**Lower Cedar Watershed Management Authority**

**5/08/18 Meeting Minutes**

1. Call to Order and Introductions
	1. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Jon Bell, Lower Cedar WMA Chair. The board and all members introduced themselves.
2. Lower Cedar WMA Update: Stanwood’s paperwork was received and Scott County identified an alternate board member.
3. Vision Statement: Board members met to discuss a vision and mission statement a few weeks ago and came up with two different vision statements.
	* 1. Cultivating a shared responsibility to sustain a healthy watershed for future generations.
			1. Could drop future generations-but this also emphasizes that it is not just for now, but for the FUTURE.
		2. Bringing people together to improve water quality and reduce flood risk
	1. Soil health really resonates with people especially farmers
	2. 15 people voted for number one, 2 for number 2.
	3. Cultivating a shared responsibility to sustain a healthy watershed now and into the future.
		1. Could change the word watershed to our water resources, or to improve the health of our waters and soils.
		2. Walcott moved and Nichols seconded, motion carried, and the vision statement was approved.
		3. Lower Cedar WMA Vision statement: **Cultivating a shared responsibility to sustain a healthy watershed now and into the future.**
4. Grant opportunities:
	1. SSCC Research Grant: The due date is very rapidly approaching. This grant can cover research and demonstration, up to $50,000. This money could be used for demonstration projects, signs within the watershed, used to create educational materials, create a logo. Funds would be received by July. It is a short application. Cedar County SWCD Conservation Assistant is willing to help write this and has already started on the footwork of creating a budget and determining costs of items such as signage. The grant term would be for three years. It would be a whole WMA effort. The grant does not require match, however it does make it much more competitive. Things like the watershed coordinators time could be used.
		1. Bill Waldie really liked the educational component, perhaps we aren’t at the point for signage yet, focus on education first. Mary Beth also thinks there is a huge need for that, especially in urban areas. Educating cities as far as what farmers are doing would be new and innovative. Creating opportunities for tours-bring urban residents out to farms. Put in practices on farms that could serve as demo sites. In Iowa City, people see it is as the farmers fault, but the WMA will be the best place to get rid of the “Us vs Them”, and bring people together. Bring farmers together to discuss how they are addressing items. On the website have an interactive map (Story Map) with locations of practices such as bioswales and how it is helping improve water quality. The goal should be to help urban residents understand that farmers are trying to be a part of the solution. Also include streams on that map, projects that cities are doing, research, active links, include monetary values of what farmers are contributing to conservation practices as well as government funding, and more. SWCDs might be willing to help with this-maybe sending out a postcard survey to get permission to take photos and showcase these practices.
		2. Mike Tertinger asked if there is anyone else already doing this? Yes and no, currently there is a story mapping effort being used but it is not on this scale. It is interactive but not this detailed. Could be a great thing to highlight in the grant application.
			1. One thing to be careful of is the privacy of the farmer.
		3. Conservation Farmcrawl-could be an event to make it fun, but pick out different locations.
		4. Perhaps there could be a school component-build it and maybe FFA students could give these presentations to school groups. Could we develop a display that could be portable that could be taken to different fairs, schools, events, etc for education.
		5. Perhaps we could bring awareness and get involvement by hosting Project AWARE on the Lower Cedar again (last hosted on 2009).
		6. For this grant we should be very focused. Focus on items that will show results and don’t go all over the board. Legal aspects are difficult this may not be something for the grant now but definitely something to do in the future to get people out on the river.
		7. English River Johnson County SWCD-IDALS likes to see hands on education like Farm crawl, field days, boots on the ground, and stewards. bring attention to people who have already been actively practicing conservation. Educational elements like website more important and signage secondary. Typical field days will not be enough, so we need to draw out different kinds of interactions that reaches new audiences.
	2. Watershed Planning Grant-There is no posted deadline for when this grant will be due, but most likely it will be this fall.
		1. Jody shared the background on the English River watershed planning effort and how it benefited them. The effort included assessment of watershed issues, goal setting, education, etc. They were able to use this grant to do water sampling, hydrologic modeling, survey of landowners, and more with the help of other partners. They pulled all this information together, shared it and used baseline data to apply for more grants and monitored progress. Very typical of how other WMAs use these funds. Also set goals: reduce flood risk, etc.
		2. Bruce pointed out that Indian Creek WMA also did a plan with grant funds and it has led to good progress in the watershed.
		3. Will need match funds.
	3. James Drahos motioned that Holly move forward with pursuing these grant funds, Bob Axtell seconded. All approved, motion carried.
5. Committee Establishment:
	1. Grants Committee: Mike Tertinger, Mary Beth, Jodi Bailey, Josh Spies, and Holly Howard.
	2. Other potential committees discussed at the executive committee were Ag/rural, Outreach, Media-logos, web development-could be under outreach. This could stay on the agenda on a rolling basis and committees could form as needed.
		1. Jacob Donaghy posed the question, who comes up with the funds for the match-the grants committee? In the Indian Creek Watershed every board member (city and county entity) agreed to contribute startup funds.
6. Other Business:
	1. Fundraising: At the executive meeting the group discussed having each member organization donate $100 to $500 to create seed money for various items. However, one problem is that the LCWMA is not tax exempt as we are not yet a 501c3 (and it costs money to become one). Jeff Sorenson mentioned that donations could be made to the local community foundation in the name of the WMA and we could bypass becoming a 501c3 for now.
		1. Jen Fencl / ECICOG: Identified potential banking institutions (local to Watershed Coordinator AND Treasurer) – US Bank, and CBI Bank and Trust
		2. The magic number of funds we should maintain in account is at least $2,500- the minimum required so we could have a small business checking account without the fees.
		3. Need a federal tax ID for bank account.
		4. If several people are desired to sign on the checking account, its not an option with US Bank, so CBI might be our only option. However, due to different location of board members, one person should be able to purchase items as all expenses will be approved by the board before money is spent.
		5. Someone with the ability to create an invoice will have to do that function-Holly cannot.
		6. A county could donate their time and services to be the fiscal agent and resolve many of these issues. This would mean we wouldn’t have to be audited as well.
			1. Counties will go back to their staff and ask auditors if they would be willing to fulfill this role. Then, counties email Holly with their answers, executive committee can meet in the near future to determine the fiscal agent and communicate with the greater board via email as the next meeting is not until August. Then we can have cities and counties commit funds now, and pay later.
			2. Another option, if we could not get a fiscal agent established before the deadline of the Watershed Planning Grant, Holly could apply for this grant on behalf of the Muscatine SWCD or other entity.
			3. Discussion about where these match funds should come from-all partners or private money. There are many private organizations that might like to donate. However, through having seed money come from all members, it would show skin in the game and that this WMA has buy in. Cities, counties, SWCDs, as well as personal donations could be used.
			4. Bruce Frana/ Linn SWCD moved that we make a motion to get committed donations for future funds, MB Stevenson/ WB seconded. All approved, motion carries.
			5. Members may move forward with discussing fundraising with organizations. Getting organizations to commit to a number and then pay later once accounting is figured out.
7. Member Updates and Public Input:
	1. Holly gave an update on upcoming events-Cedar River Ramble Paddle on June 2nd, Greening YOUR Landscape Workshop on May 10th, Grazing for Succe$$ Workshop on June 19th.
	2. Farmer in the Indian Creek Watershed which is also located at the very top of the Lower Cedar WMA who has installed a saturated buffer, will be taking data on water quality
8. Speaker presentation: Flooding Issues-Josh Spies from The Nature Conservancy gave a presentation about flooding issues.
	1. Brief discussion followed with these main thoughts:
		1. We have to have a place to store water so we are not all sending the water downstream as quick as possible.
		2. Flood mitigation has been increasingly important
		3. Groups spend a lot of money fixing the same flooding areas year after year
		4. Stream mitigation will be needed.
		5. There is money to restore wetlands. Bob axtell said it went well working with Corps to install wetlands on his place.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.