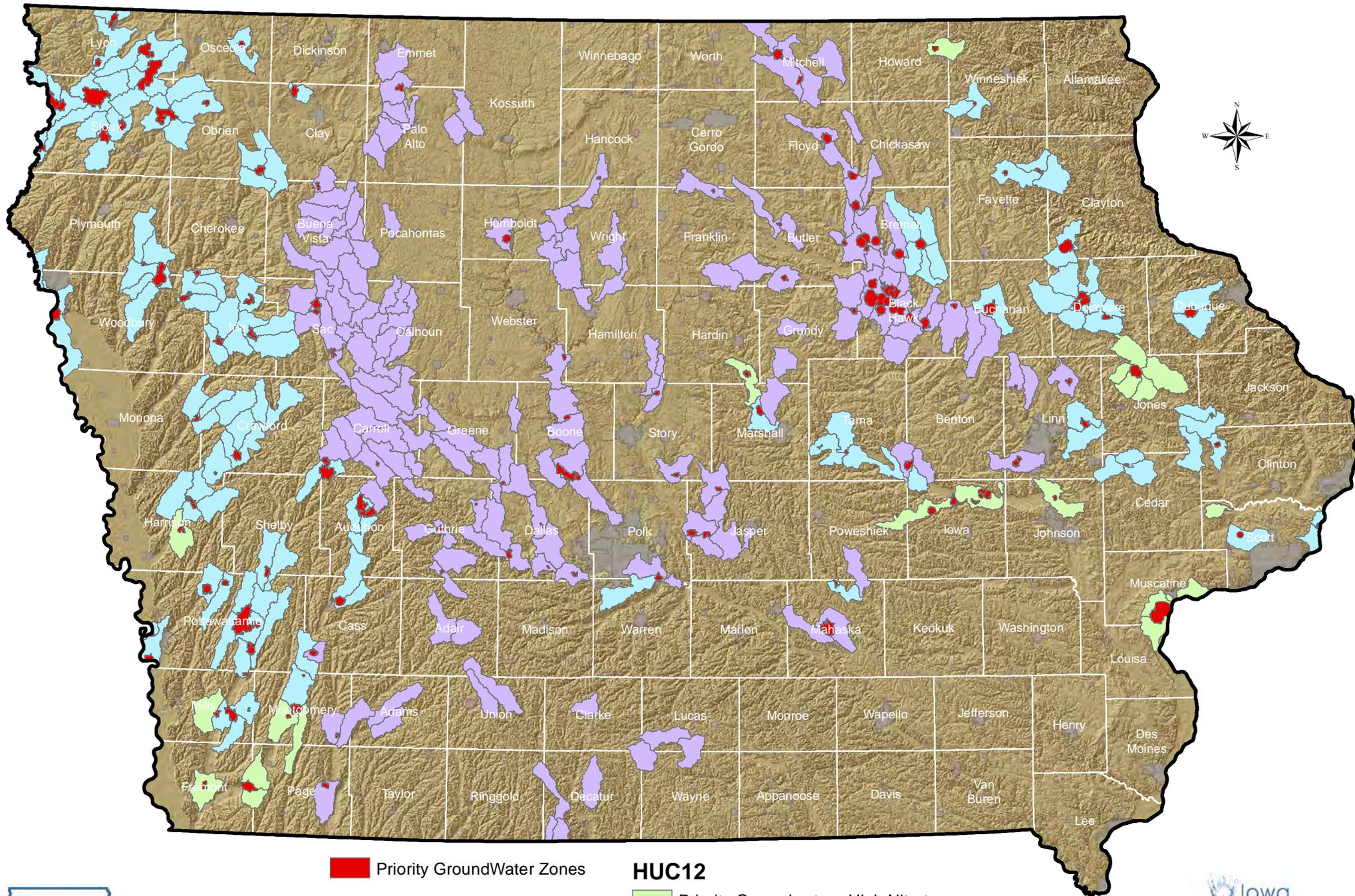
- Map & Itemized list - NRCS SWPA Priority HUC12s
- Recommended Practices specific to source water and drinking water systems

Full Source Water Protection Committee Members:

<b><u>Source Water Protection Subcommittee</u></b>		6/3/2021
Matt Dvorak	Iowa DNR, SWP West Des Moines Water Works, Iowa	<a href="mailto:matthew.dvorak@dnr.iowa.gov">matthew.dvorak@dnr.iowa.gov</a>
Christina Murphy	Association of Water Agencies	<a href="mailto:christina.murphy@wdmww.com">christina.murphy@wdmww.com</a>
Brent Johnson	Labre Crop Consulting, Iowa Farm Bureau	<a href="mailto:brent@gpssoilsampling.com">brent@gpssoilsampling.com</a>
Bridget Durst	CDI/DNR Source Water Community Facilitator	<a href="mailto:badurst@gmail.com">badurst@gmail.com</a>
Aaron Schroeder	IRWA, Source Water Protection ISU, Professor, Dept. of Geological and	<a href="mailto:aschroeder@iowaruralwater.org">aschroeder@iowaruralwater.org</a>
Bill Simpkins	Atmospheric Sciences	<a href="mailto:bsimp@iastate.edu">bsimp@iastate.edu</a>
David Brommel	NRCS	<a href="mailto:david.brommel@usda.gov">david.brommel@usda.gov</a>
Jim Jordahl	Iowa Ag Water Alliance	<a href="mailto:jjordahl@iowaagwateralliance.com">jjordahl@iowaagwateralliance.com</a>
Marty Braster	Rathbun Rural Water, Manager	<a href="mailto:mbraster@rrwa.net">mbraster@rrwa.net</a>
Robert Mier	NRCS	<a href="mailto:robert.mier@usda.gov">robert.mier@usda.gov</a>
Jennifer Terry	Des Moines Water Works	<a href="mailto:terry@dmww.com">terry@dmww.com</a>
Sindra Jensen	NRCS	<a href="mailto:sindra.jensen@usda.gov">sindra.jensen@usda.gov</a>
Sean McMahon	Iowa Ag Water Alliance	<a href="mailto:smcmahon@iowaagwateralliance.com">smcmahon@iowaagwateralliance.com</a>
Mike Gannon	Iowa Geologic Survey	<a href="mailto:mike-gannon@uiowa.edu">mike-gannon@uiowa.edu</a>
Mary Beth Stevenson	City of Cedar Rapids	<a href="mailto:mb.stevenson@cedar-rapids.org">mb.stevenson@cedar-rapids.org</a>
Alicia Vasto	Iowa Environmental Council	<a href="mailto:vasto@iaenvironment.org">vasto@iaenvironment.org</a>
Randy Van Dyke	Iowa Lakes Regional Water, CEO	<a href="mailto:randy.vandyke@ilrw.org">randy.vandyke@ilrw.org</a>
Jon Hubbert	NRCS, State Conservationist	<a href="mailto:jon.hubbert@usda.gov">jon.hubbert@usda.gov</a>

Vince Sitzmann	IDALS	<a href="mailto:vince.sitzmann@iowaagriculture.gov">vince.sitzmann@iowaagriculture.gov</a>
Susan Kozak	IDALS, Director	<a href="mailto:susan.kozak@iowaagriculture.gov">susan.kozak@iowaagriculture.gov</a>
Chad Fields	Iowa DNR, Geologist 3, Water Supply	<a href="mailto:chad.fields@dnr.iowa.gov">chad.fields@dnr.iowa.gov</a>
Stephen Hopkins	Iowa DNR, Nonpoint Source Coordinator, Interim SWP Coordinator	<a href="mailto:stephen.hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov">stephen.hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov</a>
Joe Stokes	US EPA, Source Water	<a href="mailto:stokes.joseph@epa.gov">stokes.joseph@epa.gov</a>

# NRCS SWPA Priority HUC12s



 Priority GroundWater Zones

## HUC12

-  Priority Groundwater - High Nitrate
-  Priority Groundwater - Phase 2
-  Priority Surface Water



Iowa NRCS Source Water Protection Practices – FY -2020

Practice Name	Practice Code
Access Control	472
Agrichemical Handling Facility	309
Alley Cropping	311
Bedding	310
Conservation Cover	327
Conservation Crop Rotation	328
Constructed Wetland	656
Cover Crop	340
Critical Area Planting	342
Dam	402
Denitrifying Bioreactor	605
Filter Strip	393
Forage and Biomass Planting	512
Grade Stabilization Structure	410
Grassed Waterway	412
Integrated Pest Management	595
Irrigation Ditch Lining	428
Irrigation Land Leveling	464
Irrigation Reservoir	436
Irrigation Water Management	449
Livestock Shelter Structure	576
Mulching	484
Nutrient Management	590
On-Farm Secondary Containment Facility	319
Open Channel	582
Pond	378
Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane	521A
Prescribed Grazing	528
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till	329
Riparian Forest Buffer	391
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390
Saturated Buffer	604
Sediment Basin	350
Short Term Storage of Animal Waste and Byproducts	318
Silvopasture Establishment	381
Sprinkler System	442
Stormwater Runoff Control	570
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	580
Subsurface Drain	606
Terrace	600
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612
Underground Outlet	620
Vegetated Treatment Area	635
Waste Facility Closure	360
Waste Storage Facility	313
Waste Transfer	634
Waste Treatment	629
Waste Treatment Lagoon	359
Water and Sediment Control Basin	638
Watering Facility	614
Well Decommissioning	351
Wetland Creation	658
Wetland Enhancement	659
Wetland Restoration	657
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	380
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation	650

USDA-NRCS State Technical Committee  
 Sub Committee Meeting – Source Water Protection  
 Minutes – June 1, 2021

Members present were:

Matt Dvorak, Brent Johnson, Chad Fields, Steve Hopkins, Bill Simpkins, Aaron Schroeder, Susan Kozak, Jon Hubbert, Vince Sitzmann, David Brommel, Alicia Vasto, Jeff Matthias, Sean McMahon, Jennifer Terry, Mary Beth Stevensen, Marty Braster, Randy Van Dyke, Christina Murphy

The subcommittee reviewed application statistics from last year’s priorities and how the process went for NRCS.

Christina shared some information received from Jeff Matthias at the state office regarding EQIP applications. April 9<sup>th</sup> was the ranking deadline for staff for the first batch. A second batch date was announced which ended May 7<sup>th</sup> and rankings needed to be complete by June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Information on the applications from the first batch were shared with the group.

Category	Application No	Application Cost	Moving forward	Pre-Approved \$
High Priority Groundwater	16	\$1,411,144.00	14 (2 cancelled)	\$1,408,560.00
Priority Surface Water	145	\$6,742,799.00	9 – (all that were pre-approved)	\$975,624.00
Ground water eligible or Low Priority	55	\$2,462,517.00	None pre-approved	\$0.00

Dave Brommel shared some statistics from the CSP program.

Two applications in the high groundwater priority areas for a total \$134,000. 45 applications for the high surface water priority areas but only 8 funded for a total of \$901,000. 31 remain unfunded at \$3.3 million. 15 groundwater low priority applications were not funded for a total of \$1.26 million.

It appears there will be not be an issue meeting the 10% goal for source water protection. There was discussion about an application funding cap that was tabled to a later meeting date and could be considered in the future.

It was noted that another 38 applications that support source water protection were funded in other funding pools. Dave Brommel indicated that it is common that not all the applications are funded.

The only process question was about credit for existing stream buffers. Again, this discussion was tabled for a future meeting as we put together recommendations for the next fiscal year.

Steve Hopkins gave an overview of the NWQI program and the specific NWQI – Source water program. Steve shared that traditionally and with much success, watersheds were selected that has Phase II plans and an active watershed coordinator.

There has been a recent call for proposing new NWQI watersheds. In consultation with Steve and the State Conservationist, the thought would be the source water protection committee could provide input on the process.

There was consensus from the source water committee to continue to recommend watersheds that has a Phase II plan and an active watershed coordinator. The group discussed how vital they were to getting practices implemented. Water utilities were recognizing that and have had discussion about how to support more permanently funded watershed coordinators, such as Cedar Rapids has done.

There are two new watersheds that the group discussed and ultimately is recommending be added for consideration and those are Rathbun Lake and Blackhawk Lake (NRCS refers to Wall Lake Outlet).

NRCS indicates that they believe there will not be significant changes to the process for identifying priority areas, the group is waiting a few more weeks to move forward with recommendations. This will also give NRCS a chance to finalize the second round and provide some more statistics that will be helpful to the discussion.

Christina will send out a doodle poll late June/early July to move that process forward.

USDA-NRCS State Technical Committee  
Sub Committee Meeting – Source Water Protection  
Minutes – August 5, 2021

Members present were:

Brent Johnson, Chad Fields, Steve Hopkins, Bill Simpkins, Susan Kozak, Jon Hubbert, Vince Sitzmann, David Brommel, Jeff Matthias, Jennifer Terry, Joe Stokes, Ananad Hase, Mike Gannon, Christina Murphy

The chair shared that she was looking to see if any committee members that had interest in serving in a leadership role, this could be either as someone new to chair the committee or providing assistance as a co-chair. Christina was happy to continue to serve but also happy to allow others to step forward. Jen Terry expressed interest. Jen also thought Mary Beth Stevenson from Cedar Rapids might be interested.

Nrcs reviewed ranking and funding application statistics for the EQIP and CSP programs. The chair will send this out as part of an email for the whole group.

EQIP SWP information:

- 11 applications obligated in Surface Water Priority Areas in 7 counties (Bremer, Buena Vista, Butler, Grundy, Palo Alto, Sac & Wayne) for \$1,121,000.
- 19 applications obligated in Groundwater High Priority Areas in 14 counties (Audubon, Boone, Bremer, Buchanan, Carroll, Cass, Floyd, Grundy, Linn, Lyon, Muscatine, West Pottawattamie, Sioux, Woodbury for \$1,603,000.
- NWQI SWP-Spirit Lake has 2 contracts for \$39,000 in Dickinson County
- NWQI SWP-Cedar Lake has 3 contracts for \$85,000 in Madison County
- All NWQI SWP applications were selected in both watershed.
- All Groundwater High Priority Area applications were accepted (19)
- For Surface Water Priority Area, 11 application above were selected from 148 applications. The 148 applications have a total estimated cost of \$9,609,000.00.
- For Groundwater Eligible or Surface Water Low Priority, no applications were selected from 57 applications that were ranked. The total estimated cost is \$2,226,000.00.

CSP SWP information:

- NRCS had 2 Applications in the Ground Water High Priority Areas. Both were selected for funding (Buchanan and Sac Counties). The total contract amount is \$97,264.00.
- NRCS had 46 applications for the Surface Water Priority Areas. We have 10 of these applications selected for funding. The total contract amount is \$1,138,048.00. Applications are in Adair, Boone, Bremer, Buchanan, Crawford, Dallas, Emmet, Floyd, Hamilton, Humboldt, Kossuth, Linn, Mitchell and Sac Counties. Applications selected for funding based on ranking were in Dallas, Floyd, Humboldt, Mitchell and Sac Counties.

- NRCS also had 15 applications in the Ground Water Low Priority Areas. No applications have been selected for Ground Water Low Priority, because NRCS was instructed to only select from this priority area if the other 2 priorities had all applications selected.
- Currently 11.6% of the total CSP allocation is used for the SWP selected applications.
- Since only one of the selected applications has been obligated it is too early to run a report based on priority practices in the SWP ranking pools.

The chair shared a request made by Rathbun Regional Water to add points for existing buffers in the ranking of applications. This item was tabled since Marty had a last-minute conflict. The chair would contact Marty and send it out via email to group for a vote.

A proposal was made by Steve Hopkins for consideration of a \$100,000 cap. There was lengthy discussion on the pros and cons of a possible cap. This cap could only be applied to the EQIP program as the CSP program must address the whole farm. This proposal was also going to be sent in an email to the group for a vote.

Jon Hubbert asked the group if they would discuss and suggest any additional things that should be done to address microcystins. Suggestions were going to be emailed to the chair.