



LOWER CEDAR WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, November 12th, 2024, 6:30 pm Cedar County Emergency Management Agency 1410 Cedar St, Tipton, Iowa

Board Members Present: Bill Waldie (Johnson County), Jodi Freet (Cedar County), Justin Shroeder (Cedar Rapids), Marty St. Clair (Linn County SWCD), Jon Bell (Cedar County), Kurt Kirchner (Muscatine County), Eric Furnas (Muscatine County), Travis Glynn (Muscatine SWCD), Brad Wylam (Linn County)

Others Present: Karen Kurt (ECICOG), Alyssa Comer (ECICOG), Carissa Shoemaker (Nature Conservancy), Marissa Cartwright (Linn County), Emery Davis (Heartland Cooperative), Ruth McCabe (Heartland Cooperative), Kate Giannini (Iowa Flood Center), Logan Mahoney (Iowa Flood Center), Chase Broulik (Tile Contractor)

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order by Chairperson Jon Bell at 6:00 pm
2. **Introductions**
3. **Approve Minutes from May 14, 2024, and August 13, 2024, Board Meetings**
Motion by Schroeder, seconded by Kirchner. Motion carried.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Waldie reports that the Lower Cedar WMA received \$1,000 from Linn County, and \$10,000 from Cedar Rapids today (November 12, 2024). The total funds for LCWMA are \$96,194, with \$26,444 for administration with Heartland and ECICOG. Waldie reports that this year is covered, but the board should start considering grant opportunities for the future. Motion to approve treasurer's report by Kirchner, seconded by Schroeder. Motion carried.
5. **ECICOG Staffing Update:** Kurt introduced ECICOG's new Environmental Specialist, Alyssa Comer. Kurt then reported to the group she is currently working on formalizing the service agreement so all watersheds that work with ECICOG are consistent in their verbiage. ECICOG will provide a finalized agreement at the first meeting of the quarter.
6. **Iowa Flood Center Hydro-Station Expansion and Hydrologic Modeling Update:** Giannini relayed to the group that the Iowa Flood Center was awarded one million dollars of congressional funding which allowed them to expand their hydro center by implementing weather stations, and groundwater wells. Giannini explained that water models add behavior changes to landscape to see how the watershed would react if those behaviors happened naturally. This data will help identify priority zones and will be good information to have for funding opportunities. Mahoney shared a slide on what-if scenarios that is part of her grad school project. Comer will send slides out to the group.
7. **Lower Cedar Conservation Outreach Update:** Davis provided a quarterly report from Heartland Co-op.
 - Davis introduced Broulik, the tile contractor working on the Batch and Build projects. There are three bioreactors, and 10 saturated buffer strips left to do, and should be complete the first week of December. 40 total projects will be completed with this project, and checks to farmers will be going out tomorrow (November 13th) that also cover the cost of crop damage. The next batch and build project will be focusing on Mud Creek.

- Davis reported there are currently 35,000 cover crop acres in Lower Cedar Watershed.
- McCabe reports that Stevenson shared a Fishers and Farmers grant opportunity that would fund Davis's position for two more years. Discussion begins about utilizing the Flood Center data, and the Lower Cedar WMA Plan to look at other grant opportunities as well. Bell agrees that LCWMA should go after whatever they're able to regarding grants.
- Schroeder explains that rather than starting a new project with Heartland Co-op, a contract extension would make most sense. Bell agrees and states a formal agreement should be written up once the grant is obtained. Bell asks for a motion to amend and extend the contract with Heartland when the time comes. Motion by Schroeder, seconded by Kirchner. Motion carried.
- Kurt explains that with the Fishers and Farmers grant, there is a match required. McCabe shares that Heartland keeps track of all the work they do in addition to grant requirements, and that an in-kind labor match should not be an issue. Motion to proceed with grant application. Motion by Bell, seconded by Schroeder. Carried.
- Discussion begins about an executive team that will meet to work on grant applications together.

8. The Nature Conservancy Lower Cedar Update:

- Shoemaker shares that TNC has hired a full time Habitat Specialist. This position is funded for 5 years, and they will be providing technical assistance to Muscatine NRCS.
- Shoemaker announces that TNC is starting a strategic planning process which includes revising and updating their Freshwater Action Map. Shoemaker asks for any input, as it is a working document with the goal to help partners understand where they will work.
- Shoemaker then shares that the Oxbow Restoration Toolkit has now been published. So far four out of twelve watersheds have been plotted for oxbow restoration sites using the toolkit. Shoemaker shares that this could also be helpful in seeking funding opportunities. Bell asks if TNC could provide a map focused only on the Lower Cedar.

9. Indian Creek Soil Health Partnership Update:

- Cartwright announces the new grant to fund her position is nearing the signing stage. This grant will expand her position to cover all of Linn County rather than just Indian Creek.
- Cartwright shares that she will present to Kirkwood next week, and that her and Jon Gallagher were on an episode of the Linn County Master Gardener's podcast, "Garden Wisdom".
- Cartwright shared that Maquoketa WMA was able to get cover crop funding at \$30 an acre through an EPA grant administered by the DNR, Bell explains that it is a very restricting grant and is not open to everyone.

10. Other Local Project Updates: St. Clair reports success for the IGS field trip in Lower Cedar earlier this fall, with a 25-person turnout.

11. Other Business: Bell calls for celebration about the amount LCWMA has accomplished and proposes a meeting once the batch and build project is complete. Heartland agrees to host an

event, ECICOG agrees to do press. McCabe mentions that Heartland is working to create a promotional video for the batch and build project.

12. Next Meeting: November 12 @ 6:30PM Cedar County EMA

13. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm by Jon Bell. Motioned by Schroeder, seconded by Waldie. Motion passed.

Next Meeting – February 11, 2025 @ 6:30 PM Cedar County EMA

Upcoming Event Summary:

- Linn County Partner Appreciation Day, December 4th, 2024, Ushers Ferry Historic Village, Cedar Rapids
- Prescribed Fire Workshop for Landowners, February 13th, 2025, Lee County