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Watershed Assessment Group Minutes
Administration Building Public Meeting Room and Zoom
Date: January 28, 2022

Recording:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/J8OBP0bmr9YzL86XkQgV8iSJG4Xi7Wl8Qr260mtYWxmOMeACq0xXWpnROgt6yP51.xUtJPTuMvYqK-R-M> (Passcode: !t%d76j^)

Committee members present: Mike Cox, Leanne Harter, Sara Carmichael, Amelia Schoeneman, Andrea Wagner, Keith Morgan, Linda Murken, Matt Boeck, Darren Moon

Harter called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve – Morgan/Schoeneman

II. Learning Moment – N/A

III. Review Meeting Notes from prior meeting – August 4, 2021

Motion to Approve – Schoeneman/Wagner

IV. Old Business

A. ARPA Funding Requests

- Murken gave an update on internal ARPA funding requests. Hickory Grove Wastewater, Edge of Field (EOF), and S. Skunk River access projects have been approved. EOF funding could be covered by Iowa Finance Authority money. Carmichael will update group if that application gets approved. County money for EOF will then be returned to general ARPA funding pot.
- Conservation applied for over \$15 million worth of restoration projects through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Funding is coming from the bipartisan Infrastructure Bill.

V. New Business

A. Review and Edit Implementation Matrix

- Harter lead the following discussion regarding updates to the matrix. All updates can be seen by following this [link](#). File is named “Staff Working Copy of Implementation Matrix_To be used for updates_FY23
- Murken suggested Scrapping the estimated budget amount column since the FY23 Budget request column is already in use.
- 1.2 change \$2,500 to \$1,150. All other updates are approved
- 1.3 Harter added this row in the Regulatory section.
- 2.2 Cox: What is an area action plan for riparian areas
 - o Murken: Were we going to help landowners install fence to keep animals out of creek
 - o Cox: we did that with hickory
 - o Schoeneman: On our end, we’re looking at not letting people building in these riparian areas
 - o Murken: What other practices can we give to farmers to help them water their livestock

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- Cox: Will need to work case-by-case instead of countywide ordinances. Alternative water sources or protecting an area of creek to limit the cattle exposure to the waterway
- 2.3
 - Schoeneman: Need to add \$776.
 - Cox: \$2500 will be used to get a feasibility study of Wetland and Streambanks
- 2.5
 - Schoeneman: A and B are redundant, can we combine?
 - Harter: I will fix words of A and we will remove B
- 2.8 moved from later on in the document. Not new, just changed location in document
- 2.10 identify which department is primarily responsible. Do we want to keep EH on WQM?
- 2.11
 - Harter: Will be adding ISWEP membership and the \$1,100 will come from the countywide budget
- 2.12
 - Harter: \$175 is for Fourmile WMA involvement.
 - Murken: Should we add a goal to establish another WMA?
 - Cox: Don't want to move too fast in creating a new WMA with East Indian watershed without finalizing Headwaters first.
 - Murken: Agree
 - Cox: Should we maybe focus on creating an Indian WMA instead of East Indian WMA?
 - Murken: Yes, when it's time we can add it to the matrix.
 - Carmichael: I will also add to the matrix that we are taking part in meetings with the Iowa River Watershed Coalition.
- 2.13
 - Cox: What do people think about the priority. To move it from High to Medium/Ongoing?
 - Schoeneman: What does ongoing mean?
 - Cox: We do A on an ongoing basis
- 2.14:
 - Harter: I added E, F, G to the notes section which will help with the county's Flood Rating. Do we have money in the budget for that?
 - Schoeneman: no.
 - Harter: We'll take the 1K down to 0
 - Cox: We are heavily involved with item E. Should we represent conservation on the sheet? The funding on that could change dramatically with acquisition cost. Conservation currently has \$343K in FY23 budget for purchasing floodplain properties.
 - Murken: What is the point of the budget column? If you are identifying land acquisition, should do a footnote saying it's Conservation reserve.
 - Cox: It's coming out of Friends of Conservation Trust fund.
 - Morgan: Are there structures on this land?
 - Cox: There are no structures on the properties. It is farmland per FSA but no tilling is happening. Locations include NE of Cambridge and some adjacent to the Jordan area of Ames.
 - Harter: E is just exploring partnerships, but not land acquisition.
 - Cox: I'm find with either way the group wants to go.

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- Murken: To continue to explore partnerships doesn't go very far. What is it asking?
- Cox: Maybe the word acquisition should be replaced with protection. Maybe it's an easement to protect the land.
- Harter: That is a good point. Will make the change.
- Morgan: Is the object of this to prevent the land should it flood?
- Harter: Not even just ag land, but structural properties in the floodplain.
- Cox: It isn't just specific to flooding, but could be any kind of erosion (rain or wind).
- Morgan: We need more actionable objectives. How are we measuring these action items?
- Harter: These are just meant to be guidelines for the internal group. The objective is a missing element.
- Cox: how many properties are there in the county with structures in the floodplain.
- Harter: small number but can't remember the exact number.
- 2.15
 - Carmichael will get exact amount of money from Grandinetti
- 2.17
 - Carmichael will add update to the matrix document
- 2.18
 - Harter: Carmichael and I thought it would be good to add this to the matrix. Boeck and Carmichael can work together to update ACPF and other data.
 - Murken: Where is this data being used?
 - Cox: we are using it Conservation. Also, this is what is being used for the WMA plan for Headwaters.
 - Cox: data is from 2017. At some point we might want to get the existing data updated. I think that data came from FSA/NRCS.
 - Harter: might need to update the parcel data. But overall just need to make sure everything is updated on a routine basis.
 - Boeck: We have access to a ton of layers that can be updated. I don't have a problem updating, just need to know what to do.
 - Murken: The data comes from the NRCS, right?
 - Cox: I think that is right. But we are talking about two different things. One is identification of existing practices and two is mapping using the ACPF tool for unmapped areas.
 - Harter: I think just using the ACPF tool to make sure it's up to date.
 - Cox: I suggest to update the title of this goal to say "Update existing conservation data"
- 3.1
 - Murken: We were going to review ALL districts?
 - Moon: The goal is to review as projects come up.
 - Harter will make changes to the action goals making changes to the action goal.
 - Cox: Should change priority to medium/ongoing

Harter: We need to add a new column that says who the primary responsible party is. there is a new column that says primary responsible party.

Morgan: Let's just add initials to the end of each item listed in the note section.

1.2: Will be AS

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1.3 b,c: AS. Murken: Should we scratch A? and remove Mike

Ran out of time so Harter asks everyone to add their names to each actionable goal and send by email to her by Wednesday 2/2/2022.

VI. Staff Updates and Assignments

- Harter: National flood insurance program is set to expire in February. Short term extended to February 18th. Reauthorization bills are in both committees but no movement is happening yet. If Build Back Better gets momentum then there will be movement on this program. Federal level could be impactful to state and county programs
- Schoenman: Stormwater bill HSB 536 died in subcommittee
 - o Harter: could be added through an appropriations bill so please keep an eye on it. Also, if anyone else has other legislative worries please bring those forward to the group as it happens.

VII. Other Items Not on the Agenda - none

VII. Next Meeting Time and Date

- Sara will send out a doodle poll

IX. Adjournment – adjourned at 2:33 motion by Morgan, Second by Amelia