

**Meeting of the
Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority**

February 16, 2023 - 10:00 AM

Roland Community Center – 208 N Main St., Roland, Iowa

1. SPECIAL NOTE TO THE PUBLIC: This Meeting Is Also Being Offered Via Zoom.
Members of the public can participate by using the information below:

To join the Zoom meeting by computer, tablet, or smartphone:

Click the following link: [HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/88680378245?
PWD=Z2GYDK9OWWK4VGZSBLRLCCTKY2XJQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88680378245?pwd=Z2GYDK9OWWK4VGZSBLRLCCTKY2XJQT09)

Or visit [HTTPS://WWW.ZOOM.US/](https://www.zoom.us/), click on "Join A Meeting" and use the Zoom Meeting ID: 886 8037 8245 and Passcode: 972785

To join the meeting by telephone:

Dial (312) 626-6799, then enter the Meeting ID: 886 8037 8245 and Passcode: 972785

2. Call To Order
3. Roll Call/Introductions
4. Approval Of Agenda
5. Approval Of Minutes

- 5.1. December 7, 2022 Minutes

Documents:

[DECEMBER 7, 2022 MEETING MINUTES.PDF](#)

6. Old Business

- 6.1. Set Date To Elect New Officers And Review Bylaws

Documents:

[HEADWATERS OF SOUTH SKUNK WMA BYLAWS FINAL 3-30-2022.PDF](#)

7. New Business

- 7.1. Review Action Steps

1. Presentations of Watershed Plan to governing bodies.
 - o Presentations made - Sara
 - o What we learned - Sara and others who participated

2. Review of Technical Team membership
 - o Anyone to add? Make a plan to discuss with them
3. Discussion with Ioway Creek WMA - Linda and Mike (see WMA Discussion)
4. Proposals for funding for Watershed Coordinators - Linda, Kate, and Sara
5. Other Follow-up: Results of Dec. 7 Meeting (see Results of Dec. 7, 2022 Planning Meeting)

Documents:

[WMA DISCUSSION.PDF](#)
[RESULTS OF DEC 7, 2022 PLANNING MEETING.PDF](#)

8. Public Comments
9. Next Meeting
10. Adjournment

Headwaters of the South Skunk River, Watershed Management Authority
December 7, 2022, 10:00 AM
Roland Community Center – 208 N Main St., Roland, IA
Also available via Zoom

Attendees:

Voting Members - Linda Murken (Story County), Dalton Johnson (City of Roland), Brian Lammers (Hamilton County), Alisha Bower (Story County SWCD), and Tim Gartin (City of Ames – via Zoom).

Non-voting – Catherine DeLong (ISU Extension), Kimberly Grandinetti and Laura Johnston (Story County Environmental Health), Marianne Harrelson and Sara Carmichael (Story County Conservation), Dustin Albrecht (City of Ames), Kate Hansen (Center for Rural Affairs), Jathan Chicoine (local farmer), Adam Rupe and Matt Mardensen (JEO Consulting Group).

1. Meeting is available for public viewing via Zoom.
2. **Call To Order** – by Murken at 10:04 AM
3. **Roll Call** – Introductions of all in attendance and via Zoom
4. **Approval Of Agenda** – MOTION by Bower, SECOND by Johnson. MCU.
5. **Approval Of Minutes** – August 31, 2022 – MOTION by Johnson, SECOND by Gartin. MCU.
- 6I. **New Business – Adopting (Accepting) The Watershed Management Plan** – Adam Rupe with JEO Consulting Group reviewed the major highlights of the plan and comments received after the open houses. There were 28 attendees at the two open house meetings and a couple of them provided comments. Other comments were received from some of our partner members. Mr. Chicoine would like to participate in future improvements to the watershed and has offered his farm as a possible demonstration site. Adam received some more monitoring data and was able to update some of the information in the plan. He added a section on riparian buffers BMPs. All of the updated plan documents are available on the JEO website. MOTION by Gartin, SECOND by Johnson. MCU.
- 6II. **Consideration Of Next Steps For The WMA** – A lengthy discussion took place regarding what the next steps are for the WMA. It was determined that some initial next steps will include the following: presenting the plan to each of the city/county entities included in the HW WMA; review what we have learned from the presentations; review the Technical Team and partners list for updates and develop a plan to get more information to them; create an advisory council or task force of farmers and landowners; creating targeted handouts and next steps document; and work on acquiring funding to hire a grant writer or Watershed Coordinator.
7. **Public Comments** - None
8. **Next Meeting** – February 16, 2023, at 10:00 AM at the Roland Community Center
9. **Adjournment** – at 12:01 PM

**Bylaws of the
Headwaters of the South Skunk River
Watershed Management Authority**

PREAMBLE

The *Code of Iowa* Section 466B.22, Sub-Chapter II provides that two or more political subdivisions (defined as including cities, counties and/or soil and water conservation districts) located within the same United States Geological Survey Hydrologic Unit Code 8 watershed may create a Watershed Management Authority by entering into a 28E agreement. The purpose of such authorities is to enable cooperation in supporting watershed planning and improvements for the mutual advantage of the political subdivisions involved.

These Bylaws create an organized structure to ensure a system to manage the activities of the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority and to serve as a communications link with participating political subdivisions.

ARTICLE I – AUTHORITY

- A. The Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority is a Watershed Management Authority pursuant to *Code of Iowa* Chapter 466B.
- B. The Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority is established pursuant to the intergovernmental cooperation clause as set forth in Chapter 28E of the *Code of Iowa*.
- C. Voting membership in the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority is limited to cities, counties, and soil and water conservation districts located within the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed.
- D. The Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority shall not make policy that would require a Member to change policies as set by its governing body or require a Member to contribute funds without official action of approval by that Member’s governing body.
- E. No Member may be required to contribute funds to the Authority and no action to contribute funds by a Director appointed by the Member is binding on the Member without approval by the governing board of that Member.

ARTICLE II – DEFINITIONS

- A. Board of Directors – The authorized representatives appointed by the participating political subdivisions’ elected legislative bodies.
- B. Member – A political subdivision participating in the 28E Agreement that forms the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority.
- C. Director – The authorized representative of a participating political subdivision (Member).
- D. 28E Agreement – The legal document (Iowa Code 28E) signed by each participating subdivision to form the watershed management authority as a legal entity.
- E. Quorum – Unless otherwise stated, a quorum is a simple majority of participating subdivisions.
- F. Alternate - A substitute representative of a Member authorized to temporarily serve if the Member’s designated representative is unable to attend a meeting or vote in a meeting.

ARTICLE III – NAME AND PURPOSE

- A. The name of the organization shall be Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority.
- B. The purpose of the organization shall be to enable cooperation in supporting watershed planning and improvements in the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed for the mutual advantage of the Members. As outlined in *Code of Iowa* Section 466B.23, a Watershed Management Authority may perform all of the following.
 - 1. Assess the flood risks in the watershed.
 - 2. Assess the water quality in the watershed.
 - 3. Assess options for reducing flood risk and improving water quality in the watershed.
 - 4. Monitor federal flood risk planning and activities.
 - 5. Educate residents of the watershed area regarding water quality and flood risks.
 - 6. Allocate moneys made available to the authority for purposes of water quality and flood mitigation.
 - 7. Make and enter into contracts and agreements and execute all instruments necessary or incidental to the performance of the duties of the authority. A watershed management authority shall not acquire property by eminent domain.

ARTICLE IV – GOVERNANCE

- A. The Board of Directors shall conduct the affairs of the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority. Each Member shall appoint one representative to serve as a Director, and all Directors comprise the Board of Directors.
- B. The Directors shall serve staggered terms of four years. The initial board shall determine, by lot, the initial terms to be shortened and lengthened, as necessary.
- C. A person appointed to fill a vacancy shall be appointed in the same manner as the original appointment for the duration of the unexpired term.
- D. A Director is eligible for reappointment.
- E. A Member may remove an appointed Director for misfeasance, nonfeasance, or malfeasance in office. If a Director is removed, the Member shall appoint a successor for the duration of the unexpired term of the removed Director.
- F. Each Director has one vote. A Member may appoint an Alternate to serve in a Director's absence. A proxy designation is not needed for an Alternate to vote. An Alternate may attend with the Director, but both cannot vote at the same time.

ARTICLE V – COMMITTEES

- A. Executive Committee
 - 1. Officers: A Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected by the Board of Directors. These Officers shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.
 - 2. Eligibility for and election to office
 - a. Any Director may be elected to serve as an Officer.
 - b. The Board of Directors shall elect Officers prior to July 1 of each year.
 - 3. Terms of office
 - a. The term of office for the first Executive Committee shall run through June 30, 2022.
 - b. Subsequent terms shall be for two years, beginning on July 1st.
 - 4. Duties
 - a. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board and Executive Committee, prepare an agenda in consultation with others and perform other duties as determined by the Board of Directors.

- b. The Vice Chair shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair, assist the Chair in fulfilling his/her duties, and attend the Board and Executive Committee meetings. In the event that both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent, another Board member shall be elected at the beginning of the meeting to serve as chairperson pro-tempore. The pro-tempore chair shall conduct the meeting and sign any documents requiring signatures when said documents were the result of any action by the Board at the particular meeting.
- 5. Failure to Perform Duties
 - a. If an officer is unable or unwilling to perform his or her duties as outlined in sub-section 4, the Board will hold a special election to elect a replacement officer.
- B. Secretary: The Board may appoint a secretary, who need not be a Director. The Secretary shall keep and distribute copies of minutes and shall be responsible for any other correspondence of the group. The Secretary shall attend all Executive Committee meetings and Board meetings.
- C. Technical Advisory Committee
 - 1. A Technical Advisory Committee may be created to assist and advise the Board. 1. A simple majority of the Board shall appoint members. The Board may appoint a member of the Board as Committee Chairperson.
 - 2. Members of the Technical Advisory Committee may attend and participate in any and all board and committee meetings, unless the meeting is closed pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.5. However, they do not have voting privileges.
 - 3. Other Committees: The Board may create other committees as needed.

ARTICLE VI – FINANCE

- A. Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, the Board shall adopt a plan for the fiscal year (July 1 through the following June 30).
- B. The Board may solicit, accept and receive grants, donations, endowments, gifts, reimbursements and such other funds as are necessary to support work pursuant to this Agreement.
 - 1. The Board will review each opportunity for funding. After review of the opportunity, a fiscal agent will be selected. The fiscal agent must be a Member or other organization, as selected by the Board, meeting the fiscal agent standards outlined in Article VI – Finance Section C. Should no Member or other organization accept the nomination of fiscal agent for the opportunity, the opportunity will not be considered.
 - 2. No action to contribute funds by a Director of the Authority is binding on the Member the Director represents without official approval by the governing board of that Member. No Member may be required to contribute funds to the Authority, except to fulfill any obligations previously made by official action by the governing body of the Member.
 - 3. The fiscal agent designated by the Board of Directors of the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority shall hold all funds received for use by the Authority in a special fund. When funds are provided as a grant or loan directed to a Member of the Authority for a project administered by that Member, the funds shall be retained and administered by that Member.
- C. Fiscal Agent Standards: The responsibility of a fiscal agent is to promote the mission or purpose of the account entrusted to it, safeguard the assets of the account, and assure the propriety of all expenditures of funds and disposition of account assets. This includes:
 - 1. Entering into a Fiscal Agent Agreement between the Fiscal Agent and the Authority for all opportunities. This document shall clearly identify the responsibilities of both the Fiscal Agent and the Authority. This document shall identify conditions where the agreement would be terminated.
 - 2. Recording all funding receipts and disbursements. The Fiscal Agent shall establish a separate project account for each funded project. All applicable project receipts and disbursements shall be recorded in this account.

3. Submitting all required reports to the funding organization. Reporting responsibilities are to be detailed in the Fiscal Agent Agreement.
 4. Making all disbursements for the project. All transactions will be recorded in the project account established by the Fiscal Agent. Sufficient documentation must be maintained by the Fiscal Agent to allow the Fiscal Agent's external auditor to perform the fiscal and compliance audit of the funding.
 5. Maintaining records for any items as required by the funding agreement. Verification of assets according to the Fiscal Agent's periodic inventory procedures should include those assets acquired as Fiscal Agents.
- D. Story County, Iowa, Story County Administration Building, 900 6th Street, Nevada, Iowa will serve as the audit point for internal and external audits.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

- A. The Board shall generally meet quarterly at such time and place as may be designated by the Chair, and said meeting shall be known as the regular meeting of the Board. All meetings of the Board shall be posted pursuant to Code of Iowa Section 21.4.
 1. Directors and/or their proxies are expected to attend meetings whenever possible. If a Director fails to attend three consecutive, regularly scheduled meetings of the Board, the Chair shall discuss the situation with the Director. If the absences continue, the Chair shall notify the Member to determine if the jurisdiction wishes to consider a reappointment for the remainder of the term.
 2. A closed session may be held by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present in accordance with *Code of Iowa* Chapter 21.5.
- B. A special meeting may be called by the Chair or by petition of three (3) or more Directors or Members, when necessary for specific purposes requiring Board action. Special meetings shall also be posted pursuant to Code Section 21.4.
- C. All meetings shall comply with the Iowa Open Meetings Law (*Code of Iowa* Chapter 21A). All documents will be available to the public in compliance with the Iowa Public Records Law (*Code of Iowa* Chapter 22) and may be copied at cost, on demand.
- D. A majority of the membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of holding a meeting of the Board. A simple majority of the Board present at the meeting shall suffice to pass a measure submitted for vote at a regular meeting. A vacancy in the membership of the Board shall not impair the rights of a quorum to exercise all the rights and perform all the duties of the authority.
- E. All meetings of all committees, including the Board of Director meetings and Committee meetings, shall be conducted according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VIII – CONTRACTS AND OBLIGATIONS

The Board of the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority shall not acquire, or dispose of its assets; merge; consolidate; or enter into contracts without approval of a two-thirds majority of the Members.

ARTICLE IX – ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

The Board of Directors shall hear and resolve any disputes that arise concerning violations of policies and guidelines or concerning the terms of the 28E Agreement.

ARTICLE X – WITHDRAWAL FROM MEMBERSHIP

- A. Any Member may withdraw from the Authority by the action of its governing board, unless the Authority then has unpaid debts or legal obligations, in which case the consent of the governing boards of the remaining Members to the withdrawal is required.
- B. Obligations upon withdrawal from membership: A participating political subdivision terminating its participation in the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority shall continue to be fully obligated for all payments and other duties owed by such subdivision at the time of termination.
- C. Rights upon withdrawal from membership: A participating political subdivision may request a copy of records pertaining to the participant.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These bylaws can be amended at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors by a two-thirds vote of the Board, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

Adopted this 28th day of October, 2020.

Amended this 30th day of March, 2022.

January 4, 2023

Discussions of Water Quality and WMAs' role and Possible Collaborations

Present: Penny Brown-Huber (Prairie Rivers of Iowa), Steve Carlson (Iowa Creek WMA), Mike Cox (Story Co. Conservation), Dan Haug (Prairie Rivers), Linda Murken (Headwaters of the South Skunk and Ioway Creek WMAs)

Invited but not able to attend: Brian Lammers (Headwaters WMA), Jeff Schroeder (Ioway Creek WMA)

Information shared on all of the entities involved with water quality planning/funding:

Federal: USDA, NRCS, EPA

State: IDALS, IDNR

Local (Boone and Story Counties): Ioway Creek WMA, Headwaters of the South Skunk WMA, Beaver Creek WMA

Other: Prairie Rivers of Iowa, Center for Rural Affairs, Iowa State University

Beaver Creek WMA (western Boone and Greene Counties) has a Watershed Coordinator, Laura James. She is funded by the Farmer to Farmer grant, in partnership with IDNR. Is Boone County the fiscal agent? She is also working on edge of field practices through the Batch and Build program started in Polk County.

Story County has a Watershed Coordinator, Sara Carmichael, funded through Story County and employed in the Conservation Department. Sara is working primarily on edge of field practices through the Batch and Build program. Sara is talking with Kyle Ament at DNR and will be asking him to the Feb.16 Headwaters meeting to present on potential funding opportunities for future development of the WMA.

IDALS also employs a Watershed Coordinator, Megan Volkens. She currently is assigned to work on edge of field practices in Hamilton, Jasper and Story Counties (Headwaters and Ioway Creek watersheds). Will start working more in Jasper County when a fiscal agent is established.

There are still some active watershed projects being funded by WQI grants, but IDALS has also funded county and regional projects.

There is currently not a Watershed Coordinator for the Ioway Creek WMA, which formed in 2012 and completed a plan in 2014. Prairie Rivers of Iowa had received a WQI grant to hire a watershed coordinator. The project ran for four years and spent 47% of the available cost share, resulting in 2300 acres of no-till and 1529 acres of cover crops in the final year of the project, plus one bioreactor.

NRCS now has enough funding to hire district conservationists (DCs) in every county, but the Hamilton county position has not been filled. Doug Ruopp is the DC for Story County DC and Jeremy Johannsen is the DC for Boone County. NRCS has reorganized so that specialists (biologist, engineering, soil technician, natural resource specialist) known as Resource Leads are assigned to a Resource Office that serves a four-county area. Boone, Story, and Hamilton Counties are each served by a different Resource Office. Story County is served out of Newton, along with Jasper, Marshall and Marion Counties. Fort Dodge and Webster City serve Boone and Hamilton counties respectively. They approve any designs for

any conservation practices, especially those receiving federal funding (like batch and build). They also perform some design work on conservation practices.

Iowa State University has many groups and individuals working on water quality, both in the University and in Extension and Outreach. Catherine DeLong organizes training for Watershed Coordinators.

Iowa Learning Farms does field days and webinars on conservation practices. Lisa Schulte Moore is co-Director of the Iowa State University Bioeconomy Institute and received a MacArthur Fellowship and a grant from USDA “. . . to test whether farmers can profitably turn a mix of harvested prairie, cover crops, conservation grassland and cattle manure into renewably sourced natural gas.”

The Center for Rural Affairs lobbies on issue of importance to rural America and are providing support to WMAs. They are currently working on updating basic information about all of the WMAs in Iowa and in advocating for ongoing funding for Watershed Coordinators.

Discussion:

We discussed how the money available drives the practices we are promoting, rather than vice versa. Much of the funding focuses on counting activities per year rather than being cumulative and measuring progress toward long range outcomes. This leads to a lack of knowledge about how many and what types of practices are actually sustained over a period of years.

Because Coordinator funding is typically only for a few years, there is little follow-up and support for landowners who install practices. A WMA that has had the same Coordinator working for ten years has made remarkable progress with landowners' adopting practices.

Also, many agencies at various levels of government are assigning themselves roles in water quality efforts which may be overlapping, often without checking to see what other entities are already doing.

We could benefit from having a long-term Vision: What do we want Iowa water and land to look like in 50 years and how do we get there? If we had an end goal in mind, we could better determine how the funding that is available could be used to get us further on the path toward achieving it. (Example: A successful install of an edge-of-field practice could lead to having discussions about in-field practices that same landowner could use to reduce unnecessary inputs and keep the soil in place. Then enlisting these farmers to talk with other farmers.)

We should also discuss possible benefits of the two (or more) WMAs working together, and how WMAs can help bring coordination to the planning efforts at various levels.

Plan:

Linda will share this document with the people who couldn't be at this meeting.

Will discuss at Iowa Creek WMA meeting on January 19 and February 16 Headwaters WMA meeting. See whether members feel we could mutually benefit by working together.

HEADWATERS OF THE SOUTH SKUNK WMA

RESULTS OF DECEMBER 7, 2022 PLANNING:

Action Step # 1:

WHAT: Present overview of completed assessment to the governing bodies of all WMA members.

WHO: Sara volunteered to present the plan and ask the partner agencies for their feedback and ideas. Catherine volunteered to create a document that could be adapted to various audiences. Other WMA members and Tech Team members will assist in by arranging dates and attending the presentations. Sara will let us all know the dates of the presentations.

1. Ames City Council – Dustin will discuss with John Joiner; Tim will discuss with City Manager.
2. Hamilton County – Brian will contact.
3. City of Jewell – Brian will contact.
4. City of Randall – Brian will contact.
5. Story County Soil and Water Commissioners – Alissa will contact.
6. City of Roland – Dalton will contact.
7. Story City – Linda will ask Eric Christian to contact.
8. Hamilton Co. SWC – Linda will contact Lynn Knutson and Leah Maass.

NOTE: Ellsworth and Hardin Co. did not sign the new 28E.

WHEN: Make calls now, set up presentations for January 2023.

Action Step # 2:

WHAT: Review what we have learned from the presentations.

WHO & WHEN: WMA members, February 16 meeting.

Action Step # 3:

WHAT: Review our Tech Team and Partners list for possible additions and replacements. Develop a plan to get info to them (Additional presentations? Documents?)

WHO & WHEN: Everybody review before Feb. 16 meeting and come with suggestions.

NOTE: These action steps should give us additional information to set additional short-term goals that can build on work already being done, as well as gaining additional support through informing 28E members and partners.

Other Follow-up:

Linda will

1. Talk with Tim Gartin about Ames alternate.
2. Participate in the 12/8 call on funding for Watershed Coordinators.
3. Check on ISAC Legislative Proposal for Watershed Coordinators.
4. Discuss with Prairie Rivers.

Other Ideas to be considered in the future:

Creating an Advisory Council or Task Force of farmers and landowners

Reaching out to associations and businesses: Iowa Corn, Iowa Soybeans, Heartland Coop

Possible goal of hiring a grant writer to help get funding for a Watershed Coordinator for areas not already served.

Look at Riparian Buffers – EWG did a study, Hamilton Co. was one of five counties included.

JEO will keep our info on their website for a year – how to capture it so we don't lose it after they are done.

ISU Website on Nutrient Reduction Strategy has info on locations of BMPS (last updated in 2019).

Most memorable quote from the meeting: The money is there, but you need the infrastructure to catch it.