Watershed Management Authorities

What is a WMA?

- 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. (IDNR)
- Legislation enacted in 2010.
- Chapter 466 of *Code of Iowa.*

Requirements of a Watershed Management Authority

- 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

(per Iowa Code Chapter 466B.2)

How WMAs are formed?

- 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.

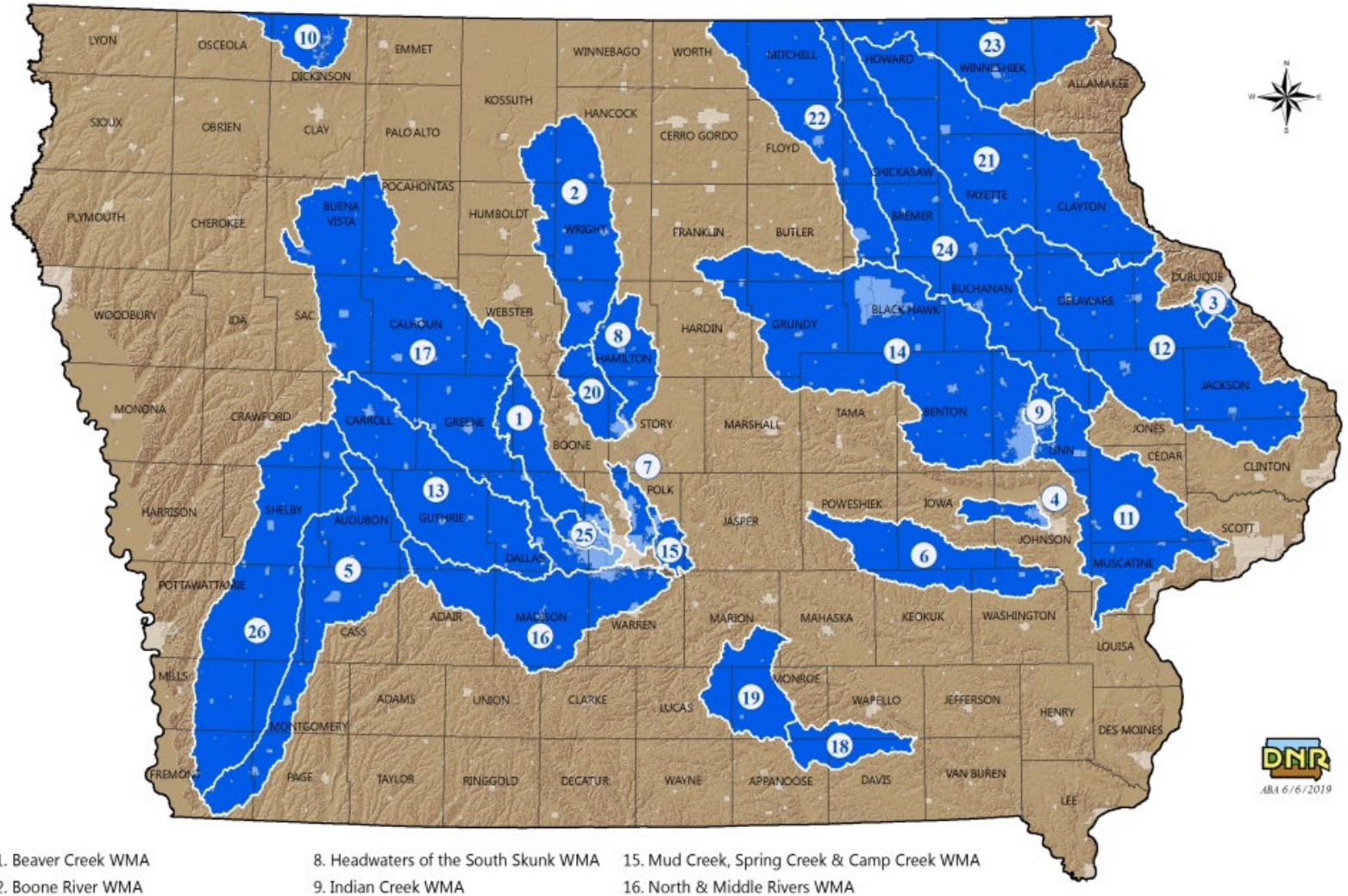
A WMA does *not* have taxing authority and it may not acquire property through eminent domain.

Benefits of forming a WMA

- WMAs have been formed across Iowa for a variety of reasons. While the driving motivation for WMA formation may be water quality improvement and/or flood risk reduction, there are multiple benefits to cooperating with other jurisdictions within a watershed:
- Conduct planning on a watershed scale, which has greater benefits for water quality improvement and flood risk reduction
- Foster multi-jurisdictional partnership and cooperation
- Leveraging resources such as funding, technical expertise
- Facilitate stakeholder involvement in watershed management

Current WMAs in Iowa

Iowa's Watershed Management Authorities



1. Beaver Creek WMA
2. Boone River WMA
3. Catfish Creek WMA
4. Clear Creek Watershed Coalition
5. East Nishnabotna Watershed Coalition
6. English River WMA
7. Fourmile Creek WMA
8. Headwaters of the South Skunk WMA
9. Indian Creek WMA
10. Little Sioux Headwaters Coalition
11. Lower Cedar WMA
12. Maquoketa River WMA
13. Middle-South Raccoon WMA
14. Middle Cedar WMA
15. Mud Creek, Spring Creek & Camp Creek WMA
16. North & Middle Rivers WMA
17. North Raccoon River Watershed Management Coalition
18. Soap Creek Watershed Board
19. South Central Iowa Cedar Creek WMA
20. Squaw Creek WMA
21. Turkey River WMA
22. Upper Cedar River WMA
23. Upper Iowa River WMA
24. Upper Wapsipinicon River WMA
25. Walnut Creek WMA
26. West Nishnabotna Watershed Coalition

WMAs of Iowa

WMAs of Iowa was created to enable WMA-to-WMA exchanges and be an information resource for the latest news and research, funding opportunities, and curriculum in watershed restoration. WMAs of Iowa seeks to:

- Unite WMAs for further advancement in the state
- Share resources, ideas, and best practices
- Provide support to members through technical assistance and celebrating successes
- Build and support ongoing public-private partnerships for success

As of January 2019, WMAs of Iowa has filed Articles of Incorporation with the State of Iowa is working toward filing for nonprofit status with the IRS with the assistance of the Drake Legal Clinic.