



**MUD, CAMP, & SPRING CREEK WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY  
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN  
STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETING**

**CITY OF ALTOONA, IOWA  
CITY HALL  
407 EIGHTH STREET SE, ALTOONA, IOWA**

**JUNE 22, 2015  
1:30 PM**

1. Welcome – *Mark Land*

*Group members introduced themselves with their organization.*

*Attendees: Sue Ugulini, Mike Ugulini, Chip Classon, Rich Leopold, Mike Fairchild, Jon Hansen, Joe Riding, Teva Dawson, Gary Haines, James Martin, Sheila Navis, Kyle Ament, Roy McCleary, Jennifer Welch, Loren Lown, Karen Oppelt, Paul Miller, Pat Boddy, Mark Land, Kyle Riley, Amanda Oswald*

*Mark went through a PowerPoint presentation on the background of Mud, Camp, and Spring Creek Watershed and the Watershed Management Authority, the other Watershed Management Authorities in Iowa, the Central Iowa Watershed Planning Efforts, and the definition of a Watershed Management Authority.*

2. Overview of the Planning Process – *Mark Land*

*Mark described the overview of the planning process for completing a successful Watershed Management Plan as part of the PowerPoint presentation.*

3. Review of Previous Watershed Initiatives – *Jennifer Welch*

*Jennifer explained that the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are interested in watersheds. From 2004-2010, conservation practices were implemented by landowners in the Camp Creek Watershed through funding by IDALS (\$1 million +) and landowners (\$100,000). RAMP-UP is another initiative that Jennifer discussed. In 2005, the RAMP-UP project took place and provided education and outreach about how to incorporate green infrastructure into developing communities.*

*Pat Boddy asked for clarification of “green infrastructure,” since some of the attendees might not have heard of it before. Pat described it as using nature based systems to control stormwater instead of using piping. Jennifer expanded on that and described it as using natural landscape to do its natural work instead of bypassing the natural course. It is a type of holistic planning and a way to make the whole water cycle work for us.*

*Local residents from Runnells, Altoona, Mitchellville, Pleasant Hill and Unincorporated Polk County attended a series of talks, brainstorming sessions, and workshops to discuss their concerns and opportunities within the watersheds. The mission/vision statement of RAMP-UP is "Our vision is to protect and enhance identified natural areas within the Spring, Mud and Camp Creek watersheds which will lead to healthier lands and water for all to enjoy as they live, work and play in eastern Polk County." Six goals were developed, as well as mapping for each watershed.*

*Mark: We are going to discuss how we fit in to the six goals that were developed from the RAMP-UP project. We are going to start with discussing the strengths/assets and weaknesses of the watersheds.*

*Pat: We are going to use the six goals as a starting point to determine what is working, what needs updated, and what needs eliminated.*

#### **4. Watershed Features, Strengths, and Challenges/Large Group Discussion – Pat Boddy**

*Pat: What are the assets/strengths of the watershed as you know them now?*

*Pat: Partnerships around the table.*

*Jennifer: The watershed has an interesting landscape. It is not all flat. It is unique and has varied land uses and vegetative cover. It is also ready for development.*

*Rich: There is a higher percentage of conservation practices on agricultural lands.*

*Mark: Metro Waste Authority has done work in the watershed.*

*Pat: Thomas Mitchell Park and landowners are also part of the work that has been done.*

*Roy: Living up to MS4 permits.*

*Loren: The area is not built out, so it is not difficult to retrofit.*

*Kyle Ament: The school district is active in environmental issues.*

*James: The watershed has a lot of data already available.*

*Gary: The SE Polk School District is practicing chemical reduction. Instead of doing blanket applications of fertilizers, they are taking a selective approach and alternating.*

*Roy: Education – Since 2007, we utilize earth science students to do water monitoring through the IOWATER program and as they go out in the world, they remember those practices.*

*Teva: The sense of government is strong. They want to be proactive and support the watershed.*

*Pat: To have all jurisdictions on board.*

*Mark: What about recreational components?*

*Rich: Camp Creek has had work done by Metro Waste Authority. Most of the stream channel is unchannelized and has natural meanders.*

*Mike U: Increased sampling is being done on soil before mass applying fertilizer. Filter strips have also been implemented.*

*Loren: Pleasant Hill purchased 80 acres in the watershed to develop a park and implement water conservation features.*

*Jennifer: The upper reaches of the watershed are developed, which is opposite of most watersheds.*

*Pat: What are the challenges facing the watershed?*

*Gary: Getting everyone to participate.*

*Sheila: Large developments and acreages going in. For example, Runnells used to be farmland and now it is acreages with private owners.*

*Loren: The stream infrastructure is broken. There are no bottoms in the creeks and there is erosion. It is not sustainable. We are efficient at pushing water off the land and we are better at keeping soil on the landscape, but the high velocity water causes the bottoms of the creeks to blow out.*

*Russell: Streambank stabilization.*

*Rich: Too much water too fast.*

*Mike U: Increased rains.*

*Mike F: The cost of land to farm and competition for farm acres. There is less opportunity to farm in eastern Polk County.*

*Roy: Educating residents to retain stormwater on their land instead of dumping it.*

*Russell: Curb and gutter systems in cities shoots off into water at high velocity and cause erosion*

*Sue: Concrete flumes also do this.*

*Roy: Some people have a theory that it's the farmers causing the problem. We need to use data to go against the theory instead of pointing fingers. Impervious surfaces are also to blame and some people don't understand that.*

*Rich: Some of the farmers are doing a good job but some are not. This is also the same with cities. The nature of the fix is complicated and expensive.*

*Jon H: The rights of individual property owners. A property owner's rights to develop a piece of land might override what is right.*

*Sue: Not In My Backyard (NIMBY).*

*Jon H: Federal regulations are looser than local regulations.*

*Russell: Sometimes the common good isn't necessarily the best use.*

*Rich: Invasive species.*

*Jon H: Who pays?*

*Roy: We have to monitor to know what's in the water.*

*Sheila: Nitrate levels in Jasper County are rising.*

*Mike F: Camp Creek was impaired in the past. There is no impression that the water quality is fine.*

*Rich: Camp Creek was monitored more, so that is why it was labeled as impaired. The other creeks are probably similar.*

*Roy: What do we do when we find a problem? We had a higher nitrate level in one of our samples and we put it back on the students to solve the problem.*

*Jennifer: Flashy streams/flash floods are an issue.*

*Mark: Lack of monitoring.*

*Rich: Persistence of effort, like prior efforts that have already been done. We don't want to be repeating this process again in 10 years.*

## 5. Goal Updating/Setting Exercise/Small Group Discussion – Pat Boddy

*Pat: Using the six goals developed from the RAMP-UP project, we are going to count off by sixes and break up into groups to discuss. Each of the goals were categorized into Policy Issues, Education/Public Awareness, Economic Vitality, Natural Resources/Water Quality, Recreation/Quality of Life, and Water Quantity/Flooding. Each of the groups will look at all of*

*the goals and determine if there needs to be updates, deletions, or additions. Each group will also look at their specific goal and make sure it's the best version that it could be.*

*The groups broke off for small discussions.*

*Pat: We are going to report out as a group and discuss goal by goal.*

## **Policy Issues**

### **1) Develop unified land use policies for green infrastructure throughout eastern Polk County.**

*Pat: Look at all land uses within watershed, not just green infrastructure.*

*Rich: Changing policies on land use may not be comprehensive enough. Policy wide needs to be based in the MPO or Capital Crossroads.*

*Teva: There is a potential for consolidation of this goal with #3.*

*Chip: Different terrain should have different rules. Sometimes a broad rule doesn't work for each situation based on different soils and land types. The policy must be realistic and as consistent as appropriate given the conditions.*

*Jon H: Communities/jurisdictions aren't always consistent in their policies. Everyone needs to understand the consequences of the policy.*

*Roy: In regards to all of the goals, we need to address the flooding issue as the baseline. If you don't address flooding, the other goals don't necessarily matter. If we don't handle floods, then what does everything else mean?*

*Paul: Flooding in watersheds becomes a moot point if resources aren't directed in the right directions.*

*Sue: Increase participation of landowners and those involved in the drafting of policies.*

Suggestions from post-it notes:

- Change language to "watershed area" instead of "Polk County"
- Combine #1 and #3
- Add increased participation
- Edit: "Develop unified land use policies which includes green infrastructure through eastern Polk County to results in a well-balanced mix of land uses."

## **Education/Public Awareness**

### **2) Increase community awareness, support and involvement in the Green Infrastructure Plan.**

*Karen: Define Green Infrastructure Plan for understanding.*

*Jon H.: Education vs property rights. There are smart people out there that do not care. These creeks are dangerous places and we don't want to give a false sense of security because of the flashiness of the streams. We might struggle with making it feel too safe and secure.*

*Chip: Work on the watershed part first.*

*Sue: Solicit landowner participation and information during comprehensive planning and other planning. If they do come to the table, take their information and use it within the plan without having a "we know better than you" mentality.*

Suggestions from post-it notes:

- Watershed not green infrastructure
- Safety along these creeks is really a function of education and awareness
- Education vs property rights
- Combine #1 and #2
- Add increased participation
- Better define infrastructure

### **Economic Vitality**

#### **3) Provide a well-balanced mix of land uses throughout eastern Polk County.**

*Loren: High Trestle Trail provided an economic explosion and drew business to the area.*

*Sheila: Should be goal tied into #6. Economic vitality is important to the communities and more trails are being planned.*

*Teva: Trails seem to be the focus of recreation amenities, but there are others including hunting, fishing, bird watching, equestrian riders.*

Suggestions from post-it notes:

- Change language to “watershed area” instead of “Polk County”
- “Eastern” Polk County should be perhaps all of Des Moines metro if you are considering policy
- Combine with Goal #1
- Recreational amenities create economic value

### **Natural Resources/Water Quality**

#### **4) Provide incentives and options to landowners to retain contiguous areas of natural areas, open spaces and agricultural areas.**

#### **5) Maintain, preserve and enhance eastern Polk County’s natural resources that contribute to the residents’ quality of life.**

*Karen: We don’t know if we have an issue because of the lack of water quality monitoring data.*

*Mike F: Incentivize land owners for permanent impacts.*

*Roy: Universal theme for all categories – develop flooding goals.*

*Sue: Expand not only recreational uses, but also businesses.*

Suggestions from post-it notes:

- Define quality of life
- Protect and enhance urban and rural areas
- Change language to “Watershed Area” instead of “Polk County”
- Incentivize landowners to permanently protect
- Reduce waterborne sediment
- Water quality monitoring

### **Recreation/Quality of Life**

#### **6) Increase safety and use of non-motorized transportation modes.**

*Sheila: Recreation is a piece of quality of life and this goal could be consolidated. We need to deal with flooding issues first and then recreation is secondary.*

*Teva: If people aren't out to enjoy these areas, then they won't care about them.*

*Sheila: Goals need to be prioritized.*

*Teva: One is not more important than another.*

*Pat: Chronology will be discussed in later discussions.*

*Rich: What does non-motorized entail? Are they including trails only or what other methods are available?*

Suggestions from post-it notes:

- Delete
- The #1 job of these creeks is stormwater conveyance. The recreation component is somewhat secondary in nature.
- Rework: provide safe recreational transportation connections
- Develop more multi-use trails
- Preservation of woodlands/timber
- Work with schools for recreation, habitat, conservation, education
- Develop recreation opportunities in greenways
- Edited: Identify where #6 (trails) would enhance water quality or green infrastructure

### **Water Quantity/Flooding (did not have a goal assigned to it)**

*Rich: Quantity and flooding/modeling is most important in populated areas where it affects human related activities. This would help with prioritizing spending.*

*Roy: 5 years ago, the Terrace Hills Golf Course never got flooded and now they get 3 inches of rain and have to close the course because of flooding and impact business.*

*Rich: The intensity of storms is increasing.*

Suggestions from post-it notes:

- New goal: Volume of stormwater runoff shall not increase
- Hydrologic model for Spring Creek
- Flooding is the main issue. The other goals are moot unless you address this issue.
- It would be ideal to have 28E agreements between neighboring communities regarding allowable release rates
- Develop regional stormwater agencies
- People need to buy into stormwater practices

### **Open Discussion**

*Russell: For overall smoothness, attention needs to be paid to property owners' rights. Unless you have good buy-in, there will not be smooth development and more resistance.*

*Pat & Russell: You can't get the participation without the solicitation.*

*Roy: People don't care until something happens to them.*

*Sheila: We all have a stake in the process. It will cost all of us one way or another.*

*Mike U: Your basement might not flood now, but it might in 5 years and you better care now.*

6. Watershed Management Planning Schedule – *Mark Land*

*Mark discussed the schedule of the entire Watershed Management Plan and described how it is a cycle of discussions between the Watershed Management Authority (WMA), the Executive Committee, and the Stakeholders. Ultimately, the Stakeholders' recommendations will be presented to the WMA.*

7. Adjourn

*-Adjourn: 3:25PM*