



Iowa Water Quality Initiative:

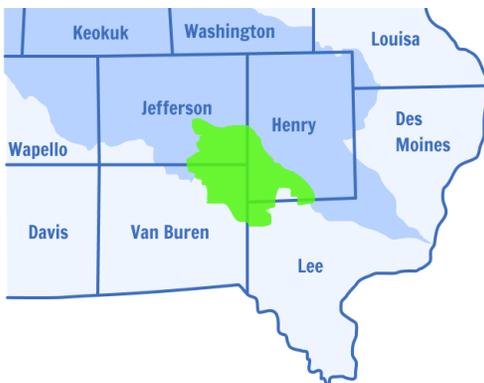
Lower Skunk River Watershed Project



The Lower Skunk River Watershed contains 134,541 acres and seeks to engage all stakeholders in improving water quality and soil health through a collaborative, research-based approach. The project aims to work with farmers, as well as, rural and urban residents to adopt conservation practices that fit their unique needs, lands, and budgets.

Watersheds and Gulf Hypoxia

Watersheds are areas of land where all the water drains to the same creek, stream, or river. In Iowa, as water moves through a watershed it picks up nitrogen and phosphorous and deposits them into the Mississippi River and eventually the Gulf of Mexico. Nitrogen spurs algae blooms which depletes the water in oxygen, killing all aquatic life in the area. In 2017, this created a 3.7 million acre 'dead zone'.



Trends you see impacting the watershed

- Large farm corporations
- Declining rural population
- Changing land ownership: Intergenerational and absentee
- Statewide recognition that clean water is important
- Fewer animals on grass
- Conservation practices: Cover crops, no till, waterways, and filter strips

“Everyone and everything is connected to a watershed. Collectively, we have a responsibility to our land and water.. I can help you figure out and meet your own goals for water quality and soil health. We have cost-share and informational resources available”

Miranda Haes, Lower Skunk River Watershed Coordinator



Miranda Haes, our Watershed Coordinator

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Community Dialogue and Project History

We'd like to say a great big thank you to everyone who participated in any of our 3 community dialogues this Winter. It was great to see familiar faces and meet new ones! A summary of the conversations is below. Already, new activities are being planned as a result of the conversations.



Key Themes You Shared



Community Participation & Engagement
"Hope for More"



Water Quality & Land Management
"Healthy land, healthy people"



Watershed Communities
"Who makes the decisions?"

You Said the Watershed Needs

Buffers	No till	Cover crops	Public interest
Active participants	Involved landowners	Conservation Funding	Access to information
Appropriate manure management	Research on alternative crops	Good advice from knowledgeable folks	Communication: website, newsletter
Increased wildlife habitat			

Next Steps

"We are putting your ideas for more communication and outreach into action. Please, contact me, if you are willing to represent the watershed at an event, let me take pictures of your fields, or interview you."

Miranda Haes, Lower Skunk River Watershed Coordinator



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