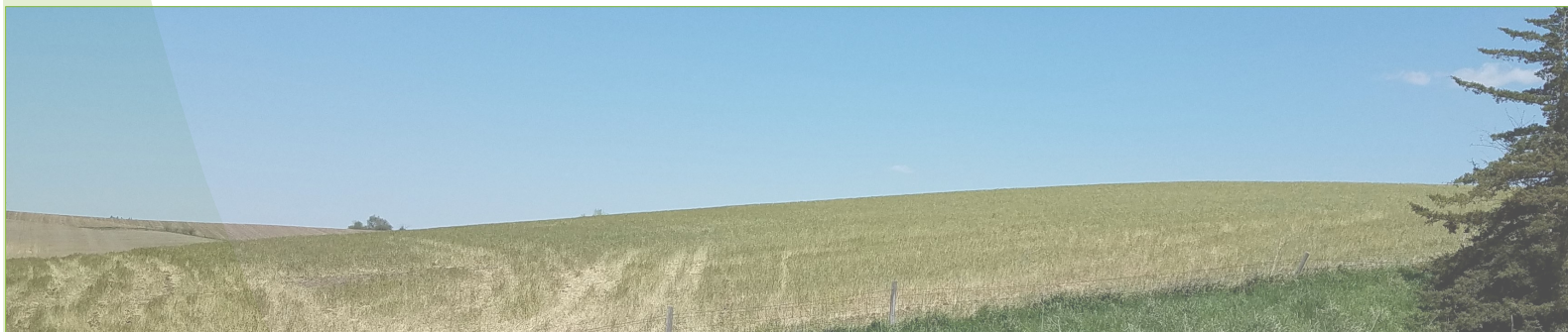



Johnson SWCD
51 Escort Ln.
Iowa City, IA. 52240
(319) 499-4826



All programs offered through the Johnson County SWCD and USDA-NRCS are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis with-out regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, marital status, or handicap.



Clear Creek Watershed—Upcoming Events

Clear Creek Watershed
**Picnic, Pot Luck
& Pie Contest** 
August 25th, 2018 11:00 am
F.W Kent Park
Bob White Pavilion

Family friendly gathering to get together and share good food and friendly conversation. Johnson County Cattlemen's Association will be providing their grilling expertise and great local beef. Please bring a dish to pass and your best pie for a pie contest! **You are invited!**

Clear Creek—Hydrology & Resiliency
August 29th, 2018
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
F.W. Kent Park
Conservation Education Center

Educational and public feed back meeting. Folks from the Iowa Flood Center will present. Our watershed management planner, East Central Iowa Council of Governments will seek your ideas and opinions.

Clear Creek—Water Quality
September 19th, 2018
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
F.W. Kent Park
Conservation Education Center

Educational and public feed back meeting. Folks from the Iowa DNR, Geological Survey, UNI & Flood Center will present. Our watershed management planner, East Central Iowa Council of Governments will seek your ideas and opinions.

In This Issue:

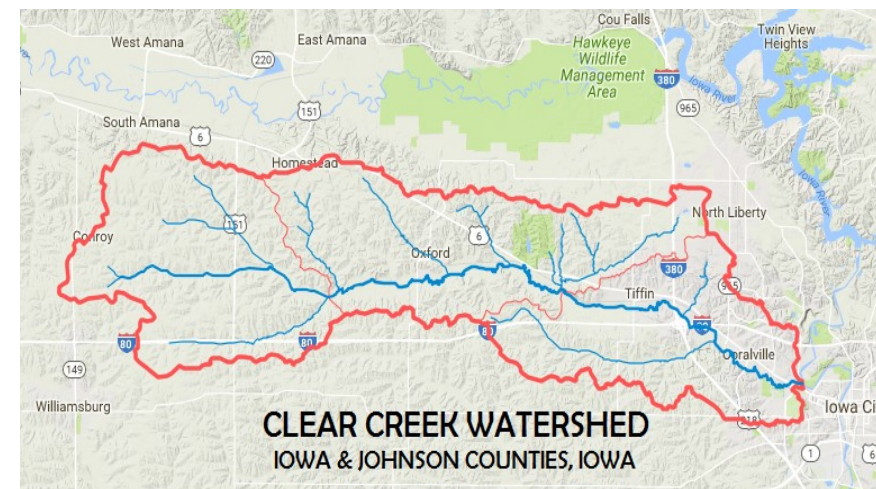
- ⇒ Project Background
- ⇒ A Watershed is....
- ⇒ Iowa Watershed Approach
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- ⇒ Your neighbors are getting involved.....
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Summer 2018



CLEAR CREEK NEWS

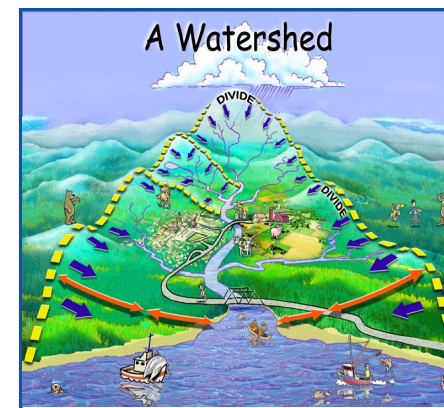
AN IOWA WATERSHED APPROACH PROJECT



Project Background

In 2016 the State of Iowa secured a \$96.7M federal FEMA Disaster Resilience Grant issued through Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to address flooding issues throughout the state. The grant was split up among different watersheds in the state. The Clear Creek Watershed was one of nine selected watersheds and received around \$3.1 million to construct water retention & water quality projects within the boundaries of the watershed. To see if you have land within the watershed, come to the Johnson Co. NRCS office, call 319-499-4835, or visit our website to view the interactive map:

www.clearcreekwatershedcoalition.org/maps.html



What is a Watershed?

A watershed is the land area that drains to a particular body of water such as a stream, pond, lake, wetland, river or ocean. Ridges and high points form the boundaries of watersheds; draws and valleys collect and transport precipitation into streams and ponds then river systems and eventually water moves to larger and larger water bodies. Watersheds follow the land and extend across county, state and national boundaries.

Watersheds, sometimes called basins, describe land area at different scales. Watersheds are nested, larger watersheds are made up from many smaller watersheds. Clear Creek is a part of the Iowa River Watershed which is a part of the Mississippi River Watershed (or basin), which is a part of the Gulf of Mexico Watershed.

No matter where you live, you live in a watershed.

As you can see above, there can be many types of land uses within a given watershed. Differences in land use can have significant impacts on how fast water flows off the landscape. Adding conservation practices and water retention structures in a watershed will reduce the time it takes for water to leave the landscape, reducing occurrences of flash flooding and improving water quality.

Focusing conservation efforts at a watershed level have shown to be an effective method for successful implementation with measurable results.

**ALSO, A
WATERSHED IS A
NEIGHBORHOOD
IT'S PEOPLE,
YOU AND ME,
LIVING,
WORKING,
PLAYING,
GROWING,
TOGETHER.**

Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS - Terrace Construction

ARK-D5-2G

Why a HUD grant?

Iowa is often referred to as the **most transformed state in the country**. Once dominated by tallgrass prairie, its transformation has made it a **highly efficient agricultural community that has been the backbone for the state's success** and whose productivity contributes greatly to feeding the world.

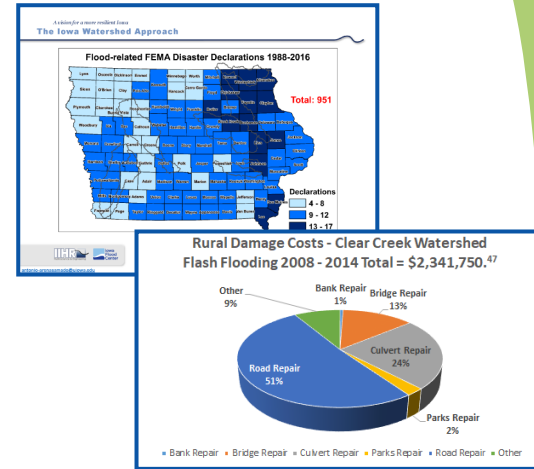
This transformation has drained 90% of our wetlands, and converted 99% of its original prairie to row crop, pasture, pavement, roofs and other hard surfaces. Through tiling, ditching, straightening streams, adding storm sewers and roads we have created a system that is highly effective at removing water from the landscape. **The transformation has shifted us from a**

landscape resilient to heavy rain events to one that is very susceptible to flash flooding and soil erosion.

From **1988-2016 Iowa had 951 flood related FEMA disaster declarations and ranks 4th in the nation** for the most declarations in this category, with many of the declarations occurring in east central Iowa. It's estimated that **damages from these events have totaled in the billions of dollars**. Flash flooding alone between 2008 -2014 (4 events), in the Clear Creek watershed, reported over \$2M in damages to roads, culverts and bridges. Because of our history of costly flood events, Clear Creek was 1 of 9 selected watersheds in the state to receive funding. **By taking a proactive approach and investing in flood reducing practices now, we can reduce occurrences of costly flood**

damage in the future.

This allows for more tax payer dollars to go towards community improvement instead of repairing damaged infrastructure, as well as helping to protect the wellbeing of our neighbors.



RESILIENCE: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; *toughness.*

Targeted Practices—What you can do to help.

Ponds, wetlands, oxbow & floodplain restoration, terraces and basins can all be designed to temporarily hold water during heavy rain events, reducing the occurrence of flash flooding down stream. These practices can also be placed in areas susceptible to erosion to prevent or fix gully formation.

75% cost-share is available to landowners for installing practices.

Projects are evaluated by the amount of water retained, area of drainage, and location in the watershed. Other practices are

also available for cost-share: **conservation cover (like prairie), buffer & filter strips (Non CRP), denitrifying bioreactors, grade stabilization, grassed waterways and saturated buffers.**

All projects are voluntary. Cost obligations will be determined before a landowner is committed to anything. Keep in mind, no single practice will be the cure-all. It will take a community effort between many landowners for project success.

Adding native prairie to your fields can have significant impacts on runoff and water quality. Many native prairie plants have stiff tall growing stems that can slow water and help keep soil on your land. They also have deep fibrous roots that promote water infiltration and nutrient uptake.

Studies have shown that adding just **10% native vegetation at**

Your neighbors are getting



involved.....

The Clear Creek Watershed Coalition hosted three kick off meetings last winter, one in Iowa County, one in Johnson County and one for contractors. We had **great** turn out, **44 farmers/landowners** and **45 different contractors!**

This is a testament to Clear Creek watershed's dedicated community members who care about their land and their neighbors.

Now is **your opportunity** to help improve Clear Creek's flood resilience.

We have 3 years to utilize these funds. Success of this project will ultimately be up to watershed residents stepping up and coming together to make lasting improvements towards our communities flood resilience.

Several projects are already in the works, but more will need to be installed to have a significant impact. If you believe your land has potential for projects contact me to set up an appointment for a site visit and consultation.

I look forward to meeting with you, on your land to see how we can come together to continue improving the area for future generations.

CONTACT:

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Johnson County SWCD | 51 Escort Ln. | Iowa City, IA. 52240

Phone: (319) 499-4835 | Email:

john.rathbun@ia.nacdn.net

Check out these websites to learn more about the project:

www.clearcreekwatershedcoalition.org

www.facebook.com/ClearCreekWatershed/

www.iowawatershedapproach.org/

www.jcswcd.org/clearcreek

strategic locations in crop fields can reduce water runoff by 40% as well as reducing sediment and nutrient runoff by 80-90%! Conservation cover, filter strips, contour buffers, and prairie **STRIPS** are all practices that help.

Taking steps to improve soil health can have significant impacts on how fast water moves off the landscape, as well as additional benefits to the producer such as improving plant nutrient uptake, protecting crops from drought or oversaturation, and reducing erosion. Adopting systems that utilize no-till and cover crops can increase organic matter by .1% a year. Although that may not sound like a lot, that equates to an additional 2,000 gallons of water per acre that can be stored in the landscape and over 10 years, an additional 20,000 gallons of water per acre!



The Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA) is a vision for Iowa's future that voluntarily engages stakeholders throughout the state at the watershed scale to achieve common goals, moving toward a more resilient Iowa. It is a replicable model for other communities where the

landscape has lost its natural resilience to floods. This program is not only about Iowans helping Iowans, but also about demonstrating Iowans' commitment to stewardship, to their neighbors, and to the future.

The goals of the IWA include the following:

- Reduction of flood risk;
 - Improvement in water quality;
 - Increased resilience;
 - Engagement of stakeholders through collaboration, outreach, and education;
 - Improved quality of life and health for Iowans; and
 - Development of a replicable program.
- To learn more about the IWA check out: www.iowawatershedapproach.org

