

Long-term Investments in Land Protection in Flood Plains

Wetlands, Wildlife Habitat, and Flood Hazards in the Cedar River Basin

Wednesday, May 16, 2012
Center for Energy and Environmental Education
University of Northern Iowa

Vern Fish

Executive Director

Black Hawk County
Conservation Board



America's Most Endangered River

The Cedar River is #5 on the list of endangered rivers due to outdated flood management, *Americans Rivers*.

Side streams have been straightened;

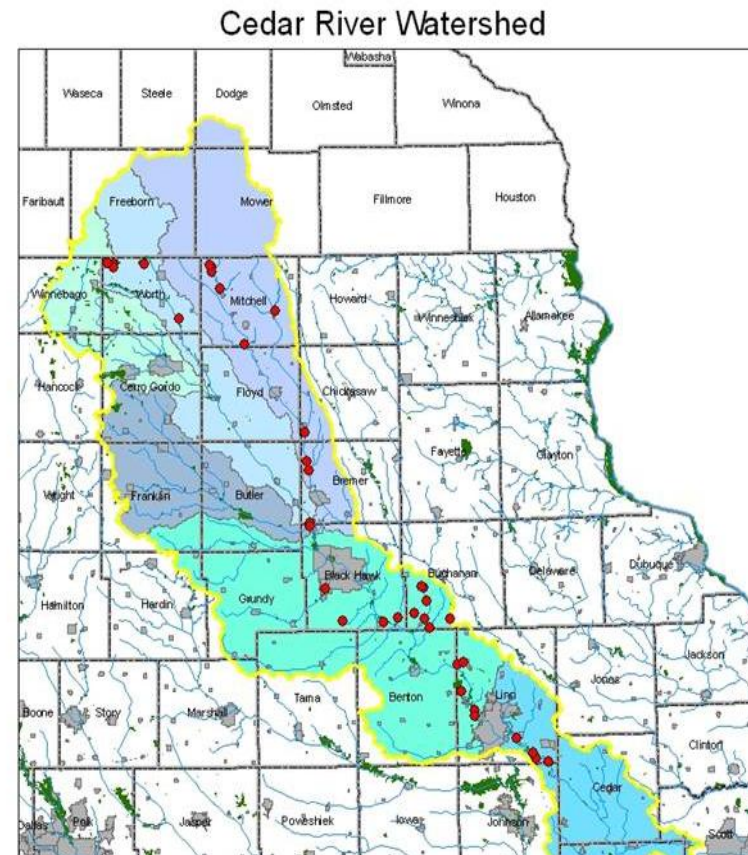
90% of its wetlands drained;

its prairies have replaced with annual crops;

Its floodplains filled & developed and

the Cedar Valley has been hit with two 500 floods years in 15 years!

*“We need to incorporate a **holistic, non-structural, natural solutions** that provide flood protection, improve water quality, enhance fish & wildlife habitat and provide recreational & economic benefits to local communities.”*



The Flood of 2008

The communities along the Cedar River experienced catastrophic flooding in 2008!

WEDNESDAY
JUNE 11, 2008

THE COURIER



MATTHEW PUTNEY / Courier Photo Editor
This is a view from the air of the widespread flooding in the Cedar Valley. This shows the interchange of Highway 218 and Highway 57 in Cedar Falls with downtown Cedar Falls at the top.

FLOODS OF 2008

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WATERLOO www.wfcourier.com CEDAR FALLS



DENNIS MAGEE / Courier Regional Editor

Bridges away

The bridge over the Cedar Valley Nature Trail went under when the Cedar River rose to historic levels. Thursday the bridge appeared to have suffered extensive damage.

Cedar River Watershed Coalition

A diverse group of individuals and organizations have joined together to form the **Cedar River Watershed Coalition**.

The purpose of the Cedar River Watershed Coalition,

Is to facilitate cooperation within the watershed

*organize and advocate for land practices and policies
(federal, state, and local)*

to reduce future flood damage and improve water quality.

County Conservation Boards

As part of the Cedar River Coalition, the 22 county conservation boards in the watershed began talking about their role in watershed management.

*CCB's acquire and management "wild lands" that help hold and clean water.

*CCB's also provide environmental education through their nature centers and naturalists.



Interpretative Plan

Working together, the 22 CCB's raised enough money to hire the E Resources Group to write an Interpretative Plan.

E Resources held three focus groups meetings in the Cedar River Watershed to gather feedback on what messages resonate with various constituencies:

Charles City (Upper Cedar)

Waterloo (Middle Cedar)

Cedar Rapids (Lower Cedar)



Messages that Communicated Broadly

We're all in this watershed together

The Cedar River: It's OUR watershed and OUR responsibility

It costs more to repair flood damage...then it does to reduce flooding.



Healthy land has soils that absorb water

Woodlands, wetlands and prairies are a large part of solution

Our land & water resources play a role in everyone's business

We're all in this watershed together

Themes:

**Wild lands can absorb floodwater and reduce the damage of future floods.*

**Wild lands provide clean water, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities*

Outreach Recommendations:

Develop a consistent outreach program to service club members/community leaders that carries a natural resource based flood reduction message.



We're all in this watershed together

An interpretation and outreach plan for the Cedar River Watershed County Conservation Boards



REAP

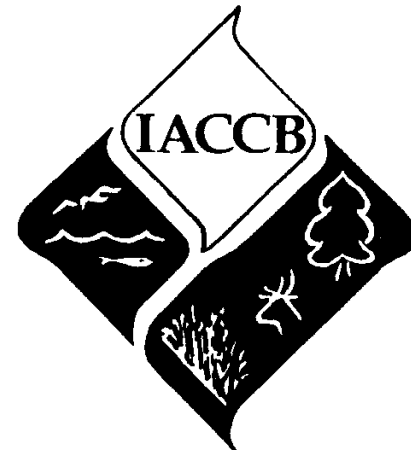
Conservation Education Program

On November 21, 2011 the REAP CEP Board approved a \$49,000 grant to the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards (IACCB) to create and implement a Cedar River Watershed Education Program



The County Conservation Directors Association (CCDA) have provided a \$3,000 match.

Iowa DNR is currently exploring the possibility of providing an additional \$50,000 match.



Products to be developed

Logo – A logo is being developed as a branding tool. The scenic byways logo is being used as a model. This logo will be designed so it can be adapted by other watersheds



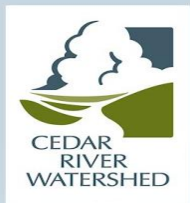
PowerPoint – This slide show will tell the story of the Cedar River Watershed and give community leaders the information they need to make informed decisions in their community.

PSAs – 3 to 4, 30 second PSA's will be developed to air on local TV stations. These PSA's will be aired in coordination with the release of several feature articles.

Feature Stories – Larry Stone has been hired to write 12 feature stories to be released to local newspapers in the watershed.

Displays – Portable displays will be developed for use at county fairs and special events.

Highway Signs – These signs will be located in strategic locations to call attention to the Cedar River Watershed.



Mobile Watershed Education Center

A watershed trailer will supplement & complement the watershed awareness campaign.

It will become a moving billboard that can be used at county fairs, river cleanups, field days, workshops, summer camps, bioblitzs, and farm field days.

Currently we are doing a survey of the 22 county conservation boards to see how if this is a tool they would be willing to use.





Iowa View

Before 'next time': Reclaim flood plains along the river

In June a report issued by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program, a joint effort of more than a dozen government agencies concluded that the extreme weather we've been experiencing will become more extreme. This is due to climate change.

The report suggested that, with a warmer climate, droughts will get drier, storms will get stronger, and floods will get deeper. The report noted that "currently rare extreme events will become commonplace."

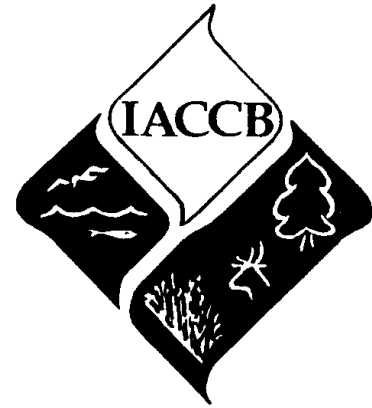


State Sen. **JOE BOLCKORN** is a Democrat from Iowa City. Contact: jobolckorn@legisstate.iowa.gov
Democrat from Cedar Rapids. Contact: rob.hogg@legis.state.iowa.gov

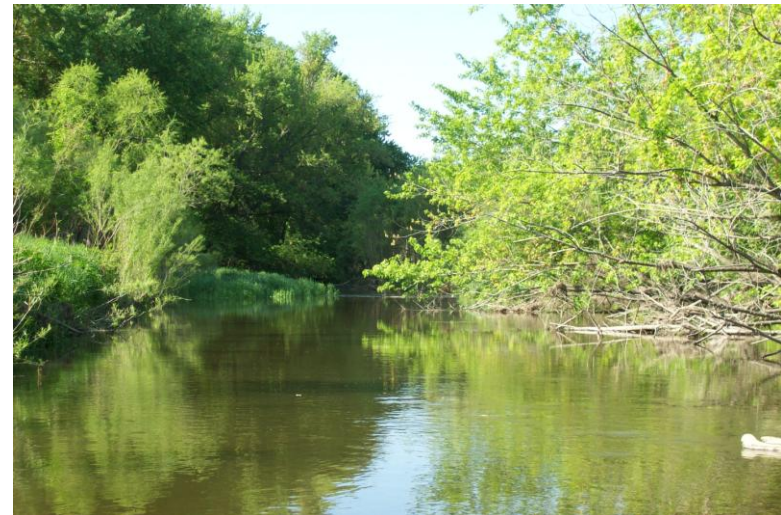
County Conservation Boards

County Conservation Boards were created by the Iowa General Assembly in 1955 and were authorized to acquire, develop, maintain, and make available to the inhabitants of the county, ***public museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreational centers, county forests, wildlife and other conservation areas....***

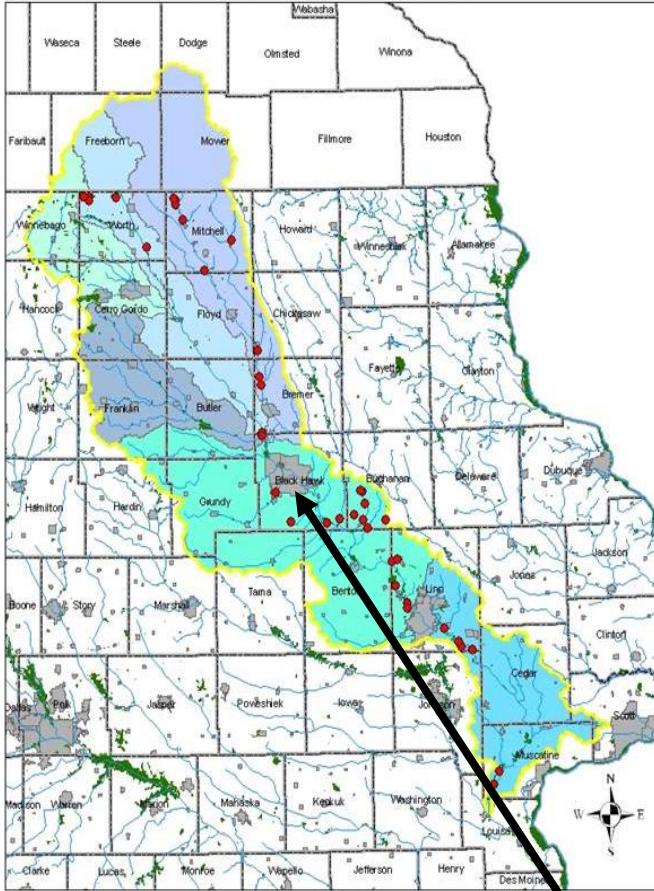
***CCB's have the ability to acquire and management "wild lands" that help hold and clean water.**



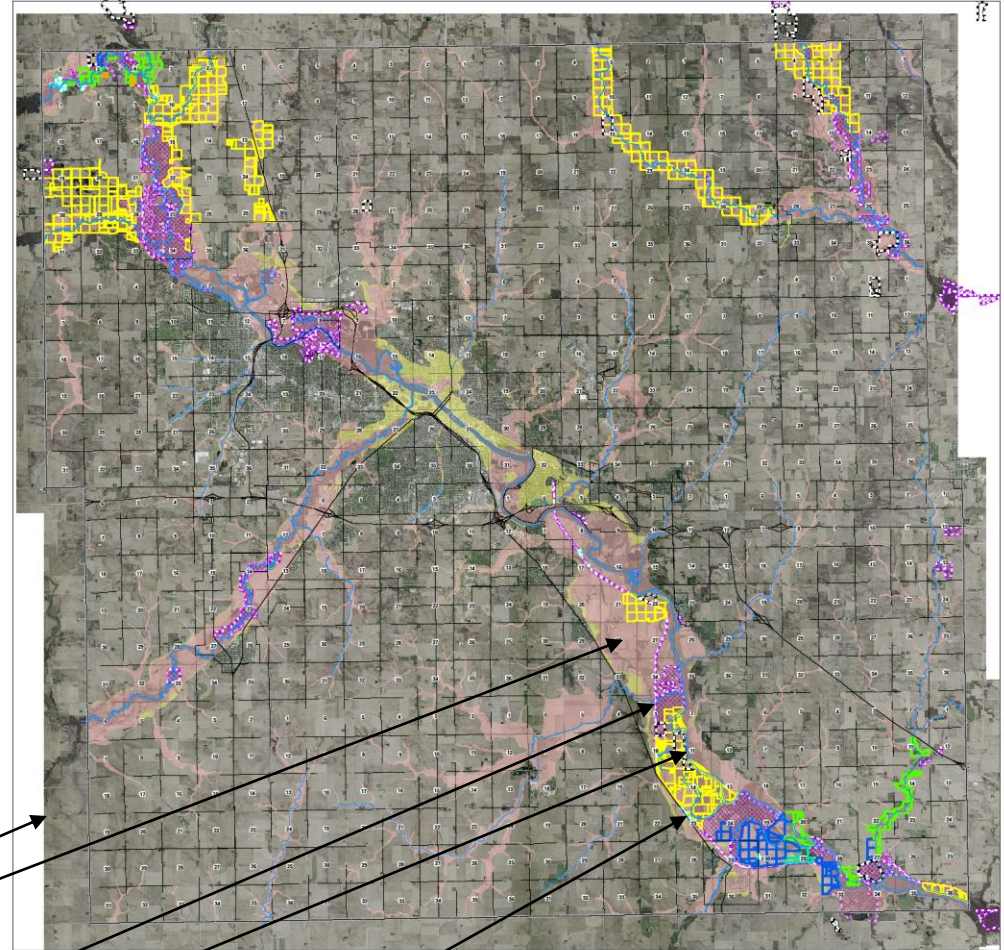
Iowa Association of County
Conservation Boards



Cedar River Watershed



Black Hawk County Cedar River Watershed Coalition

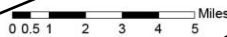


Black Hawk County
Flood Plain

Existing Parks

WRP's

Potential additions



The vision of the Cedar River Watershed Coalition is to reduce flooding in the Cedar River Basin by holistic floodplain management. The parcels listed below have the potential to temporarily hold water which will reduce flooding, improve water quality, provide wildlife habitat, offer recreational opportunities and prevent the destruction of private and public property. These benefits can be achieved by donations, leases, private initiatives, voluntary permanent easements or public purchase.

Legend			
	Corporate Boundary		Potential Land Use
	BHC Boundary		Buffer Strip
	Waterway		Flood Plain Forest
	100 year (zone A)		Upland Forest/Prairie
	500 year (zone B)		Wetland
	Planned/Pending Buyout Parcels		Potential Use TBD
	Public Lands		

Funding Sources:

State of Iowa:

Resource Enhancement And Protection (REAP)

Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant

Federal:

Land & Water Conservation Fund

North American Wetland Conservation Act

Wetland Reserve Program

FEMA – Flood Buyouts

Private:

Pheasants Forever

Ducks Unlimited

National Wild Turkey Federation

White Tails Unlimited

Private Foundations & Individual Donors

Questions

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