

Maquoketa River Watershed Management Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday March 25, 2025
Hillside Sports Bar and Grill
21592 US-151 BUS
Monticello, IA 52310

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order, Welcome** – Don Schwenker called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. with 23 in attendance (6 members, 17 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; John Kurtz, Buchanan County Supervisor; Joe Trumm, Jones SWCD; Mick Michel, City of Dyersville; Shirley Helmricks, Delaware County Bos;

17 WMA Partners & Guests in attendance included: Lynette Seigly, Water monitoring committee; Dean Zimmerman; Marty St. Clair, University of Iowa IIHR/ CHEEC; James Martin, IDALS; Miranda Haes, IDNR; John Haes; Dave Mack, Delaware NRCS ; Zach Timm; Corey Fairley; Nick Manternach; Cary Manternach; Tom and Peggy Norlin, Water Monitors; Pat Kearney, water monitor; Michelle Turner, Limestone Bluffs RC&D ; Scott Bishop, Limestone Bluffs RC&D; Erin Erickson, Watershed Coordinator.

2. **Approve Agenda-** Vick made the motion to approve. Kurtz seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.
3. **Approve Minutes from October 22, 2024, Meeting** – Michel 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 \$165,791.08

Bishop reviewed the monthly statement and mentioned that the RC&D has not billed the WMA quarterly for the entirety of FY25. An invoice was just sent this week for \$7500 to the WMA for the Fiscal Administrative services for a 9-month period. Bishop also reviewed the DNR Cover Crop Grant showing that the WMA paid farmers \$28, 230.30 for applicants in the 2024 program.

- b.** Erickson shared the FY26 Draft budget and pointed out the slight increase in cost for the water monitoring program from \$18 per sample to \$22 per sample.

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

5. Project Updates- Erin Erickson, Watershed Coord.

- a. Erickson shared a slideshow of past events and projects that she has recently presented to entities for budget presentations. The presentation highlighted:
- Farmer to Farmer Grant- shared photos of the flyer, kick off event at the Hogan Farm, table that represents the spread of applicants throughout the watershed and acres covered which totaled almost 1,000 acres. She anticipates more interest for the 2025 applicants.
 - IIHR hydro sensor project and completion of the **Maquoketa River Watershed hydrologic assessment** which depicted what-if scenarios for the watershed.
 - Past Events-Erickson attended the Iowa Flood Center (IFC) Legislative breakfast at the State Capital on 3/11/25 showing support for the partnership between the WMA and IFC.
 - Common Ground film screening in Manchester. 175 farmers and community members in attendance with a panel of 4 farmers that answered questions from the audience afterward.
 - Erickson mentioned seeking resources/ funding ideas to improve conditions of Backbone Lake. After talking to professionals, it was stated that the lake acts as a low head dam instead of a typical lake environment due to the shallow depths and other characteristics.
 - Erickson also mentioned working to upload the last 6 years of water sampling data to the Clean Water Hub which is an Izaak Walton League webpage.
 - *Kutz motioned to receive and file the project update, seconded by Vick*

6. Presentation on CHEEC Water Sampling 2024 Collection Data: – Marty St. Clair, Research Scientists, IIHR- Hydro science and Engineering and Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination. Highlights: Taken from the report text and some summarized from the presentation.
- There were three sites sampled in the Maquoketa Watershed that collected an additional sample to be used in the CHEEC project.

- Samples were collected from the Middle Cedar, Maquoketa, Turkey, Upper Iowa, and Upper Wapsipinicon watersheds. (The Turkey results are coordinated by the Winneshiek and Howard County NRCS offices rather than from the WMA itself.
- The samples were collected at three sites in each watershed for additional analyses for neonicotinoids, PFAS, and metals. These sites were selected by CHEEC staff based on IDNR reported locations of wastewater treatment facilities, industrial wastewater sites, and contaminated sites.
- Neonicotinoids have rapidly become the most widely utilized class of agricultural insecticides in the world. Their primary use in Iowa is as seed treatments for corn and soybeans to protect seeds from early season pests. The compounds have been implicated in the decline in pollinator populations.
- The Maquoketa had the highest levels of Neonics compared to the other watersheds in the study, but the Wapsi and Turkey were close.
- PFAS are long-lasting widely used chemical compounds which may be harmful to human health. Levels were relatively low and the testing was stopped due to low levels in the tributaries of the Mississippi River where the levels are higher.
- Metals in surface waters can originate from both natural and human sources. Dissolution of minerals is likely the dominant source in eastern Iowa watersheds, though point and non-point sources may contribute to the total. Disposal of municipal biosolids on agricultural lands have raised some concerns about the possibility of contaminating soils with metals from the waste.
- The results obtained from samples in this study were generally within expected ranges for Midwestern streams. Total phosphorus is notably higher for the Maquoketa which is consistent with dissolved phosphorus measurements.
- Eastern Iowa rivers are heavily influenced by agricultural practices within their watersheds. This is particularly apparent in the levels of nitrate and neonicotinoids which are ubiquitous in samples throughout the area. The relatively low levels of PFAS found may be in part due to dilution from the high flow rates observed in rivers during the period of sampling; future sampling and analyses will determine if this is the case.
- CHEEC plans to continue this sampling and analysis campaign in 2025 – resampling some of the same sites while adding some different sampling locations. This exploratory work is consistent with CHEEC’s mission to “to determine the levels of environmental contamination which can be specifically associated with human health effects.”

7. **Committee Updates:**

- a. **Executive Committee** – Chair Don Schwenker- mentioned working with LB RC&D as our fiscal agent and introduced Michelle Turner as the new Executive Director.
- b. **Water Monitoring** Committee- Honored the Committee at a ceremony before the meeting. Approve the increase to the testing cost of the water samples from the University of Iowa from \$18 to \$22 each totaling \$2970 for the 45 locations sampled 3 times a season.
Kurtz made the motion to approve. Vick seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

i. ***New Business:***

- a. The board approved Limestone Bluffs and WMA FY26-28 Contract which covers the fiscal agent responsibilities between the MR WMA and the LB RC&D for 3 years. The contract was reviewed by the Executive Committee and the Limestone Bluffs Board before moving to full board approval.
Michel made the motion to approve. Kurtz seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.
- b. The Board approved the FY26 Contract between the WMA Coordinator and the MR WMA. Which gave the coordinator a 5% increase in pay for the year.
Michel made the motion to approve. Kurtz seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

8. **Public Comments –**

It was suggested to seek other options for the MR WMA bank account that would earn higher interest or put some of the funds in a CD for a time. The Board Chair addressed the comment and mentioned that the Executive committee will investigate it.

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

Adjourn –Kurtz made the motion to adjourn Vick seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

-Respectively submitted by Erin Erickson, MR WMA Watershed Coordinator