

**Joint Meeting of the
Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority
and
Ioway Creek Watershed Management Authority
September 15, 2025 - 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Stanhope Community Center - Stanhope, IA
Also available via Zoom**

Attendees: *= Both Headwaters and Ioway WMA Member

Voting Members for Headwaters – *Dustin Albrecht (City of Ames), *Brian Lammers (Hamilton County), *Cindy McCollough (Hamilton County SWCD), *Linda Murken (Story County), Mark Tjelmeland (Story County SWCD), and Linda Wild (City of Randall). = 6 (Quorum met)

Voting Members for Ioway – *Dustin Albrecht (City of Ames), Austin Hayek (Webster County)-Zoom, *Brian Lammers (Hamilton County), *Cindy McCollough (Hamilton County SWCD), *Linda Murken (Story County), Seldon Spencer (Story County SWCD), and Chelsie Wilson (Boone County). = 7 (Quorum met)

Technical Team Members – Sara Carmichael (Story County Conservation), Cynthia Farmer (Center for Rural Affairs), Laura Johnston-Zoom (Story County Environmental Health), Dan Haug (Prairie Rivers of Iowa), Steve Konrady (Iowa DNR).

Other – Sam Ose (Hamilton County SWCD)

1. Meeting is available for public viewing via Zoom. [Link](#), Passcode: 6.n7N.zt
2. **Call To Order** – by Murken at 10:05 AM. Dustin Albrecht arrived 10:09 AM.
3. **Roll Call/Introductions/Members Update** – Introductions. Roll Call for Headwaters and Ioway.
4. **Approval Of Agenda**
 - 4.I. Headwaters Agenda – Roll Call Vote
 - 4.II. Ioway Agenda – Roll Call Vote
5. **Approval Of Prior Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2025**
 - 5.I. Headwaters Minutes – Roll Call Vote
 - 5.II. Ioway Minutes – Roll Call Vote
6. **Water Monitoring Report – Dan Haug, Prairie Rivers Of Iowa**

Water Monitoring Update for WMA Presentation Link
<https://www.storycountyiowa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17037/Water-Monitoring-Update-For-WMA-Dan-Haug>. This will help with progress tracking and goal setting for the future of WMAs. Another website to review the Water Monitoring in Story County is <https://www.prrcd.org/story-county-water-monitoring/> and here is a one page document showing the highlights <https://www.storycountyiowa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17066/Water-Quality-Monitoring-Highlights-2024>.

Prairie Rivers of Iowa is doing two main things for water monitoring including a volunteer program (44 sites, 50+ volunteers) and a lab testing program (15 sites). This data is going into the Izaak Walton League, Clean Water Hub (<https://www.cleanwaterhub.org/>) platform. It shows what the problems are, and it uses a color-coded system (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, No Threshold). High level of nitrates and low dissolved oxygen are the biggest issues. While there wasn't much of chloride (road salt, wastewater treatment, water softeners) affecting aquatic life.

Analysis was done a lot last year showing where and when different pollutants were coming from. This year has been interesting on levels of nitrate. In May, we saw the highest nitrate levels at most of the sites over the past 5 years. But when looking at the nitrate data pulled on the South Skunk River over the past 20 years, it looks like it's in a long-term cyclical pattern where it's not outside the norm to have higher nitrate levels. This presentation also shows other graphs

showing nitrate levels between cover crops and no cover crops, fertilizer rates, and estimate costs.

Discussion included the following: side dressing vs fall/spring application for fertilizer, percentage nitrogen lost, cost, water testing (funding is offered), yield amounts, corn on corn vs rotation, water pollutants and rise of cancer rates, water quality (recreation-beaches vs agricultural), Des Moines Water Works (high nitrogen this summer – less water use), and Practical Farmers of Iowa – insurance program. Nitrogen misconceptions and with the public interest high, there is opportunity for Dan Haug to educate on the nitrogen cycle.

7. **Cover Crop Field Day Debrief**

This was worthwhile event with a good turnout of over 75 with a couple people asking about the edge-a-field program. Alex Woodall (owner of farm location and presenter) did a fantastic job. Iowa Learning Farm is still waiting for the results from the survey, and we want to request drone footage.

8. **What Next? Please Review As You Have Time:**

Where do we go from here? What can we influence and what can we do to make a difference? WMA members request for Haug to summarize his report as a one-page pdf to get information out – a watershed advocacy summary. This way you can link it to different websites or distribute it to newspapers (editorial), Farm Bureau, newsletters (SWCD), and social media. The summary should show three things 1) Cover crops 2) Edge-a-field 3) How to apply and when. Then have a review committee from a “Farmers” perspective and have it ready by the next meeting.

Discussion included the following: beaches, edge-a-field practices, nitrogen cycle, drainage tile, drainage recycling/retention pond, slope, water/aquifers, data centers, cover crops (hassle, wrong time of year, logistics, cost highboy vs drone, long term value), funding, and pilot programs.

9. **Legislative Update – Cynthia Farmer, Center For Rural Affairs**

Nothing specific to related to WMAs. Highlights at legislative level: 1) Carbon pipeline was part of last session and it’s on hold 2) Point of contact with your legislators.

Hayek commented on county level: Shelby and Story County case is working on their amicus brief (about 22 counties might sign on) about the Summit carbon pipeline. Also, it could go to the Supreme Court. This regards “home rule” with counties and how it operates in Iowa.

10. **Plan For Next Meeting**

Farmer mentioned WMA’s save the date: Gathering of the WMAs on November 12th at the Indian Creek Nature Center, Cedar Rapids. This is free to attend for WMA members. Please click [here](#) for the reservation link.

Konrady mentioned IDNR funding for WMAs 1) Update WMA plan: application window will probably run between October 15th through December 15th for about \$50,000 per award. 2) Sign orders for county creek signs/creek crossing: money for implementation sometime in the spring 3) DNR hiring freeze: will fill central WMA representative position as soon as allowed.

Newspaper article: about IDALS more than \$65.8 million pilot project (buffer strips) for watersheds in Cedar Rapids and Des Moines (Boone River included).

11. **Public Comments** – None. No public members.

12. **Next Meeting** – November 17, 2025 @ 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Gilbert City Hall, Council Chambers, 105 SE 2nd St, Gilbert, IA 50105.

13. **Adjournment** – Adjourned at 12:01 PM.