

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by WMA Chairman, John Kurtz at 1:35 pm.

Motion to approve the agenda was made by, Don Shonka and seconded by Steve Smolik. Motion Passed.

Board Members present: Steve Smolik, *Mitchell County Supervisor*, Don Shonka, *Buchanan County Supervisor*, John Kurtz, *City of Independence*, Chris Eibey, *Delaware SWCD*, Ross Evelsizer, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*, Tori Nimrod, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*, Kristina McBurney, *District Representative for Ashley Hinson*, Dan Cohen, *Buchanan County Conservation*, Brian Keierleber, *Buchanan County Engineer*, Orlan Love, *City of Quasqueton*, David Lehman, *Bremer County Conservation*, Ben Bonar, *Buchanan County Conservation*, Luke Monat, *Shive-Hattery Engineering*, Dan Kirby, *IDNR Fisheries*, Ron Lenth, *Bremer SWCD*, Randy Leach, *City of Fredericksburg*, Kate Giannini, *Univ. of Iowa Flood Center*, Helen Leavenworth, *Linn SWCD*, Matt Kuhn, *Chickasaw County*.

Motion to approve the Minutes from September 13th, 2022 Meeting was made by David Lehman and seconded by Steve Smolik. Motion Passed.

New Business

- Watershed Coordinator Update – Ross and Tori

Grant opportunities

Watershed Coordinators provided an update on projects happening in the watershed. Northeast Iowa RC&D was recently awarded an Iowa DNR Creek signage grant in the amount of \$10,000 to install creek signs in Chickasaw County. Creek signs will be installed on bridges in 7 different locations in the Upper Wapsipinicon River Watershed. Other counties in the Upper Wapsi Watershed also awarded include; Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan and Delaware.

Project coordinators worked with the City of Fredericksburg to develop a wetland project. Preliminary designs were developed, but project is on hold until a funding source is available, and until a neighboring landowner sells additional land to the City. The landowner is in the process of selling of portions of his property to the city for development, but is not able to sell the entire thing in one year. The Urban WQI Grant program is a fit for this project, but the City was not ready to this funding cycle. The project will be re-visited next year. The Urban WQI funding opportunity requires 50% match. Historically, WQI grants have been a maximum of \$100,000 grant award, but this year that amount has increased due to extra funds received by IDALS. This grant focuses on water quality improvement eligible practices include rain gardens, wetlands, permeable pavement, native plantings, and other water quality improvement practices. Although practices need to prioritize water quality improvement, flood reduction benefits can also be included.

Project Coordinators worked with Amy Bouska, IDALS Urban conservationist, the City of Independence, and Buchanan County to investigate project locations in Malone Creek watershed, and within the City of Independence. Over 10 locations were identified for potential urban conservation practices such as wetlands, rain gardens, permeable pavers, and native plantings. The City of Independence worked with RC&D and Fehr Graham engineering to develop an Urban WQI Pre-application for a "Riverside Park Water Quality Improvement Project." The project includes adding a permeable paver boat parking area, native landscaping around the River Side Park disc golf course, and multiple bio-retention cells to collect street runoff. Although not funded through the WQI grant, the city is also proposing to improve the boat ramp and dock system as well. The City should be notified after the first of the year whether or not they are invited to submit a full application.

Project coordinators will continue to work with Fredericksburg, the City of Independence, and Buchanan County on project development. Other folks that have project ideas can contact Ross or Tori. It is very beneficial to have a project plan in place to be ready for funding sources that come up.

Water Sampling in the Upper Wapsipinicon River Watershed is complete for the 2022 season. Samples were collected at 21 sites on the 1st and 3rd Mondays during the months of May and June. Then the 3rd Monday in July, August, September, and October. Samples are collected by volunteers throughout the watershed and sent to Coe College for analysis. Once data is received from Coe, Project coordinators will summarize the water quality data on the Upper Wapsi Website (www.upperwapsi.org) and develop a summary to present at a future WMA meeting

Project coordinators reminded board members that they are going to send out donation request letters out to member entities for Fiscal Year 2024. Understanding that Counties are planning budgets for the next fiscal year. Members who would like to be invoiced must request one from the Project Coordinators.

- **Partner Updates:**

- Kate Giannini, Iowa Flood Center, recently presented at a Watershed Planning Advisory Council (WPAC) meeting about funding needs of WMA's to continue their watershed resiliency efforts. The meeting went very well. There is a group of project coordinators and partners in the State that continue to meet and discuss messaging to legislators. Ross and Tori are a part of those meetings.
- Dan Cohen, Buchanan County Conservation Board, updated attendees on the IDNR signage grant that was awarded to multiple counties in the Upper Wapsipinicon River Watershed. Watch for stream and watershed name signs to be installed this spring throughout several counties.
- Kristina McBurney, District Representative for Representative Ashley Hinson introduced herself to the board and asked them to reach out with any questions or comments they have. They are going to begin working on the new farm bill, so anything the board feels should be a part of the bill can be discussed. Her contact information is below.

Kristina McBurney

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- **Next Meeting Date:** Tori, will send out potential meeting dates for beginning of March.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:21: Motion made by Orlan Love, Second by David Lehman. Motion Passed.