

Headwaters of the South Skunk River, Watershed Management Authority

July 24, 2024, 10:00 AM

City of Ames Water Treatment Plant – 1800 E 13th St, Ames, IA

Also available via Zoom

Attendees:

Voting Members - Linda Murken (Story County), Dalton Johnston (City of Roland), Linda Wild (City of Randall), Alisha Bower (Story County SWCD), and Brian Lammers (Hamilton County).

Non-voting – Sara Carmichael (Story County Conservation), Laura Johnston (Story County Environmental Health), Kurtis Bower (City of Roland), Dustin Albrecht (City of Ames), Cynthia Farmer (Center for Rural Affairs), and Dan Haug (Prairie Rivers of Iowa).

1. Meeting is available for public viewing via Zoom.
2. **Call To Order** – by Murken at 10:02 AM (quorum achieved after Roll Call at 10:10 AM)
3. **Roll Call** – Introductions of all in attendance
4. **Approval Of Agenda** – N/A due to quorum. Moved forward with the presentation from Prairie Rivers.
5. **Other Reports** –
Dan Haug with Prairie Rivers of Iowa presented on the four lessons learned from the past four years related to the 10-year Story County Water Monitoring Plan. Lessons include: Water quality is highly dependent on the weather, Tracking progress requires accounting for weather, Impaired waters list is the tip of a very dirty iceberg, and wastewater treatment plants don't treat everything. After the presentation an hour-long discussion about the plan, monitoring results, and what the group can do ensued. The focus was on E. coli and nitrates. K. Bower suggested focusing on local policy/legislators and bringing this information to them. He also asked about the Chicoine oxbows (from previous meetings) to see if that water was going to be monitored. There is no plan to test water quality on his property due to the large watershed and the other conservation practices located upstream.

A. Bower wondered how to address the source of E. coli which the presentation showed that the main source is wastewater treatment and not septic tanks or CAFOs. How can we help smaller towns (Ellsworth, Jewell, Blairsburg, Kamrar) get treatment? D. Johnston will ask DNR to see what funding is available. Also discussed was, testing soil/manure for nitrates before applying fertilizer. Generally, one solution to help decrease nitrates is to cover crops with soil testing.

Discussion on holding a field day in the watershed. Story County SWCD is planning an edge-of-field field day for this fiscal year. The focus will be on a joint cover crop field day with Hamilton SWCD next fiscal year. Wild will reach out to Hamilton County SWCD and others to gauge their interest. D. Johnston asked about the timing of discharging from small wastewater treatment. The group believes this can be found in the permits.
6. **Approval Of Minutes** – April 24, 2024 – MOTION by A. Bower, SECOND by Lammers. MCU.
7. **Updates & Old Business**
- 7I. **Review and Provide Updates to the Planning Document** – Murken will update the document and bring it to the next meeting to discuss. Wild updated the group on the OLLI presentation that Carmichael will be doing in October. Registration for OLLI classes/presentations starts in August.
- 7II. **Headwaters WMA Brochure Update** – Carmichael gave an update on the brochure. A new email address for Headwaters WMA has been created and all emails will be sent to Murken and Carmichael. Carmichael will bring copies to the next meeting.

8. Member Updates

8I. Report on 7/18/24 loway Creek WMA Meeting – Murken talked about the last loway Creek WMA meeting. They are interested in having a joint meeting with Headwaters. loway board members will reach out to cities/SWCDs that are part of the group but haven't been as active.

8II. 2024 WMA Gathering Tentative Agenda – Carmichael and Farmer discussed the plan for the state-wide meeting in August. All board members within the WMA are welcome to attend. Others can join as well but it is mainly focused on board members.

Other updates: Carmichael and Albrecht discussed year 2 edge of field practices. Looking for bidders for construction. Years 3 and 4 are moving forward with design and should be completed within a year or two.

9. Public Comments

10. Next Meeting – Headwaters and loway WMA joint meeting on October 2, 2024, from 10-noon. Murken will decide on location and there will be a zoom option.

12. Adjournment – at 11:54 AM. MOTION by A. Bower, SECOND by Lammers.