

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Kurtz at 1:29 pm.

Motion to approve the agenda was made by, Don Shonka and seconded by David Lehman. Motion Passed.

Board Members present: Steve Smolik, *Mitchell County Supervisor*, Don Shonka, *Buchanan County Supervisor*, John Kurtz, *City of Independence*, Kip Ladage, *Bremer County and Bremer County SWCD*, Orlan Love, *City of Quasqueton*, Randy Leach, *City of Fredericksburg*, Ray Armbricht, *City of Fredericksburg*, Trevyn Cunningham, *Central City*, David Lehman, *Bremer CCB*, Sheila Steffen, *City of Dunkerton*, Karmin McShane, *Linn SWCD*, Sean Dolan, *Buchanan SWCD*, Cally Mueller and Dave Nuss, *City of Sumner*, Duane Meihost, *City of Frederika*, Robert Schwickerath and Karen Clemens, *City of New Hampton*, Matt Kuhn, *Chickasaw County*.

Others Present: Kate Giannini, *Iowa Flood Center*, Ross Evelsizer, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*, Tori Nimrod, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*, Valerie Decker, *Univ. of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment*, Brian Keierleber, *Buchanan County Engineer*, Rick Wulfsuhle, *Buchanan County Emergency Manager*, Dan Cohen, *Buchanan County CCB*, Josh Balk, *Iowa DNR*, Miranda Haes, *Iowa DNR*, Luke Monat, *Shive-Hattery Engineering*, Todd Sherrets, *City of Independence*, Antonio Arenas, *ISU Assistant Professor*, Adam Weis, *IHR Research Assistant*.

Motion to approve the Minutes from February 8th, 2022 Meeting was made by Randy Leach and seconded by Orlan Love. Motion Passed.

New Business

- **IWA Project Coordinator Update**

Water Quality monitoring 2021: Watershed Coordinator Tori Nimrod, Northeast Iowa RC&D presented data from the 2021 upper wapsi water sampling year. Results showed lower levels of Nitrate than previous years likely due to lower amounts of rainfall during the 2021 sampling season. Only one site averaged above 10mg/L, which is the maximum EPA drinking water standard. Although Nitrate levels were lower, Phosphorus and Bacteria levels were high at most sites. Phosphorus is directly tied to sediment, so when water levels are low sediment from the bottom on creeks causes high levels of phosphorus, which can cause harmful algae blooms that destroy micro invertebrate and fish populations. Ecoli (fecal bacteria) levels were also high in many of the sites throughout the upper wapsi watershed. Watershed coordinator also shared a table that reflected the change over time of nitrate levels at site Black Hawk 12. The table showed high levels of nitrate during the 2017 year, which correlated to a heavy rainfall year. Nimrod commented that although you can look at the data this way to compare sites year to year; the sampling size is still small for each site so conclusions based on the improvement or degradation of surface waters over time in the upper wapsi watershed should not be made using the sampling data alone. Nimrod also commented that sampling for the 2022 season is lined up and ready to go. The first sampling day is May 2nd. One major difference for the 2022 season, is donations made to Northeast Iowa RC&D for coordination now includes the cost of sampling analysis performed by Coe College. Therefore, Northeast Iowa RC&D will be covering the cost of upper wapsi water sampling for the year 2022. For more information on water sampling visit <https://upperwapsi.org/plan/challenges-and-opportunities/water-quality/>

Project Coordinators also discussed planning for the upcoming IWA project Field Day where board members and the public will be invited to tour several of the IWA implemented projects in the Upper Wapsi Watershed. Coordinators put together a draft tour route for discussion with the board. See draft itinerary attached with these minutes. The proposed tour route would begin and end at Cedar Rock State Park where there was a large oxbow implemented. It is an open place for parking, and to have a lunch afterward. The site is also easily accessible via foot. Other tour locations are located on the east side of the river due to the inability to easily cross the river without adding a lot of travel time. Practices visited via the proposed tour route include two on-road detention structures, several ponds, an oxbow, wetland and WASCOD project. The proposed tour includes at least one of each type of practice implemented. The Board indicated they liked the proposed route. They were interested in being able to stop at the labeled "drive by" locations as well either to have a longer time to view them and or get out and walk around. Brian Keierleber, County Engineer indicated they may be able to provide traffic control in areas where projects are located along a busy road. Kate Giannini suggested talking to Catherine DeLong about funding for bussing for the event. Project Coordinator indicated that Buchanan SWCD and Buchanan County Pork producers may be interested in providing a meal for the event.

- **University of Iowa IIHR – Adam Weis, IIHR Research Assistant**

Adam Weis from University of Iowa IIHR, presented results from the phase 2 hydrologic assessment. This assessment looked at the flood reduction results in the upper Wapsi watershed provided by implemented projects. Conclusions from the analysis showed very small impacts on the entire upper Wapsi watershed (less than 1% flood reduction), but at the local level several of the ponds had about a 50% flood reduction. As you moved downstream from the structures and more tributaries entered the area, the flood reduction percentage decreased. The Priority watersheds where structures were implemented all include either the main stem of the Upper Wapsi or the large Buffalo Creek, this caused modeled flood reductions to be reduced quickly due to the large amounts of water moving through the watersheds. Adam also shared some cost analysis of how much money is needed to provide a 20% flood reduction at Anamosa. Approximately 300 million dollars is needed in implementation funds to implement enough detention structures. Although overall watershed flood reductions were only a scratch on the surface and the funds needed to make a measurable difference is high, County Engineer and others present commented that locally these projects made a huge difference to improving and protecting existing infrastructure. They also commented on the amount of money spent in flood recovery during the 2008 flood was in the Billions, while mitigation funds are only in the millions.

- **City of Independence – Todd Sherrets, Floodplain Manager**

The City of Independence recently adopted a Stormwater utility fee as a means to build revenue for city stormwater and flood reduction projects. Todd Sherrets, City floodplain Manager presented a few project ideas for the board looking for input and advise in moving forward with implementation. The first project was a detention pond located in JC park that would capture water prior to the confluence with Malone creek, where they currently have flooding issues. Both the park and proposed pond would be city owned. The second project was working north of the community to reduce siltation in the Independence Reservoir city is proposing the implementation of wing dams to reduce silt flowing in to the reservoir. Dredging is very expensive so they are looking for alternative actions. Project would be a concern with the Army Corps of Engineers, and is currently owned by the county. The third project Sherrets shared with the board was implementation of recreational rapids and dam mitigation on the Upper Wapsi flowing through the community. This project would provide added safety by mitigating the existing dam structure, and would provide a unique recreational opportunity for the community. The proposed rapids would stretch approximately one mile, making it one of the longest in the area. Board members suggested talking with the DNR, who is involved with many dam mitigation projects in the State of Iowa.

- **Public Comment/ Other Partner Updates:**

- Kate Guinini: Kate Guinini, Iowa Flood Center provided a few updates to the board in regards to events happening in the near future. The IWA video is out for viewing. It can be found on their website at www.iowawatershedapproach.org. Phase 2 hydrological reports are almost complete and will be made available to the public when they are completed. June 14th is the IWA celebration tour located in Vinton, Iowa. HUD officials will be present at the event. The University of Iowa is a part of a 360-million-dollar program to improve flood prediction and mapping tools. 21 million of those dollars are allocated to the state of Iowa.
- Valerie Decker: Thanked board members for participating in the last survey. Had the best response rate ever!
- Dan Cohen: Dan presented three lawn signs that show a landowner has pledged to not use herbicides or pesticides on their lawn. Signs can be ordered online by filling out a short form and picking one of three sign designs. Fill out the form at www.goodneighbor Iowa.org.
- Miranda Haes: Miranda is the new Northeast Iowa Basin Coordinator with the Iowa DNR. She has officially taken the position, which was recently being filled by Josh Balk.
- **Next Meeting Date:** TBD

Meeting Adjourned at 2:27: Motion made by Orlan Love, Second by Don Shonka. Motion Passed.