

**Boone County Watershed Committee
Don Williams Lake Watershed Improvement Project**

MEETING SUMMARY

August 3, 2011

6:30 pm

Pizza Ranch Restaurant in Boone

Attendees:

Kevin Griggs, Boone County Soil & Conservation District, Chair
Andy Hockenson, Boone County Conservation Board, Project Vice-Chair
Scott Smith, Boone County Landfill/KBCB, Project Secretary
Todd Sutphin, Iowa Soybeans Association, Watershed Plan Coordinator
Adam Kiel, Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Kevin Kordick, NRCS
Emily Klein, County Naturalist
Lois Powers, Boone County Landfill/KBCB
Jeremy Johannsen, NRCS
Jayne Smith, Boone County Soil & Conservation District

Approximately 22 land owners attended the meeting (not including children and grandchildren.)
Attendee lists are on file at the Boone County Soil and Conservation District Offices.

Welcome & Introductions: Kevin Griggs served as meeting facilitator and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Griggs and Smith introduced various staff in attendance.

Griggs and Scott Smith provided a review of watershed plan activities that have taken place since January of 2010.

Griggs provided a history of past efforts in the watershed including conservation practices and lake efforts. Smith reported on the IDNR watershed planning process, how the planning grant project evolved, and the activities that been undertaken. He also spoke about the Mobile Watershed Education Center and the Celebrate the Lake event held in June.

Watershed Assessments: Griggs introduced Adam Kiel from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Kiel presented an overview of the watershed's impairments. He also reviewed the various assessments conducted as part of the watershed improvement planning grant. These included land-use, stream and bank, gully and shore-line assessments.

Kiel demonstrated that past tillage practices that landowners have implemented over the past twenty years have made a very positive impact on the amount of silt entering the lake. This makes future watershed improvements more viable. He summed up the issue of sediment in the

lake as the loss of soil resource from area farms. Once that soil becomes sediment it is a lost resource for farmers to utilize. Hence the value of the tillage practices already implemented.

Kiel stated that recently the issue of bacteria impairment had come up in the Watershed based on water sampling at the beach. A number of factors could cause this including: the increased rainfall the past three years; cattle and other wildlife in the upper watershed, and; to a lesser degree, geese around the Lake.

See “Assessment Findings” on Don Williams Watershed web page

Watershed Plan: Griggs introduced Todd Sutphin of the Iowa Soybean Association. The ISA was contracted to develop the watershed improvement plan.

Sutphin described the planning process and the elements of an approvable plan. He stressed that any projects to be undertaken by property owners would be strictly on a voluntary basis. Sutphin stated that this is a long term process. A watershed plan covers 20 years.

Sutphin and Kevin Kordick of the NRCS detailed some of the possible Best Management Practices that could be indentified in the plan. Kordick stated that overall the watershed is in good shape. The increased water quantities over the past eight years have caused some localized problems.

See “Draft Plan” on Don Williams Watershed web page

Andy Hockenson, Director of Boone County Conservation, shared some of the ideas for the Lake and Park. These include increasing native grass buffer strips on the golf course next to shoreline and establishing a tiered system of sediment traps at the north end of the lake and north of the park. He added that the Golf Course does not use phosphorus based fertilizers so that is not an issue.

Hockenson reported that the Lake will be drawn down this fall to conduct spillway maintenance. During this, IDNR Fisheries will conduct a project (funded by a Fish Habitat Grant) to kill off the Gizzard Shad that have invaded the lake and decreased the other fish populations.

While the Lake is down, Kordick stated they will be able to better ascertain the level of silt in the north end of the lake where they want to construct a sediment trap.

Discussion:

Attendees had several questions and suggestions to offer. Some of these focused on issues in the upper watershed and drainage ways. One attendee asked if rip rap dams (ditch checks) in drainage ways is a workable strategy to slow down water. Kordick responded that could be an excellent strategy.

Another asked about drainage tile outlets. Projects could be undertaken to adapt outflow pipes so that they do not create stream bank erosion.

A person asked how the Conservation Board will pay for sediment removal and other work. Hockenson responded that currently the budget does not have money in it for this kind of work. An approved plan could open up other funding.

Someone else asked what portion of Don Williams is funded by fees at the Golf Course, camping etc? Hockenson stated most years the user fees and concessions fees pay almost 100% of operating costs.

Kiel referred to an Iowa State University study on the economic impact of lakes on local economies. Don Williams has a positive impact on the local and regional economy. An attendee asked if Don Williams was built for recreation or flood control. The Lake was built for recreation.

A person asked about bacteria and cattle crossings and if there were any programs to help farmers with this issue. Kordick stated there is funding through the Equip program.

Several asked where they could get more information on Best Management Practices. Kordick responded that the USDA/NRCS websites have information. Kiel added that the DNR hopes to create a Citizen's Guide from the various watershed improvement plans that are now underway.

Wrap Up/Next Steps: Sutphin provided the timeline of the project from this point forward. The plan must be submitted to the IDNR by November 15, 2011 for their review and approval. Once the plan receives IDNR approval it will be forwarded to the United States Environmental protection Agency for their review and approval.

Once approved by the USEPA, the plan can start implementation. Approval by the USEPA makes plan projects eligible for additional funding sources not currently available. As he had done so throughout the evening, Sutphin emphasized that all projects will be voluntary.

Sutphin also asked that any landowners interested in doing so could volunteer to help create a Don Williams Watershed Advisory Group. A sign-up sheet for this group was distributed and three landowners did volunteer to participate in the Advisory Group.

Additional Public Meetings will be held as the plan is developed. The Plan will become the guide for the watershed's property owners as they decide on which improvements to undertake on a voluntary basis. The plan, once approved the USEPA, will make improvement projects eligible for additional funding sources.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 7:35` p.m.