



North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership Project

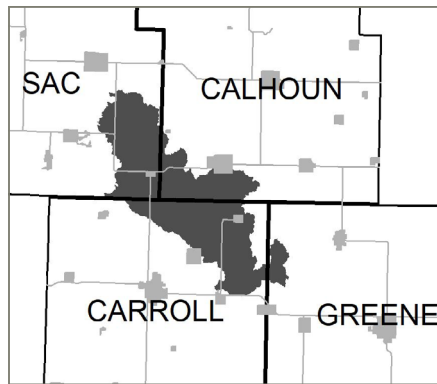


The North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership: an Iowa Water Quality Initiative to implement in-field and edge-of-field practices that keep nitrogen and phosphorus out of Iowa waters.

Announcing the North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership

Following the successful completion of the Elk Run watershed project, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) recently awarded an expansion grant to Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) for the North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership.

The project's total budget of \$2.6 million, including partner contributions, spans three years. The Iowa Water Quality Initiative (WQI) project promotes the adoption of conservation agriculture practices in four counties and five sub-watersheds within the North Raccoon River basin, including Elk Run.



The goals of the project are the installation of edge-of-field systems and the adoption of cover crops, as well as tile and stream water monitoring, and collection in-field data on nitrogen behavior in manure systems.

The project goals support the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy recommendations. The strategy, in place for five years this spring, calls for a 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus in Iowa's waters before they enter the Mississippi River.

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GOALS:

15
BIOREACTORS

15
SATURATED
BUFFERS

1
WETLAND
DESIGN AND
CONSTRUCTION

11,500
COVER CROP
ACRES



CREP Wetland



Project Coordinator Diane Ercse

Kicking off the North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership

A newly launched Water Quality Initiative will help farmers and landowners in five watersheds to adopt conservation practices that reduce nitrogen and phosphorus entering waterbodies.

The North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership is managed by Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA), and supported by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), Iowa Soybean Association (ISA), and Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance (IAWA).

The three-year project, located in Sac, Calhoun, Carroll and Greene Counties, kicked off with a ceremony at a bioreactor site on the Mark Schleisman farm near Lake City. Schleisman installed a bioreactor and a saturated buffer on his farm in 2013. The site served as an ideal backdrop for the announcement led by Iowa Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Julie Kenney.

"We're [IDALS] proud of this work. It's a great opportunity to showcase the progress that's been made," said Kenney. "As we celebrate Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week, we'll be celebrating 55 projects across the state, with the North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership being one. We are looking forward to continued momentum."

The Farm to River Partnership uses a different approach to getting conservation practices on the ground by recruiting ACWA members and partners to help. The ACWA retail members believe that their agronomists are trusted sources for farmers and landowners; the people with literal "boots on the ground" and know their clients' fields and operations well.

Through the grant project, retail agronomists will be equipped with knowledge of conservation practices and where they work best prior to consulting with their clients. The Nature Conservancy's 4R Plus materials will be used in training and education of agronomists, farmers and landowners. The 4R Plus campaign brings awareness of nitrogen management: the right source, right time, right rate and right place, as well as information about in-field and edge-of-field practices that improve soil health and water quality.



"WE'RE [IDALS] PROUD OF THIS WORK. IT'S A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE THE PROGRESS THAT'S BEEN MADE,"

Julie Kenney,
Iowa Deputy Secretary
of Agriculture

How you can get involved

THE NORTH RACCOON FARM TO RIVER PARTNERSHIP OFFERS FUNDING FOR PRACTICES TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY.

BIOREACTORS
100% PAID

SATURATED BUFFERS
100% PAID

COVER CROPS
\$20/ACRE PAID

TARGETED WETLANDS
CONSTRUCTION
100% PAID,

PLUS CRP PAYMENTS 10-15 YEARS



OTHER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Replicated strip trials to evaluate potential practices through the Iowa Soybean Association On-Farm Network®
- Tile water monitoring at no expense to farmers
- Whole farm conservation assessments, which can identify resources for other practices not covered by the grant

Elk Run watershed project wraps up

The three-year project in the Elk Run watershed was completed this spring. Prior to the project, the Elk Run 23,380-acre watershed had one of the highest nitrogen concentration levels recorded in Iowa. The project focused on one-on-one conversations with farmers and landowners to adopt farming practices that reduce nutrient losses from their fields.

With cost-share funding, farmers and landowners in the Elk Run watershed adopted cover crops on over 2,000 acres, installed five bioreactors and two saturated buffers. Additionally, conservation plans were created that cover over 1,500 acres. Tile water monitoring was conducted at 30 sites. There were 15 outreach events for watershed residents to learn about conservation practices and the watershed project.

4R Plus Field Day

When: July 31, 9:30 am to 2:45 pm

**Where: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach FEEL farm
1928 240th St, Boone, Iowa**

Cost: FREE to attend, lunch is included

Farmers, agronomists and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to hear from experts who will present ways to use the 4Rs, plus conservation

practices to achieve maximum profitability, yields and environmental stewardship. Attendees participating the whole day can receive six continuing education (CEU) credits toward their certified crop adviser (CCA) certification.

The 4Rs of nutrient management involve applying the right source, at the right rate, at the right time and in the right place. The 4R Plus program looks at how adding conservation practices to good nutrient management can help farmers further improve their soil health and water quality.

For more information, visit the ISA's website. iasoybeans.com or RSVP to sheath@iasoybeans.com



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ACWA MEMBERS

Ag Partners LLC (Des Moines River & Raccoon River)
www.agpartners.com

First Cooperative Assoc. (Raccoon River)
www.first.coop

Gold-Eagle Cooperative (Des Moines River)
www.goldeaglecoop.com

Heartland Co-op (Des Moines River & Raccoon River)
www.heartlandcoop.com

Helena Chemical Company-Midwest Division (Raccoon River)
www.helenachemical.com

Key Cooperative (Des Moines River)
www.keycoop.com

Landus Cooperative (Des Moines River & Raccoon River)
www.landuscooperative.com/

NEW Cooperative, Inc. (Raccoon River)
www.newcoop.com

Nutrien Ag Solutions (Raccoon River)
www.cpsagu.com

Pro Cooperative (Des Moines River & Raccoon River)
www.procooperative.com

Van Diest Supply (Des Moines River & Raccoon River)
www.vdsc.com



ACWA is a non-profit organization of 11 ag retailers in the Des Moines and Raccoon River watersheds, that agree water quality is vital to the future of farming. By helping their farmer clients with management options, adopt conservation practices, ACWA members are making strides toward the alliance's goals of farmer profitability combined with improving water quality.

www.acwa-rrows.org Twitter: @ToPartnership

