

MARCH 2023 | Southern Iowa Rural Water Association

QUENCH

news by the glassful

FEATURING ———
THE IOWA NUTRIENT
COLLABORATIVE



CONTENT



Publisher Iowa Rural Water Association

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QUENCH Magazine is published 2 times per year by the Iowa Rural Water Association (IRWA). The magazine is distributed by mail to IRWA members' consumers.

The IRWA Mission: To provide the highest leadership in the support of Iowa's water and wastewater industries through the provision of technical assistance, training and education, legislative, regulatory and public affairs, and financing activities.

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Southern Iowa Rural Water Association

Serving customers in Adair, Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Madison, Montgomery, Ringgold and Taylor Counties

Annual Meeting of the Membership

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

1:30 p.m.

Suptertel Inn & Conference Center

800 Laurel St., Creston, IA 50801

ELECTION CANDIDATES

The Agenda will include election of directors for a 3-year term.
for the following Counties:

Adams & Montgomery	-	Tony Mullen*
Clarke, Warren & Lucus	-	Anne Welker*
Ringgold	-	Joan Jackson*

*Denotes incumbent

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Call to order and welcome

John Walston, Board Chair

Introduction of Management Team & Board Members

Brenda Standley, Co-GM

Minutes of 2022 Annual Meeting

Amy Skogerson, Legal Counsel

2022 Financial Audit

Forge Financial & Management Consulting

Management Team Report

Jeff Rice, Co-GM

Aby Bauer, Office Manager

Chad Mahan, Operations & Construction

Roger Adkins, Water Treatment Plant

Election of Directors

Amy Skogerson, Legal Counsel

Comments from Public

Adjournment

A remote access link for meeting viewing only, will be available on our website – www.sirwa.org—the day of the meeting. The direct link will be listed as an alert.
If you choose to attend remotely you will **NOT** be able to vote for your district.



Join us for Coffee and Cookies.

If you feel you have received this invite in error and are no longer a SIRWA customer, please notify the office. Thank you!



PUMP STATION *UPGRADES*

We have been working on re-plumbing all of our pump station piping from PVC to ductile iron pipe. Several of our underground pumpstations have been moved above ground for ease of access and the safety of our staff. Currently, we are concentrating on the pressure zones that will be most impacted by the increase in system pressure once the new, 1 million-gallon, water tower is put into service. The goal is to eventually have all pump stations re-plumbed with ductile iron pipe.







THE GIFT OF WATER

LIFE SUSTAINING

Our bodies use water in all the cells, organs, and tissues, to help regulate body temperature and maintain other bodily functions. Because our bodies lose water through breathing, sweating, and digestion, it's crucial to rehydrate and replace water by drinking fluids and eating foods that contain water.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

Without water service, there would not be growing communities. Homes, offices, businesses and restaurants all need water service in order to become a part of a community.



FAR REACHING

The water drop represents the concept that from one drop, the ripples can travel very far. Our actions can have a lasting and far-reaching effect. It is also a reminder that a small but consistent action can, like the water drop, produce a very dramatic change. Just as a drop of water can change the shape of a stone, so too can our efforts bring dramatic change to Iowa.

BUDGET FRIENDLY

Currently, the average price of water in the United States is about \$1.75 for 1,000 gallons. At that price, a gallon of tap water costs a **little more than a penny**.

Compare that to:

Milk	\$ 2.45 per gallon
Cola (20 oz @ 2.39)	\$15.23 per gallon
Bottled Water (20 oz @ \$1.69)	\$10.82 per gallon
Flavored Coffee (16 oz @ 4.55)	\$36.40 per gallon
Gasoline	\$ 2.70 per gallon



FACINATING

Water is special in that it is the only substance that can exist in liquid, gas and solid form at Earth's ordinary temperatures. And, it is common to have all three phases together at the same time, such as in clouds. These three phases are the key to the water cycle. Here's how the cycle works:

Water evaporates from oceans, rivers and lakes and rises into the atmosphere where it condenses to form clouds. Precipitation then falls to the earth in the form of rain or snow where it flows into oceans, rivers and lakes and the process begins again.

BILLING OPTIONS

SIRWA offers both paper and paperless billing to our customers. Customers choosing paperless billing will receive their bills by e-mail. If you are interested in paperless billing, please contact the office.

PHONE 641-782-5744

or

EMAIL to billing@sirwa.org

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Customers can choose one of six options to pay their bill;

1. In person at our office
2. With a credit card over the phone
3. Placing your payment in the drop-box located by our flag pole
4. Mailing in a check
5. Setting up an automatic draft from a bank account
The ACH form can also be found on SIRWA's website or we can mail one to you your request.
6. Setting up a credit card (ACH), or pay online 24/7
by accessing the link on SIRWA's web site **www.SIRWA.org**.

Please note that if you use a bill-pay service through your financial institution it can take several days for the payment to reach our office.

IOWA NUTRIENT COLLABORATIVE creates network to raise of nutrient contamination in state's water supplies

By: Melissa Walker-Coordinator, Iowa Nutrient Collaborative

Dozens of public water supplies, golf course and even trailer parks, both rural and urban, are at risk from contamination from nutrients, mostly nitrogen and phosphorus.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources knows of at least 50 that have had to either treat for or blend water sources in order to meet drinking water regulatory standards for nitrate. Because of continued water quality challenges, a group of Iowa public water supplies formed the Iowa Nutrient Collaborative for Public Water Supplies in 2021. The group aims to serve as an information source to build collaborative among Iowa's rural and urban public water supplies that are challenged by management and treatment of nitrate in the state's rivers, lakes and streams.

This year, the Collaborative expanded to include stormwater and wastewater professionals in recognizing that all entities have a responsibility to educate the public about nutrient contamination in Iowa, work together to problem-solve, and engage new audiences in protecting source water.

As a state, Iowa realizes the need to reduce nutrient pollution in waterways. In 2013, the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy (INRS) was introduced as the plan for reducing nutrient overload, which are largely created by non-point agricultural sources. The INRS has been codified as the state's official water quality policy.

Protecting source water in Iowa's lakes, rivers, and streams has multiple benefits that include:

- Protection of drinking water sources and public health
- Protection and enhancement of recreational waters and aquatic habitats
- Promotion of economic development and prosperity, and an enhanced quality of life for all Iowans

While the INRS contains valuable and useful science, reductions in nutrient pollution have yet to be achieved; meanwhile, source

water continues to suffer from the effects of excess nutrient loads. The Collaborative brings together the technical, scientific and professional expertise of water professionals from across the state who, collectively, could have a powerful influence on the conversation around source water protection in Iowa. Support is needed to inform the public about the nutrient problem in Iowa and a network is needed to support water professionals in expanding the conversation across the state and to new audiences.

Collaborative takes message on the road

The Iowa Nutrient Collaborative is passionate about telling its members' stories about source water protection and the challenges Iowa's public water supplies face to provide safe, affordable drinking water to customers.

Since its creation, the group has presented at several events throughout Iowa, including the Iowa Chapter of the American Water Works Association fall conference in 2021. The Collaborative is scheduled to present again at the 2022 event and at the 2022 Iowa Water Conference. Collaborative members this spring talked about watershed protection with more than 100 land appraisers and farm managers at the Iowa Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers meeting.

Sharing the stories of its members is important to provide perspective and understanding of what treating and monitoring water quality means on a daily basis.



Almost 50 public water supplies in Iowa treat for nitrate, as shown with these green dots. Information courtesy of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

A source water specialist with the Iowa Rural Water Association and a member of the Iowa Nutrient Collaborative for Public Water Supplies, discussed the importance of source water protection, how utilities and water supplies can develop a plan and what resources are available for implementation. Part of developing a plan is talking to landowners about implementing management practices that can improve water quality, so Velvet Buckingham, an environmental specialist with IDALS and project coordinator with the Rathbun Lake Watershed project, joined the presentation. She shared "boots on the ground" methods for how to work with landowners on source water protection methods and where drinking water utilities of all sizes can seek resources and program assistance.



Des Moines Water Works CEO/General Manager Ted Corrigan speaks at the unveiling of the cover crop seeder about the utility's efforts to collaborate with others in a goal to increase the number of cover crops in the Des Moines River and Raccoon River watersheds.



Jennifer Terry, External Affairs Manager, Des Moines Water Works



Mary Beth Stevenson, Watersheds & Source Water Program Manager, Utilities Department, City of Cedar Rapids



Marty Braster, Support Services Officer, Rathbun Regional Water Association

Diverse membership offers variety of perspectives

Active members in the Collaborative come from diverse organizations across rural and urban Iowa and represent a number of perspectives. Current Collaborative members include small, medium and large utilities, Iowa Rural Water Association, Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership and advisers from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 7.

Additionally, the group established the following initiatives to protect source water:

- Raise awareness of the multiple benefits of reduced nutrient levels in Iowa's waters and elevate the urgency around reducing nutrient loads
- Identify and share "best practices" for the protection of drinking water sources. Best practices may be at the treatment level and/or at the watershed/prevention level
- Provide education and training opportunities for drinking water professionals
- Provide opportunities for networking and professional development
- Provide communication strategies for outreach to landowners, the public and policy-makers that accurately represent the urgency of nutrient reduction

In addition to presentations, the Collaborative hosts field day opportunities for its members to learn about best management practices, partnerships and other work being done in Iowa to improve water quality.

In July, members attended a field day in Des Moines, where the Central Iowa Cover Crop Seeder Project was unveiled. The seeder was purchased in a partnership among the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Polk County Supervisors, City of Des Moines and Des Moines Water Works, with ag retailer Heartland Cooperative managing the use of the seeder for interested customers in central Iowa who want to apply cover crops to their land.

Collaborative members had an opportunity to view the seeder, listen to representatives from each entity discuss the importance of the project, ask questions of those individuals, and network with water professionals and water quality partners and stakeholders from across Iowa and even the world.

Filling a Gap in Source Water Protection Education

The Collaborative, a grassroots-based organization, is building momentum. Collaborative members have together developed presentations and engaged new audiences around the

state to demonstrate the need and develop support among new and unlikely allies in the importance of source water planning and protection efforts.

In addition to educating new audiences about source water protection, the Collaborative continues to work to establish education and outreach for public water supplies across the state and provide water professionals with education, training and a sense of community as they struggle to meet regulatory standards.

In order to ensure sustainability for the Collaborative, the executive committee is seeking funds to support the coordinator position, fund academic research about source water protection communication, and offer in-person educational and networking opportunities for water professionals around the state including important work in rural and suburban areas.

Drinking water utilities that treat for nitrate are welcome to join, along with any utility, no matter how big or small, or any interested water quality stakeholder organization.

For more information about membership or to request a meeting with the Collaborative, contact coordinator Melissa Walker: mwmediaconsultants@yahoo.com.



Will Hoffmann, a conservation agronomist with Heartland Co-op, explains how the cover crop seeder works to members of the Des Moines Water Works senior management team and others from the utility. Ag retailer Heartland Co-op is managing use of the seeder for interested customers in central Iowa who want to apply cover crops on their land. The seeder was unveiled at a public event, which was a field day opportunity members of the INC could take advantage of to learn about the project and network with other drinking water producers.



The Central Iowa Cover Crop Seeder project is a partnership among Des Moines Water Works, the city of Des Moines, Polk County Supervisors with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.



ARTICLE DRAFT:

West Lake Okoboji, the deepest natural lake in Iowa, was carved by a glacier over 14,000 years ago – and to this day is one of only three blue water lakes around the world. Home to one of the most robust summer tourism communities in the midwest, and the oldest roller coaster west of the Mississippi, West Lake Okoboji is also the source of some of the softest water around. Perfect for brewing beer.

HOME BREWED

After 10 years of homebrewing, and then market and feasibility research, Matt and Michaela Matthiesen opened up West O Beer in 2013. “We loved brewing beer, and we saw an opportunity in Okoboji to share that love.



Really, of all the goals that people set when they start a company, we simply wanted to be recognized as “the local craft beer” by members of our already amazing community.” Matt said. Why here, of all places? “Okoboji is known for one thing: water. This resource also happens to be the most important ingredient in beer. And we wanted to brew it where we could get, and showcase the best.”

Two coveted Great American Beer Fest gold medals and nine years later, West O Beer has showcased this water source to the tune of 19,000 barrels of brewed beer—roughly enough beer to fill at Olympic-sized swimming pool.

At seven miles long by two wide, and protected by surrounding wetlands, West Lake Okoboji is fed by a subterranean spring, making its water naturally soft. Most breweries have to add minerals necessary to artificially treat and soften their water, or simply leave them out. Matt and Michaela knew this unique resource was also one their business should help protect. Part of West O Beer’s mission from its very founding was the will to work hand in hand with local and regional clean water groups, to connect their beer directly with Lakes Area efforts protecting that very water source, and the very livelihood of

the Lakes Area. An early conversation with Keep Okoboji Blue’s Deidre Rosenboom and Kyle Hamilton sparked a deep partnership between the two—and Blue Canoe was born, a collaborative beer that raises money and awareness for Keep Okoboji Blue’s efforts.

Founded in 2005, Keep Okoboji Blue spreads the importance of water quality and the protection of the Iowa Great Lakes’ ecosystem through environmental campaigns, water and beach cleanups, and other efforts. Fighting the potential impact that pollution runoff and aquatic invasive species can have on the lake’s environment, and the potential considerable economic impact on the people that live in the Lakes Area, Keep Okoboji Blue frequently organizes volunteer cleanup efforts both on and off the water, educational events around the Lakes Area, and advocacy campaigns around lake friendly lawn care, low impact developments, and those invasive aquatic species.

“Keep Okoboji Blue’s long-term vision and specific focus on the Okoboji area made for a natural partnership,” Matt said. “Our beer starts with our water, and each and every pint of Blue Canoe poured goes right back into taking care of that very water and the Lakes Area ecosystem.” Since releasing the beer on May 21st, West O and Keep Okoboji Blue have partnered on water and lakes cleanups, an environmental symposium, and the proceeds from those events and Blue Canoe sales have raised over \$8,000 for the Keep Okoboji Blue endowment.

TAKING ROOT

For West O, such programs reflect their increased commitment to water quality initiatives, land and soil conservation efforts, and community engagement.



In April of 2022, West O Beer launched their Taproots initiative as a way to formally and more deeply establish a framework for giving back to the community that has given so much to the brewery. Formally, Taproots draws deeply from West O's passions – tapping into its beers and spaces to give back through the following programs:

- (1) ON TAP: Beers brewed at the source with collaboration and community in mind from step one.
- (2) ON THE GROUND: Activities throughout the Lakes Area that clean, conserve, preserve and showcase our home.
- (3) ON US: Fundraising events at the West O Beer taproom that highlight the incredible work of area nonprofits and initiatives.
- (4) WEST O GIVING: General donations and sponsorships benefiting the Lakes Area. To date, West O Taproots has raised over \$30,000 for area organizations and initiatives, as well as deepening relationships in the Lakes Area.

BLUE WATER

Two of those important relationships are set to directly engage West O further in water quality efforts state-wide next year.



Starting in 2023, one student from an Iowa Board of Regents university will spend a summer researching at the Lakeside Lab as the “West O Water Quality Research Intern.” Founded in 1909, Lakeside Lab is now a 147-acre research lab and outdoor community resource located on Little Miller’s Bay, West Lake Okoboji. Each year, the Lab hosts dozens of researchers, artists, and experts across disciplines and scientific fields. Partnering with Lakeside Lab will now also directly impact one Iowa student’s education – and water quality research not only in the field, but in West O’s backyard.

Further afield, West O looked at Blue Canoe and their distribution map and wondered if that same playbook could do more – if connecting their beer with water quality efforts could take root across the entire state of Iowa.

Beginning in late-2022, West O Beer began rebranding their tap handles as part of a commitment to cleaning up waterways beyond the Lakes Area. In partnership with Doll Distributing, “Blue Taps = Blue Water” will feature new, water-inspired blue coated tap handles – signaling to patrons that West O Beer enjoyed anywhere those blue handles are found is directly impacting and protecting

their water. To start, West O Beer and Doll Distributing are donating a portion of each keg sold in Northwest Iowa to Keep Okoboji Blue. Further partnerships with water quality nonprofits and efforts in Central Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota are forthcoming.

“Again, it always comes back to water for us,” Matt said. “Awesome Water = Awesome Beer has always been a kind of slogan for us. And if West O Beer can connect craft beer lovers across the state and beyond with water quality initiatives protecting their water, wherever our beer is sold, poured, and enjoyed...that just makes for even more awesome water, and more awesome beer.”

(And for what it’s worth, anyone who would like to see their local watering hole contribute to making their water better, kindly ask them to put West O Beer’s blue handles on their tap lines!)





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Water Matters

DID YOU KNOW.....?

- ❖ 2 % of the earth's freshwater resources cannot be used because they are in glaciers.
- ❖ 10 inches of snow is the equivalent of one inch of rainwater.
- ❖ The world's snowiest city is Aomori City in Japan.
- ❖ Flushing toilets uses the most water in a household.
- ❖ About 5 gallons of water will run down the drain if you leave a faucet on for one minute.
- ❖ A watershed is an area of land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river or lake.
- ❖ Plant roots are especially good at holding soil in place and keeping dirt from washing away.
- ❖ Snowflakes have six sides.
- ❖ Sand and gravel are very good at removing dirt and contaminants from river water as water sinks down through it.
- ❖ The zone of water saturation below ground is called a water table.
- ❖ 75-80% of the earth's surface is water.
- ❖ The world's largest snowman was built in Austria and is 38.04 meters tall or around 124 feet.
- ❖ People are being encouraged to plant wetlands because they are especially good at soaking up pollutants like fertilizer and pesticides so they do not get into lakes, rivers and streams.