

Secretary Naig Announces Sac County ‘Batch and Build’ Water Quality Project

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will utilize the successful “batch and build” model with partners in Sac County to install bioreactors and saturated buffers

DES MOINES, Iowa (July 10, 2024) – Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig announced today that the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship has formed a partnership with Sac County and the Sac County Soil and Water Conservation District to launch the first phase of the North Raccoon Edge-of-Field Project within the county.

Landowner outreach is just beginning within the county, but the initial goal of the first phase of this water quality project is to install more than 30 bioreactors and saturated buffers in the North Raccoon River watershed. These edge-of-field practices, which are outlined in the science-based Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, are proven to improve water quality and reduce the loss of nutrients into Iowa’s waterways.

Iowa’s innovative “batch and build” model modernizes the project management process by installing batches of conservation practices on multiple farms at once, therefore allowing a faster acceleration of water quality progress. As a result of this efficient and cost-effective model, Iowa is setting records for conservation implementation, and is building momentum behind our statewide water quality efforts. To date, Iowa now has nine batch and build agreements in place that cover 16 Iowa counties including Sac, Calhoun, Wright, Cedar, Hardin, Jasper, Boone, Benton, Tama, Linn, Grundy, Black Hawk, Buchanan, Story, Polk and Dallas.

“I invite and encourage all Sac County farmers and landowners to learn about how they can join this exciting water quality partnership,” said Secretary Naig. “Saturated buffers and bioreactors are proven to keep nutrients out of our rivers, lakes and streams and our batch and build model gets them installed efficiently. We are building conservation momentum across Iowa and by forming this partnership in Sac County, we can accelerate the installation of these practices to further improve Iowa’s water quality.”

Sac County will act as the fiscal agent for the project and provide contracting oversight for practice installation. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will reimburse Sac County for eligible project construction costs and provide technical, design and engineering support. The Sac County Soil and Water Conservation District will enter into maintenance agreements with landowners, provide technical assistance and issue a certification upon completion. Agriculture’s Clean Water Alliance will lead landowner outreach and provide technical assistance to the project.

“I am looking forward to working with landowners in Sac County and coordinating with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University researchers and local contractors in completing the installation of water quality practices through a batch and build process,” said Brian Blomme, Drainage Engineer for Buena Vista, Calhoun and Sac Counties. “We all must work together in protecting and improving the quality of water and implementing the correct practices when it is cost effective to do so. I encourage any interested landowner to reach out to us if they are interested in participating”

Interested farmers and landowners can contact the [Sac County Soil and Water Conservation District](#) office, located within the county’s USDA Service Center in Sac City, or [Agriculture’s Clean Water Alliance](#) to learn more about participating.

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About the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Led by Secretary Mike Naig, the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship serves the rural and urban residents that call Iowa home. Through its 14 diverse bureaus, the Department ensures animal health, food safety and consumer protection. It also promotes conservation efforts to preserve our land and enhance water quality for the next generation. Learn more at iowaagriculture.gov.