

Chapter 8 – Funding Section

“The only way forward, if we are going to improve the quality of the environment, is to get everybody involved.”

Richard Rogers



The following is a description of available funding sources for watershed management efforts that was adapted from the Iowa Stormwater Education Program.

8.1 Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Water Quality Initiative accepts applications on an annual basis for projects focused on improving water quality in urban areas. Preference points are given to projects within nine priority watersheds and the projects selected will be announced in March.

Watershed Development and Planning Grants are issued by the Division of Soil Conservation for Districts and watershed partners to complete projects such as watershed assessment, problem source identification, partnerships, and landowner support.

Water Protection Fund and/or Watershed Protection Fund offers financial assistance to SWCDs interested in watershed implementation grants and those interested are encouraged to contact Iowa DNR.

Watershed Improvement Review Board - The Board awards grants to improve water quality and flood prevention. Eligible applicants are local watershed improvement committees, soil and water conservation districts, counties, county conservation boards, public water supply utilities and cities. The Iowa Legislature makes annual appropriations to the Watershed Improvement Fund, which the WIRB administers.

8.2 Iowa Economic Development Authority

Vision Iowa - River Enhancement Community Attraction and Tourism Program was created to assist projects that will provide recreational, cultural, entertainment and educational attractions.

Community Development Block Grants can be used to fund water and sewer facilities and must comply with the Green Streets criteria. Applications are guided by the CDBG annual application workshop, which is held in conjunction with the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Funding Summit.

8.3 Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Grant Programs

319 Watershed Planning Grant is designed to assist interested groups in developing a Watershed Management Plan, which identifies problems in the watershed and proposes solutions for better water quality. Applicants are encouraged to contact their Iowa DNR Basin Coordinator.

319 Watershed Implementation Grant is designed to assist interested groups in putting their Watershed Management Plan into action. Applicants are encouraged to contact their IDNR Basin Coordinator.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a competitive, federally funded grant program that provides match funds of 50% for outdoor recreation area development and acquisition. All Iowa's cities and counties are eligible to participate and the deadline is in March each year.

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funding is appropriated by the Iowa Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. The program is divided into three categories.

- **City Park & Open Space:** Grant amount dependent on city size and is specifically for parkland expansion and multi-purpose recreation development.
- **County Conservation:** Thirty percent of this fund is automatically and equally allocated to all 99 counties to be used for easements or acquisition, capital improvements, stabilization and protection of resources, repair and upgrading of facilities, environmental education, and equipment. Another thirty percent is allocated based on population and the remaining forty percent is available through competitive grants.
- **Conservation Education Program (CEP):** An annual amount of \$350,000 is administered by a five-member board of landowners, naturalists, and educators. Funds are divided according to a standard application and mini-grants.

Loan Programs

Clean Water State Revolving Fund is jointly administered by the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) and Iowa DNR Clean Water Program is designed for publicly owned wastewater treatment works and non-point source project (both public and private entities). A list of priority projects is outlined by the Intended Use Plan on a quarterly basis.

Storm Water Loan Program is available at 3% interest for municipalities that are required to have an MS4 permit.

Water Resource Restoration Sponsored Projects Program reduces the overall interest rates on loans for projects designed to improve water quality where the wastewater treatment facility is located. Applications are approved by the Environmental Protection Commission on an annual basis.

8.4 Federal Agricultural Programs

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

The NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentive Program is a voluntary conservation program that provides financial assistance to individuals/entities to address soil, water, air, plant, animal and other related natural resource concerns on their land. EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species such as native prairie grasses that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program offering farmers the opportunity to protect, restore, enhance, and protect wetlands on their property. The NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. The NRCS goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection. Landowners who choose to participate in WRP may sell a

conservation easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with NRCS to restore and protect wetlands. The program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10-year duration. Landowners and NRCS then develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. As a requirement of the program, landowners voluntarily limit future use of the land, yet retain private ownership.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

The Grassland Reserve Program is a voluntary conservation program that emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland under threat of conversion to other uses. Participating farmers voluntarily limit future development and cropping uses of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to the production of forage and seeding, subject to certain restrictions during nesting seasons of bird species that are in significant decline or are protected under Federal or State law. A grazing management plan is required for participants.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their associated benefits through Agricultural Land Easements. ACEP is a new program designed to consolidate the WRP, GRP, and Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program. Land eligible for agricultural easements includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, and nonindustrial private forest land, while farmed or converted wetland that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored is eligible for wetland reserve easements. These programs require agricultural land easement or wetland reserve restoration easement plans to protect the land over the long-term.

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program is a voluntary program for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private lands. It provides both technical assistance and cost share payments to help native fish and wildlife species, reduce impacts of invasive species, and improve aquatic wildlife habitat. Participants work with NRCS to prepare a wildlife habitat development plan in consultation with the local conservation district. The plan describes the participant's goals for improving wildlife habitat, includes a list of practices and a schedule for installing them, and details the steps necessary to maintain the habitat for the life of the agreement. NRCS and the participant enter into a cost-share agreement for wildlife habitat development that lasts from 5 to 10 years.

