

Iowa Watershed Approach and Iowa's Watershed Management Authorities

Association of State Wetland Managers Webinar

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Overview

- Watershed Management Authorities 101
- History & Current Status of WMAs
- Key WMA Attributes & Characteristics



Source: Indian Creek WMA

What is a WMA?

- Formal agreement among two or more political subdivisions
 - Cities, Counties, SWCDs
- Authorizing legislation enacted in 2010
 - HF 2459
 - Added provisions for WMA formation to the Surface Water Protection & Flood Mitigation Act
- Response to catastrophic Flood of 2008



Cedar Rapids, June 12, 2008

What is a WMA?

- Authority = Intergovernmental cooperation = Coalition
- Activities include:
 - Watershed planning & management activities
 - Education
 - Grant writing & administration
- Form within a HUC-8 Watershed



Source: Dennis Carney

WMA Activities

- Iowa Code Chapter 466B Subch. II
- WMAs may:
 - Assess flood risk
 - Assess water quality
 - Assess options for reducing flood risk and improving water quality
 - Monitor federal flood risk planning and activities
 - Educate residents of the watershed regarding water quality and flood risks
- WMAs SHALL NOT acquire property by eminent domain
- WMAs Do NOT have taxing authority
- WMAs are unique: no 2 are alike!



Source: English River WMA

How to Form a WMA

- ✓ Organize within one single 8-digit HUC watershed
- ✓ Notify **all** eligible entities with invitation to participate
- ✓ Create a Chapter 28E agreement, including a map
- ✓ Establish the Board of Directors & elect officers
- ✓ Adopt by-laws



WMA History

2012

- Federal Disaster Declaration funds from 2008 floods were allocated toward WMA planning and formation, enabling the first 6 WMAs to form

2013

- The first round of watershed planning grant funds were awarded through IDNR
- 3 new WMAs established

2014

- DNR awards 2nd round of planning grants
- 2 new WMAs established

2015

- 3rd round DNR planning grant
- 3 new WMAs established

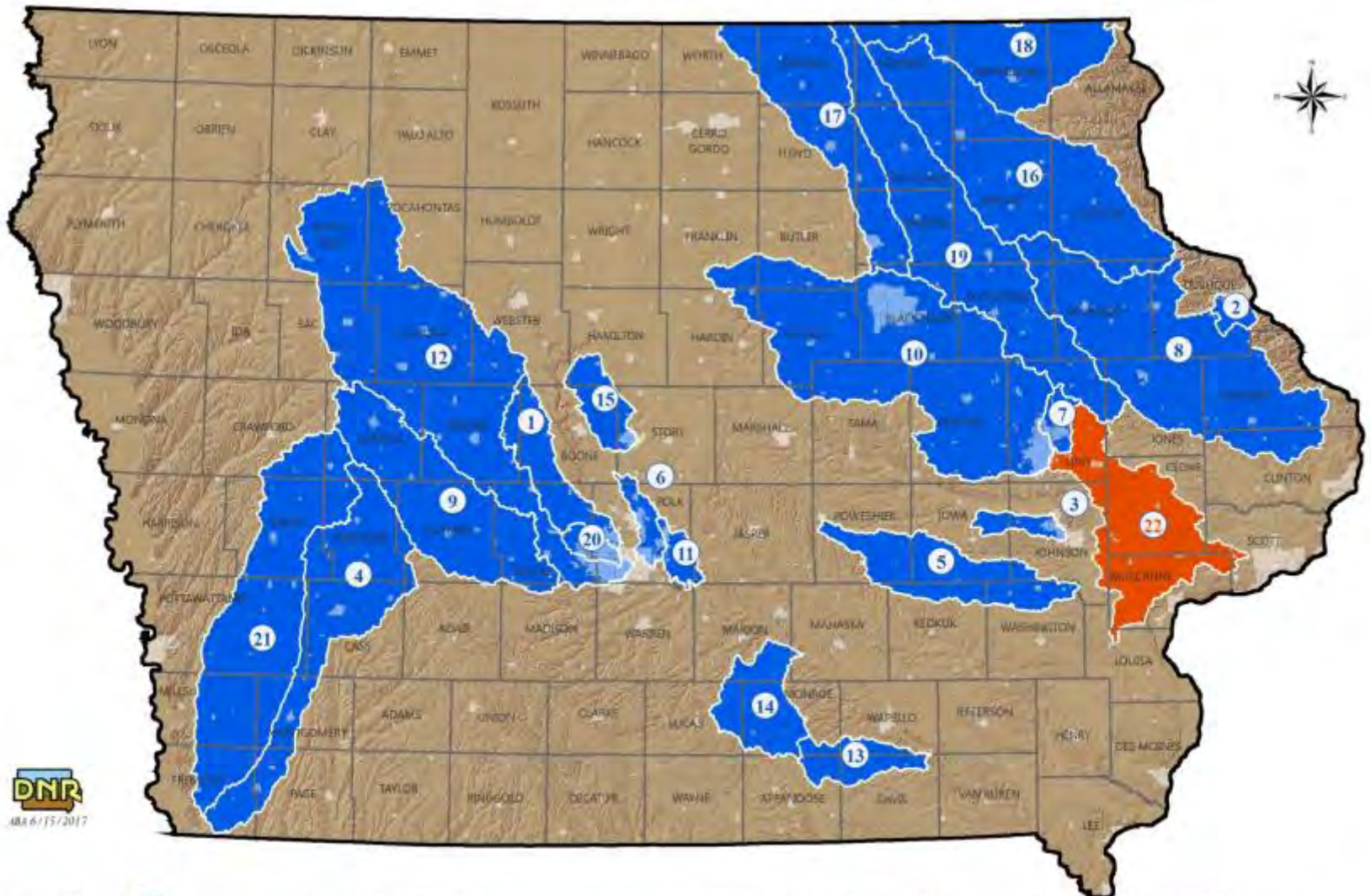
2016

- State of Iowa receives nearly \$100 million to support watershed-based resilience activities
- 3 new WMAs established

2017

- 5 new WMAs form, for a total of 21; one more WMA in progress
- 8 WMAs receive millions of dollars in planning, coordination, and implementation

Status of Iowa's Watershed Management Authorities



IBA 6/15/2017

Active WMAs

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1. Beaver Creek WMA | 6. Fourmile Creek WMA | 12. North Raccoon River Watershed Management Coalition | 18. Upper Iowa WMA |
| 2. Catfish Creek WMA | 7. Indian Creek WMA | 13. Soap Creek Watershed Board | 19. Upper Wapsipicon River WMA |
| 3. Clear Creek Watershed Coalition | 8. Maquoketa River WMA | 14. South Central Iowa Cedar Creek WMA | 20. Walnut Creek WMA |
| 4. East Nishnabotna Watershed Coalition | 9. Middle-South Raccoon WMA | 15. Squaw Creek WMA | 21. West Nishnabotna Watershed Coalition |
| 5. English River WMA | 10. Middle Cedar WMA | 16. Turkey River WMA | |
| | 11. Mud Creek, Spring Creek & Camp Creek WMA | 17. Upper Cedar River WMA | |
| | | | Developing WMA |
| | | | 22. Lower Cedar |

Iowa Watershed Approach – Project Areas



WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

[ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION](#) > [WATER QUALITY](#) > [WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES](#)

[Air Quality](#)

[Land Quality](#)

[Water Quality](#)

> [Drinking Water Compliance](#)

> [Certification](#)

> [Iowa Water Plan](#)

> [Private Well Program](#)

> [Lake Restoration](#)

> [River Restoration](#)

> [Water Supply Engineering](#)

> [Source Water Protection](#)

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> [Watershed Management Authorities](#)

> [Iowa WMAs](#)

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Watershed Management Authorities in Iowa



In 2010, Iowa lawmakers passed legislation authorizing the creation of Watershed Management Authorities. A Watershed Management Authority (WMA) is a mechanism for cities, counties, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and stakeholders to cooperatively engage in watershed planning and management.

[Map of WMAs in Iowa](#) [PDF](#)

[List of active Iowa WMAs](#)

[The Iowa Watershed Approach](#) - More information on Iowa's newest WMAs, winners of US Department of Housing and Urban Development's National Disaster Resilience Competition.

The WMA is formed by a Chapter 28E Agreement by two or more eligible political subdivisions within a specific eight-digit hydrologic unit code 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; and
- Allocate moneys made available to the Authority for purposes of water quality and flood mitigation.

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

Requirements of a WMA:

(per Iowa Code Chapter 466B.2)

- Must be located within an 8-digit HUC watershed
- All political subdivisions (cities, Counties, SWCDs) must be notified and provided the opportunity to participate within 30 days prior to WMA organization
- A Chapter 28E agreement that includes a map of the watershed must be filed with the Secretary of State
- The WMA must be governed by a Board of Directors
- WMAs may not acquire land through eminent domain and do not have taxing authority

[Full text of the Iowa code chapter that describes the creation of WMAs](#) [PDF](#)



Iowa Watershed Approach: A Vision for Iowa's Future

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Watersheds

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Middle Cedar

Upper Wapsipinicon

Upper Iowa

North Raccoon »

East Nishnabotna

West Nishnabotna

Dubuque/Bee Branch

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North Raccoon

Description:

The North Raccoon River Watershed Project includes activities in the upper watershed to reduce flooding and improve water quality, as well as infrastructure projects in the city of Storm Lake to protect commercial and residential property from flooding.

The North Raccoon River in Central Iowa is a tributary of the Des Moines River, flowing mainly through the Des Moines Lobe landform, which retains imprints

of glacial occupation, such as abundant moraines and shallow wetland basins. Flat land and poor surface drainage dominate this "prairie pothole" landscape. The North Raccoon River Watershed (NRRW) is heavily tiled; approximately 85% of the land is in row crop production with a corn-soybean rotation. The NRRW landscape is considered the most important and threatened waterfowl habitat in North America, supporting more than 300 migratory bird species.

In addition to watershed activities that will take place in the NRRW, the city of Storm Lake is also receiving funds to help make the community more flood resilient. Projects in Storm Lake will include upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, reconstruction of streets with pervious pavement, and the construction of wetlands.

In 2013, the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy named the NRRW a priority watershed. Many organizations are currently active in the watershed and existing projects will complement the activities of the Iowa Watershed Approach.

Grant Award: \$3,776,575



Are WMAs Effective?

Partnership & Coordination

- WMA Board: Typically one representative from each member
 - One vote per member, regardless of population or proportional area
- Partnerships are crucial to WMA success
 - RC&D
 - Council of Governments
 - Planning Consultants
 - Agency staff
 - Other organizations
 - University
 - Non-profit
 - Business / Agricultural
- Staffing / Coordination: Essential for a functional organization
 - 17 WMAs have staffing at some level
 - 13 have a full-time dedicated WMA coordinator (may be shared or project based)

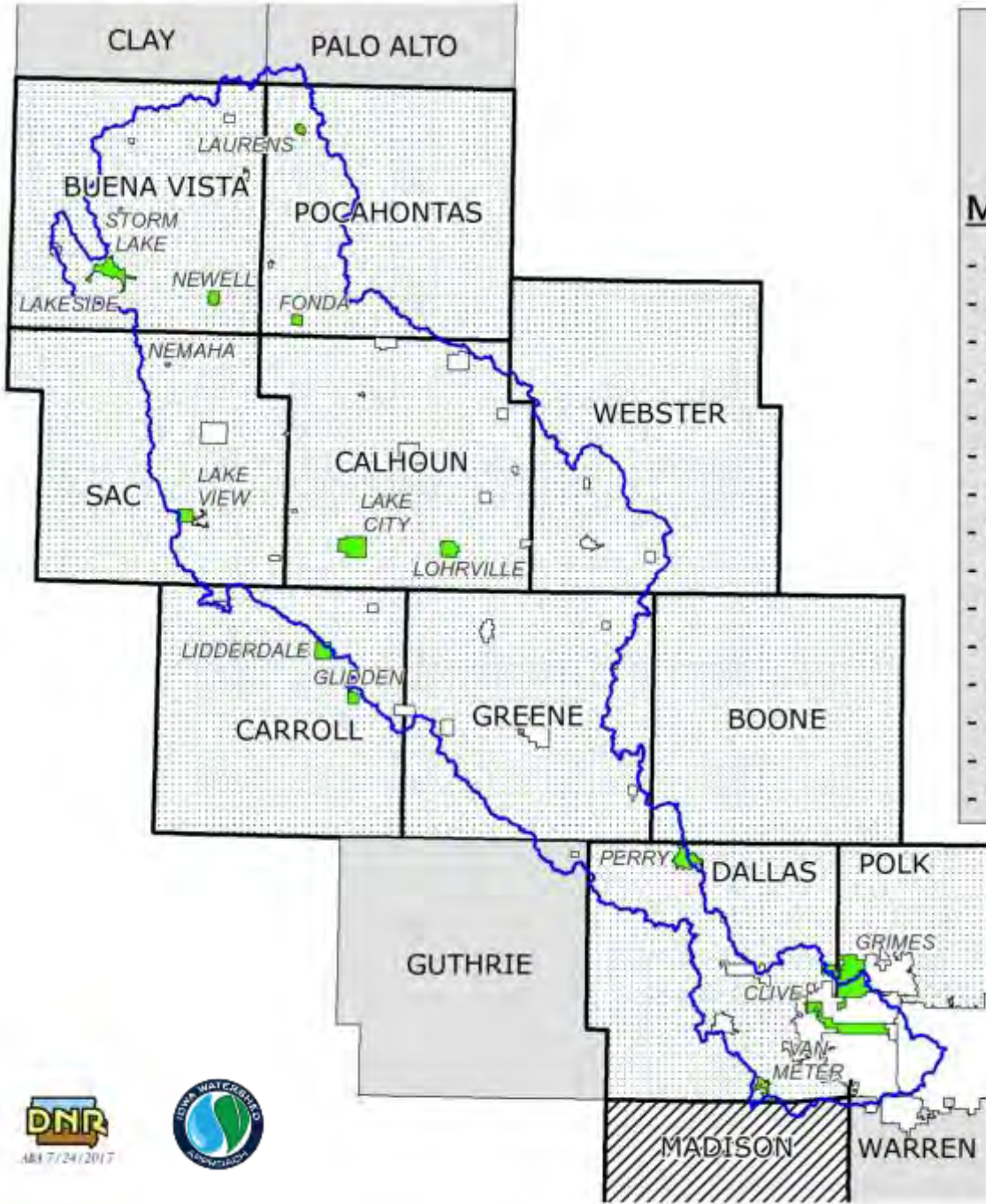


Urban – Rural Alliances

- Cities and rural communities must work together
- Building trust among stakeholders is critical
- Cedar River Watershed:
 - 69% row crop
 - 8% urban
 - Entire length = WMAs



North Raccoon WMA Membership



- | <u>Municipalities</u> | <u>County Governments & SWCDs</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| - Clive | - Boone |
| - Fonda | - Buena Vista |
| - Glidden | - Calhoun |
| - Grimes | - Carroll |
| - Lake City | - Dallas |
| - Lake View | - Greene |
| - Lakeside | - Pocahontas |
| - Laurens | - Polk |
| - Lidderdale | - Sac |
| - Lohrville | - Webster |
| - Nemaha | - Madison (SWCD only) |
| - Newell | |
| - Perry | |
| - Storm Lake | |
| - Van Meter | |

Legend

- North_Raccoon_Watershed
- Municipal Members
- County Members
- County Government & SWCD
- SWCD Only



AM 7/24/2017

Watershed Planning

- Developing a road map for watershed improvement
- 10 WMAs have completed watershed plans
- 7 more are in the process of completing plans
- Benefits of planning
 - Gather community input
 - Conduct assessments
 - Identify critical areas
 - Prioritize projects
 - Determine partner roles & responsibilities
 - Seek funding to implement the plan



Paying the Bills

- Grant Funds
- Local Contributions
- Private Funding:
 - Foundations
 - Non-profits
 - Agribusiness
- 19 / 21 have some level of funding
 - 13 have significant funding (staff + implementation funds for multiple years)
 - **None have LONG-TERM sustainable funding**



WMAs can raise awareness about watershed issues...

Somebody told me it was
frightening how much
topsoil we are losing each
year, but when I told that
story around the campfire,
nobody got scared.

Jack Handey

QuoteAddicts.com

To build urgency and encourage action!

Thank You!



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