

Maquoketa River Watershed Management Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday October 22, 2024, at 6pm
Monticello Renaissance Center at 220 E. 1st Street,
Monticello, Iowa

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order, Welcome** – Don Schwenker called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. with 15 in attendance (6 members, 8 guests). With 34 WMA members, 18 is quorum. There were 4 members of the 7-member Executive Committee participating which met quorum requirements.

6 WMA Members in attendance were: Don Schwenker, Jackson County BoS; Tim Vick, City of Manchester; Russ Farnum, City of Monticello; John Kurtz, Buchanan County Supervisor; Joe Trumm, Jones SWCD; Jon Gallagher, Linn County SWCD

9 WMA Partners & Guests in attendance included: Lynette Seigly, Water monitoring committee; Dave Goedken, Monticello City Council; Dean Zimmerman; Eric Deutmeyer, IAS Coop; Kate Giannini, Iowa Flood Center; Dan Gilles, Iowa Flood Center; Carol Sherman on zoom; Scott Bishop, Limestone Bluffs RC&D; Erin Erickson, Watershed Coordinator.

2. Approve Agenda- Kurtz made the motion to approve. Vick seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.
3. Approve Minutes from March 12, 2024 Meeting – **Kurtz made the motion to approve. Vick seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.**
4. **Financial Report** – Scott Bishop, Limestone Bluffs and Erin Erickson, Maquoketa WMA
 - a. Current Revenue & Expense Statement- Scott Bishop: Balance \$190,513.42

Bishop reviewed the monthly statement and shared the ledger that shows the revenues since July 1 the start of FY25. There is now a separate line item for the Farmer2Farmer Cover Crop Initiative to track expenses and reimbursement from the DNR to then pay farmers the \$30 /acre cost share. Bishop mentioned there is still an outstanding invoice of \$1109.90 to the DNR for the County Sign which he noted has been addressed and the WMA is waiting for the check.
 - b. Erickson shared the member contributions spread sheet received so far in FY25.
 - c. **Vick made the motion to approve the financial report Kurtz seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.**

5. Project Updates- Erin Erickson, Watershed Coord.

- a. Erin shared a few photos with details of projects and recent events.
- Farmer to Farmer Grant- shared twelve applicants to our Cost Share Program for the first year totaling 1059 acres and equaling about \$31,000 in payments to farmers for planting cover crops. Farmers have to meet USDA Historically underserved or women landowner criteria and be located in the watershed. Erickson also shared the Hogan Farm Field Day that was at in Earlville in collaboration with Practical Farmers of Iowa- there were 28 in attendance.
 - Stream Sensor- Erickson shared the link to find the data for the Maquoketa River sensor located by Hurstville and operated by U of Iowa's IIHR Hydro science and Engineering and operation and maintenance paid for by Clif Family Foundation \$15,000 grant. The data is updated every 15 minutes.
 - Past Events-Erickson was awarded the Gazette HER Women of Achievement this summer, she presented at the ISAC Conference in Des Moines and at the WMA day in Ames. For both presentations- she highlighted the self-funding formula that is unique to the MR WMA. She was also a vendor with a booth at Maqtober days, Women & Soil at the Field of Dreams, Manchester River Days, and Rodale Midwest Organic Center's Field Day.
 - Common Ground (a film about regenerative farming) will be shown at the Manchester Castle Theatre and will feature a panel of farmers after. The event is free, and tickets are reservable at <https://bit.ly/WMA-commonground>
 - Delaware County River Trail- a survey will be available in November and shared in our newsletter. Erickson is on the steering committee. The project is managed by ECIA and Delaware County Conservation focusing on the stretch of the Maquoketa from Baily's Ford to the county line.

Vick motioned to receive and file the project update, seconded by Kurtz.

6. Overview: 2024 Maquoketa River Water Monitoring Results - Lynette Seigley

(highlights taken from the presentation)

- 2024 was the sixth year of monitoring
- 45 sites monitored
- Sites monitored 3 times in May, June, and August
- Parameters unchanged during six years of monitoring
- Turbidity tested at DNR Fisheries at Manchester
- Chloride, sulfate, dissolved reactive phosphorus, nitrate-N, and E. coli bacteria tested by Dr. Marty St. Clair – formerly with Coe College, now University of Iowa
- In 2024, 3 of the Maquoketa WMA sites were included as part of a Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination (Univ. of Iowa) survey designed to get a broader idea of what chemicals are present in Iowa's surface waters. Samples were analyzed for **PFAS** (Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances), which are widespread

contaminants in many products and are found at low levels throughout the environment, as well as **pesticides** and **metals**.

- The three sites sampled as part of the CHEEC study were **DU8** (Bear Creek at Westside Park), **LD4** (Maquoketa River at Bailey's Ford Bridge at 240th), and **DE12** (North Fork Maquoketa River at 272nd St. Bridge).
- Results will be shared at a later time.
- Higher **nitrate-N** concentrations occurred in tributaries in the upper portions of both the North Fork and South Fork watersheds with lower concentrations in the lower reaches of both watersheds. In six years of monitoring, nitrate-N concentrations were the highest in 2024 for both Maquoketa WMA sites and streams statewide.
- **Dissolved reactive phosphorus** concentrations for Maquoketa WMA sites were highest in tributaries to the North Fork Maquoketa River. For the first time in 2024, dissolved reactive phosphorus levels for Maquoketa WMA sites were lower than concentrations in streams statewide.
- Elevated **E. coli bacteria** occurred at scattered locations throughout the Maquoketa Watershed. E. coli bacteria levels for sites in the Maquoketa watershed continue to be elevated compared to streams statewide.
- **Turbidity** levels for Maquoketa WMA sites highest during May 2024 sampling and were associated with recent rains in the watershed. Turbidity levels for Maquoketa WMA sites lower than levels in streams statewide.
- Maquoketa WMA **chloride** concentrations in 2024 were higher than previous five years. Statewide concentrations were also higher in 2024.
- **Sulfate** concentrations for the Maquoketa WMA sites were low and showed little variability in concentration. Concentrations for most sites were less than the statewide stream average of 34 mg/L for sulfate.

7. Update from the Iowa Flood Center – Hydrostations and Watershed Modeling – Kate Giannini, Daniel Gilles *IIHR—Hydro science & Engineering | Iowa Flood Center | University of Iowa*

- Kate Giannini presented provided an update on hydrostation expansion across eastern Iowa and locations as follows:
 - Dubuque- Dubuque Airport
 - Delaware – Manchester Airport
 - Jones- Private Landowner near Anamosa
 - Jackson – County Conservation Board, west of Hurstville Interpretive Center
 - All data publicly available on: <https://ifis.iowafloodcenter.org/ifis/>
- Dan Giles-presented the Hydrologic Model results for the Maquoketa watershed
 - This gave various scenarios for land use changes and their impact on water flow were discussed.
 - Scenarios included:
 - Conversion of cropland to native prairie as a baseline

- Broad, long-term utilization of cover crops
- Detention ponds
- Combination – 25% cover crops, 125 detention ponds
- From the models shown, the key take away was the importance of utilizing cover crops. The full report is being drafted.

8. Committee Updates:

- a. Executive Committee – no updates
- b. Technical Committee – no updates
- c. Water Monitoring Committee- see above.

9. New Business Review: New Melleray Abbey \$5000 Watershed Project Ask- Executive Committee Approved to be brought to full board for final approval.

a. Details of project:

- Beaver Dam Analogues (BDA) mimic actual beaver dam
- features by using material found nearby. In this case, John
- and his team used mainly boxelder trees and gathered rocks
- from the creek.
- Benefits:
- Low cost
- Traps fine sediment
- By adding multiple small dams spaced accordingly, the velocity
- of water is reduced during flashy rain events.
- Stores water across floodplain in desired locations
- Expands riparian vegetation growth
- Benefits landowners down stream

Based on the work completed and John estimates it will cost:

\$500 (16-man hours @ \$30/hr) to construct these Beaver Dam Analogues (BDA).

He is looking at 8-12

BDAs in Prairie Creek outside of the mitigation banking area. The total cost is

\$6,000 and the ask is \$5,000

from the MR WMA. If the cost ends up being lower than \$6,000 leftover funds will go

towards willow staking the banks of the creek which will cost an estimated \$3,000 and if still if there is anything left after that, the funds will go towards tree tubes.

Discussion followed by the board members- suggested the forester attend a future meeting to share an update on projects that the \$5000 funded.

Vick made the motion to approve. Kurtz seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11. Public Comments –

- Discussion on potential projects for the watershed, including addressing issues at Backbone State Park Lake and the increased levels of e. Coli and other nutrients affecting the use during the peak recreation season.
- Concerns raised about increased nitrate levels at Manchester fish hatchery

- Suggestion to invite Friends of Backbone group to a future meeting

NEXT MEETING – The next regular meeting of the MR WMA Board of Directors will be held early 2025, Date and time TBD.

12. Adjourn –Vick made the motion to adjourn at 7:28 pm. Kurtz seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

-Respectively submitted by Erin Erickson, MR WMA Watershed Coordinator