

Minutes

The meeting called to order by WMA Chairman, John Kurtz at 1:32 pm.

Motion to approve the agenda. Motion made by Steve Geerts and seconded by Trevyn Cunningham.
Motion Passed

Attendees: John Kurtz, *Buchanan County Supervisor*, Tori Nimrod & Ross Evelsizer, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*; Ron Lenth, *Bremer SWCD*, Trevyn Cunningham, *Central City*; Steve Geerts, *City of New Hampton*; Dave Nuss, *City of Sumner*; Michael O’Laughlin, *City of Independence*; Cara Matteson, *Linn county*; Randy Leach, *City of Fredericksburg*; Orlan Love, *City of Quasqueton*; David Lehman, *Bremer County*; Michael Miller, *Black Hawk County SWCD*; Mark Bohner, *City of Tripoli*; Dennis Goemaat, *Linn County*; Karmin McShane, *Linn county SWCD* ; Rick Wulfkuhle, *Buchanan County EM*; Chris Eibey, *Delaware County SWCD*.

Motion to approve the Minutes from May 1st, 2025. Motion made by Mark Bohner and seconded by Dennis Goemaat. Motion Passed.

New Business

Election of officers for July 1st, 2024-June 30th, 2025

John and WMA coordinators reminded the board of the new elected officials that were voted for online and are listed below.

Board Chair: John Kurtz, Buchanan County Supervisor

Vice Chair- Orlan Love, City of Quasqueton

Treasurer/Secretary, Steve Breitbach, Chickasaw County

Directors @ Large: Steve Geerts, Ron Lenth, Chris Eibey, Orlan Love

Watershed Coordinator Update:

Grant(s) Update:

WMA Coordinators gave updates on several funding opportunities for Northeast Iowa RC&D, the Wapsi WMA, and WMA member entities.

- 1) Northeast Iowa RC&D received an award for an application to IDALS for their Soil and Water Innovation Grant application for \$50,000 October, 2025. This project aims to evaluate and demonstrate the use of virtual fencing technology as an innovative method to facilitate adaptive grazing of cover crops in Northeast Iowa’s Driftless Region. The objective is to improve soil health, enhance water quality, and expand the adoption of regenerative practices by removing key barriers to managed livestock integration on row crop fields. Ross showed board members in attendance the [Nofence](#) Cattle Collar that will be utilized by farmers as a part of the project.

- 2) Lastly, Northeast Iowa RC&D in partnership with Innovative Ag Services submitted an application to National Fish and Wildlife Foundations Conservation Partnership Program totaling \$500,000. This project would directly work with landowners in the Upper Wapsipinicon River Watershed to provide technical assistance to landowners for conservation adoption. This project proposes a targeted conservation strategy by utilizing the ag retail and cooperative system as a conduit for widespread adoption of regenerative agricultural principles. Through a combination of technical training and peer-to-peer education, the project builds ag retailers' capacity to deliver regenerative agronomic guidance focused on crop management and habitat enhancement. Agronomy staff will be trained in conservation planning and Farm Bill programs (EQIP, CSP), helping at least 100 farmers understand and 50 apply for cost-share programs.

The project facilitates a farmer-led peer network and hosts multiple technical events on conservation equipment and implementation strategies. Conservation outcomes will be tracked using farmer surveys, product sales data, and water quality monitoring at approximately 40 sites. Soil health improvements will be measured using a regional soil health index and field-level evaluations. This initiative directly supports NRCS conservation goals in Iowa, particularly in addressing local capacity gaps, and is aligned with NRCS's MRBI. Ultimately, the project aims to provide a systems-approach to farming in Northeast Iowa by improving soil health, efficiently managing water resources, enhancing wildlife habitat, and creating a scalable model for conservation delivery through ag retail systems.

Coordinators expect to hear about this funding source by the end of the year.

WMA Coordinator Expense Report

As requested by WMA board members watershed coordinator, Tori Nimrod reported on the income and expenses during the time period from October 1, 2024 to September 30th, 2025 (RC&D/Federal Fiscal Year). In summary RC&D has utilized all donations received during the time period and requested for FY26. Funds were used for water sampling analysis, travel, and Coordinator time. See a more detailed breakdown of the report attached with these minutes.

FY27 Request

Watershed Coordinators finished the expense report discussion leading into sending out the donation request for FY27. Cities and other entities are beginning their budgeting season so it is a good time to send out letters requesting a donation to the Upper Wapsi WMA. WMA Board Chair emphasized the work that RC&D does to help keep their WMA alive for such a small amount of money. Other WMAs are paying for a full time person that is significantly higher in cost. The time that the RC&D puts into the WMA is invaluable and is a very efficient use of funds for the member entities. Board Member Mark Bohner also suggested asking area Farm Coops for a donation. Many are starting to see the benefits of our work in providing them business in cover crop seed contracts and other work. Project coordinators will work on sending out a letters by the end of the month.

Partner Updates:

WMA DAY November 12th, 2025

[RSVP at this link by November 5th.](#)

- Location: Indian Creek Nature Center (5300 Otis Rd SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403)
- Time: 10 AM through 2:30 PM

- Agenda: attached
- Lunch: will be provided
- Purpose: Connect with other Iowa WMAs and strategize for the future
- Intended Audience: WMA coordinators, jurisdictions, and community members

Cara Matteson, Linn County shared multiple projects going on in Linn County surrounding groundwater and source water research. In partnership with the US Geologic Survey and University of Iowa Linn County is investigating the groundwater vulnerability of their public wells. They are also testing and measuring the groundwater plume contamination and how it moves through the aquifer. This project is more for educational purposes to understand how the plume moves and how we can improve water usage. Additionally they are continuing to utilize surface water samples to develop a comprehensive data source for the state of Iowa. This work will include sampling from the Upper Wapsi Watershed. Linn County is also investigating the condition and level of their surface water and groundwater sources for the future of Data Centers being built in the county. They are researching the “water balance” and how one of these centers would impact their source water resources. The information from all these projects will help inform a comprehensive water plan for Linn County.

Next Meeting Date: Tori, will send out potential dates for the annual meeting in January, 2026

Meeting Adjourned at 2:20 Motion made by David Lehman and seconded by Orlan Love. Motion Passed.

Upper Wapsi WMA Expense Report:

Report Period: October 1nd, 2024 – September 30th, 2025

Income: \$12,890.00

Profit includes donations received during the reporting period.

Expenses: (\$12,890.00)

Water Sampling Analysis 2024: \$2,952.00

Travel to WMA meetings and for Water Sampling Collection: \$475.00

Staff Time: \$9,463.00

Remaining: \$0

Summary:

Expenses include Analysis work completed by the Dr. Martin St. Clair at the University of Iowa for the 2024 water sampling season. Travel for Northeast Iowa RC&D staff to WMA meetings, and travel to drop off water samples during the sampling season. Remaining expenses includes RC&D Staff time to complete the following tasks:

- 1) Facilitation and development of WMA quarterly meetings which includes recruiting speakers/agenda topics, transcribing meeting minutes and developing agendas.
- 2) Updating the Upper Wapsi WMA website to remain up-to date, and updating water quality data results that are posted on the website each year.
- 3) Water sampling facilitation and time spent organizing materials and transporting samples to drop-off locations every other month.
- 4) Grant application development and project facilitation. This year coordinators helped facilitate meetings with multiple WMA member entities on development of potential projects and grant applications. Project Coordinators also developed and wrote multiple grant applications including an RCPP, NFWF, SSCWQC, and others. See meeting minutes for updates on funding sources.

2025 Gathering of the Iowa Watershed Management Authorities

Indian Creek Nature Center (5300 Otis Rd SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403)

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 – 10 AM to 2:30 PM

Agenda

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Introductions, Updates	
10:15 AM - 11:15 AM	Communicating Water Monitoring Results to the Public <i>Facilitated by Catherine DeLong, Iowa State University</i>	Marty St. Clair, University of Iowa Ginny Malcomson, Polk County Conservation Dan Haug, Prairie Rivers of Iowa Sara Carmichael, Story County Conservation
11:15 AM - 11:45 AM	Ecosystem Services	Cara Morgan, Blazing M EcoStrategies and former Watershed Coordinator
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Lunch, plus Nature Center tour	<i>Sponsored by the Center for Rural Affairs</i>
12:50 PM - 1:30 PM	The CISWRA Project: A Water Quality Report and Call to Action in the Des Moines and Raccoon River Watersheds	Dr. Elliot Anderson, University of Iowa John Swanson, Polk County
1:30 PM - 2:20 PM	Interactive discussion sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How have you engaged your local elected officials?• What priorities have you been focused on?	Group activity
2:20 PM - 2:30 PM	Wrap-up and key takeaways	Cynthia Farmer, Center for Rural Affairs