

To: Cities, Counties, and Soil & Water Conservation Districts in the North Raccoon River Watershed

From: City of Storm Lake, Buena Vista County Board of Supervisors, Pocahontas Soil and Water Conservation District, and Buena Vista Soil and Water Conservation District

Date: August 5, 2016

Subject: Public Notice – North Raccoon River Watershed Management Authority Informational Meeting

BACKGROUND:

Through the National Disaster Resilience Competition, the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) has awarded the State of Iowa \$96.9 million to conduct a program to help Iowa communities and rural areas recover from prior disasters and improve their resiliency to future disasters. The award is the result of collaboration among several state and local agencies to create a program called the Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA). The IWA will accomplish six goals, including reducing flood risk, increasing resilience, engaging stakeholders, improving quality of life and health, improving water quality, and developing a program that can be replicated throughout the Midwest and the nation.

Nine distinct watersheds across Iowa will serve as project sites for the IWA. These are: Bee Branch Creek in Dubuque, Upper Iowa River, Upper Wapsipinicon River, Middle Cedar River, Clear Creek, English River, **North Raccoon River**, West Nishnabotna River, and East Nishnabotna River. Each project will work through a watershed management authority (WMA) to develop a hydrologic assessment and watershed plan to reduce the magnitude of downstream flooding. Since no watershed management authority currently exists for the North Raccoon River, one must be created as part of this grant.

What is a Watershed Management Authority?

In 2010, Iowa lawmakers passed legislation authorizing the creation of Watershed Management Authorities (Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 466B Subchapter II). A Watershed Management Authority (WMA) is a mechanism for cities, counties, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and stakeholders to cooperatively engage in planning and management at the watershed scale. A WMA is being formed for the North Raccoon River Watershed that includes all or part of Buena Vista, Pocahontas, Clay, Palo Alto, Sac, Calhoun, Webster, Carroll, Greene, Boone, Guthrie, Dallas, Polk, Madison, and Warren Counties and the associated cities, towns and SWCDs.

The WMA is formed by a Chapter 28E Agreement by two or more eligible political subdivisions within the watershed. A board of directors governs the WMA, which may undertake the following activities:

- Assess and reduce flood risk;
- Assess and improve water quality;
- Monitor federal flood risk planning and activities;
- Educate residents of the watershed regarding flood risks and water quality;
- Identify projects to reduce flooding and improve water quality; and
- Allocate moneys made available to the Authority for purposes of flood mitigation and water quality

A WMA does not have taxing authority and it may not acquire property through eminent domain.

There are several benefits to forming a WMA. First and foremost, the WMA provides a means for communication and cooperation to support on-the-ground flood damage reduction in both urban and rural areas. Partnering through a WMA allows cities and counties to pool resources and provides leverage for additional funding through state or federal sources. In addition, WMAs work directly through communities, counties and SWCDs to identify priorities and collectively develop an action plan for addressing watershed concerns.

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE: A public meeting has been set for **September 8th @9AM at the Lake City Community Building** to discuss the formation of a Watershed Management Authority (WMA) for the North Raccoon River Watershed. Cities, Counties, SWCDs and all other interested parties are welcome to attend to learn more about participating in this important organization.

MEETING AGENDA: The complete meeting agenda follows, in addition to the full list of invited cities, counties, and SWCDs. Please post the agenda in a public location and share the invitation widely with staff, elected officials, and other interested stakeholders.

**North Raccoon River Watershed Management Authority
Organizational Meeting**

**Thursday, September 8, 2016 • 9:00 AM
Lake City Community Building (118 E Washington St. Lake City, Iowa)**

MEETING AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Brief overview of the Iowa Watershed Approach
3. What is a Watershed Management Authority (WMA)?
 - a. Overview of WMAs in Iowa
4. North Raccoon River WMA
 - a. Map of watershed area
 - b. Benefits of WMA formation
 - c. Organizational documents
 - i. Chapter 28E agreement
 - ii. By-laws
 - d. Organizational sub-committee: *Volunteers requested to assist with drafting / reviewing 28E agreement and by-laws*
 - e. Timeline for organizing the North Raccoon River WMA
5. Other Business / Discussion
6. Next Steps & Meeting Summary
7. Adjournment