

North Raccoon River Watershed Management Coalition

2018 Third Quarter meeting | August 24, 2018

Stewart Memorial Community Hospital, Conference Center

1301 W Main Street, Lake City, Ia 51449

The quarterly meeting of the NRRWMC was called to order at 10 am by chair Mark Hanson. Roll call was completed with 26 voting members physically present and 4 via teleconference to begin the meeting which is above the 19 needed for quorum. First item was to add the city of Adel and Palo Alto county as voting members to the 28E agreement which was motioned by the chair and approved unanimously. Minutes from the second quarter meeting were unanimously approved.

Keri Navratil, chair of the planning committee and city manager for Storm Lake, thanked the members of planning committee and executive committee for their extra time in the last three months reviewing and interviewing proposals for the RFP and RFQ. Planning committee members include Keri Navratil, Jim Frederick, Alex Leu, Mike Beeler, Mark Hanson, Katie Rock, Jack Butler, Clarence Siepker and Dale Arends.

RFP – Proposals were due June 11th and six proposals were received. After review by the planning committee, the top three firms were interviewed on July 20th in Storm Lake: EOR /RDG/WHKS/EcoSource, Snyder/Houston, Stantec/LT Leon. The committee has selected EOR to hire for crafting the watershed management plan. \$200K is earmarked for planning services in the HUD grant for this contract.

RFQ – proposals for general engineering services were due July 20 – Proposals were reviewed and scored by the planning committee and the top 2 firms were interviewed on August 8th. The committee is recommending WHKS which is partnering with EOR for engineering services at the headwaters of the North Raccoon River. Over \$2 million is available through the HUD grant for on-ground practices.

Keri moved and Mike Beeler, Dallas Co. SWCD seconded motion to approve the aforementioned firms for hire.

Pat Conrad of EOR was present and the chair opened the floor for his comments. Pat provided a handout of the early phase of their Stakeholder Engagement Plan. A project kickoff meeting will be planned for September. Pat encouraged the board to participate and emphasized, “This is your plan.”

Next meeting is October 26th and will coincide with a Project Kickoff with stakeholders to be facilitated by EOR/RDG/WHKS/EcoSource.

Update from Ashley Johannes, Iowa Flood Center – note by chair that hydrology assessment is complete and Dan Gilles will present at our next meeting with its results. Ashley Johannes presented on the Flood Resilience Program, a new effort within the Iowa Watershed Approach. Flood resilience is the ability of a community within a watershed to plan and act collectively using local capacities to mitigate, prepare for,

respond to, and recover from a flood. This program has a special focus on community building, especially vulnerable low-income populations, and including flood resilience in watershed planning. IFC has new tools online for towns to estimate flood damage (<http://iwa.iowawis.org/>). Flood damage maps can be overlaid with social vulnerability maps to identify key regions for community-level flood resilience with this tool.

Update from Julie Kearney, Univ. of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment - Julie has a new survey to assess the boards views on the Flood Resilience and Social Vulnerability presentation just given. Julie's work centers on assessing how well the NRRWMC board engages as a coalition.

Update from Jeff Geerts, IEDA – after today's meeting all 8 WMAs with Iowa Watershed Approach now have engineering firms hired. Three of the eight also have landowners and on-farm practice locations started. Middle Cedar is leading the way and will be the first to have a bid packet for an engineering project. (It was mentioned earlier EOR is also the firm working in the Middle Cedar.) IEDA is expecting an audit in middle September which will include a visit to Buena Vista county.

Update from Marius Agua, Project Coordinator for North Raccoon River – since our last meeting in June, Marius has been working with IDNR and ISU Extension and conducting site and field visits focusing on specific HUC-12s at the headwaters of NRR. These sites include potential wetland restoration and management at Swan Lake; water and sediment detention, Pickeral Lake and Prairie Creek; oxbow restoration in Outlet Creek.

A proposal has been made to provide cost share at 90%, a rise from current 75% cost share. This is due to a lack of response from landowners seen in other watersheds across the state at 75% cost share. Reminder that other cost share programs are set at 75% cost-share so this would give our funding pool a competitive advantage. HUD funding must be spent by September 2021 and terms of the grant dictate the regions where the money must be spent. IFC knows from research that to make a measurable impact in a HUC-12 takes a minimum of \$1-1.5 million, so to add more HUC-12 regions is discouraged.

The current farm economy adds a lot of uncertainty for landowners. Marius stressed that we have tools to answer technical questions, but could use more time and attention for the social questions. "One watershed, one community, driven by a common vision, sharing responsibility, designing our destiny."

Update from Alan Wedemeyer, LT Leon – LT Leon has some funding available with RCPP funds for landowner education and outreach that covers the entire NRR watershed. Alan has an office in Lake City and has been working with farmers and landowners to create farm-level conservation plans.

Public Comments – good discussion on engaging farmers and especially absentee landowners in the watershed.

Melissa Miler, Iowa Water Center – working with Storm Lake High School for project based learning on the watershed. <https://www.thewatershedprojectiowa.org/>

Meeting adjourned by chair at 11:57 am.