

Partners of Scott County Watersheds

2022 NEWSLETTER



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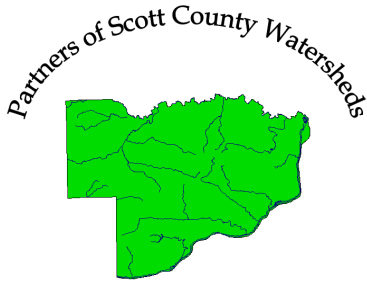
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WHO WE ARE



Since 2003, the Partners of Scott County Watersheds has been improving water quality and working toward flood reduction in Scott County by providing residents, landowners, developers, environmental organizations, educators, and government officials with education, technical support, and financial assistance to promote and install best management practices.

Our History

In 1990, 1993 & 1995, severe flooding occurred on Scott County urban streams. This flooding was a result of the conventional methods being used to deal with storm water. These events and concerns with water quality in Scott County streams led to the formation of the Partners of Scott County Watersheds, an alliance committed to developing and implementing ways all citizens can be better stewards of our watersheds.

1993 flood in Downtown Davenport. Photo from USGS



Today, PSCW operates as an independent 501(3)(c) nonprofit organization. We are partially funded by many municipalities that make up Scott County, along with conservation-related organizations and companies, and independent donors. With their support, we work towards our mission to improve the stewardship of local watersheds through education, technical guidance, and volunteer opportunities.

2022 Board Members

Chair: Mike Paustian
Iowa Pork Producers, Walcott resident

Rob DePover,
City of Bettendorf

Dave Murcia,
Scott County Conservation

Vice Chair: Steve Gustafson
Bettendorf resident

Brinson Kinzer,
Scott County

Kay Pence,
Eldridge resident

Interim Secretary: Amy Kay
City of Davenport Public Works

Judith Lee,
City of Davenport Alderwoman

Lisa Reisen,
Iowa American Water

Treasurer: Carter Amundsen
RSM Assurance Manager

Jerry Mohr,
Iowa Corn Growers Association

Brian Ritter,
Nahant Marsh Education Center

Coordinator: Kelsi Massengale

Emeritus Board Members: *Ed Kocal, Tim Huey, Jim Hoepner*

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



It has been another exciting year for PSCW. As you are about to read in this newsletter, Partners has been busy in 2022 working to fulfill our mission of improving the stewardship of Scott County watersheds. Please note that none of this would be possible without people just like you getting involved. There are many different ways you can do your part to improve water quality in our community; participating in a Snapshot or cleanup day, attending a forum, or making a donation to help pay for water testing supplies are just a few examples.

Volunteer groups have continued to work on improving the Crow Creek Wildlife Management Area in 2022. I encourage you to check out this “hidden gem” near Mount Joy and stay tuned for more exciting news in the near future! We are so grateful for the 300+ volunteers who participated in one or more of our events this past year. One of my personal favorites was the Princeton Paddle Cleanup held in August. We had a lot of fun paddling through the Princeton Wildlife Management Area and hunting for plastic, tires, and even furniture!

On behalf of the PSCW Board, I would like to thank our donors and members for their generous financial support— they are listed later in this newsletter. Combined with our dedicated volunteers, we are doing great things in Scott County. It takes all of us working together to make clean water a priority and I encourage you to join our efforts. Check out our website and join our email list to stay up to date on the latest activities.

I look forward to seeing you in 2023!

Mike Paustian

FROM THE COORDINATOR

I can't believe a second year in this position has come and gone! It's been such an exciting time working with members of the community to get out there and make our watersheds better. This year, I've especially enjoyed the opportunities to connect with kids in the classroom, coordinate cleanup events, and see watershed sign designs come to life! I have lots of plans and ideas for 2023, and can't wait to see what year 3 brings. Thank you for being part of it all!

Kelsi Massengale



2022 HIGHLIGHTS

2022 has been an exciting year for PSCW. Check out some of the highlights below!

EDUCATION

- Designed and installed **50 watershed education** signs along Duck Creek Parkway
 - Reached over **2,600 people on Facebook** through our signage giveaway
- Held the second annual Floating Classroom education event
- Reached **1,837 people** through forums, workshops, special events, and programs!



TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

- Received **\$31,780** in grants and donations for the Crow Creek Wildlife Management Area improvement project
- Advised Augustana College in their student-led social and ecological assessment of the Silver Creek Watershed
- Tested **73 sites** around Scott County for water quality parameters
- Partnered with the City of Davenport to install a small boat access point along Duck Creek



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Partnered with **9 local groups** for community cleanups
- Partnered with Miss Scott County for volunteer and watershed outreach opportunities!
- Hosted our first kayak cleanup on the Mississippi River

In September of this year, PSCW Vice-Chair, Steve Gustafson, was awarded the “**New Voices in Water Quality in Iowa Water Education**” Award by Iowa Learning Farms. An entire page could be written about Steve and all the work he does, but we’ll leave it at this: congratulations on this much deserved award, Steve!



EDUCATION

POND MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

This year, we held our second pond management workshop at West Lake Park. On June 3rd, nearly **30 participants**, ranging from landowners to contractors to conservation professionals, attended the morning workshop to learn about wetland habitats, water quality, and fisheries management. We were grateful for the partnership from Scott County Conservation, Iowa DNR, Nahant Marsh Education Center, and Riverside Global that made this educational event a success!



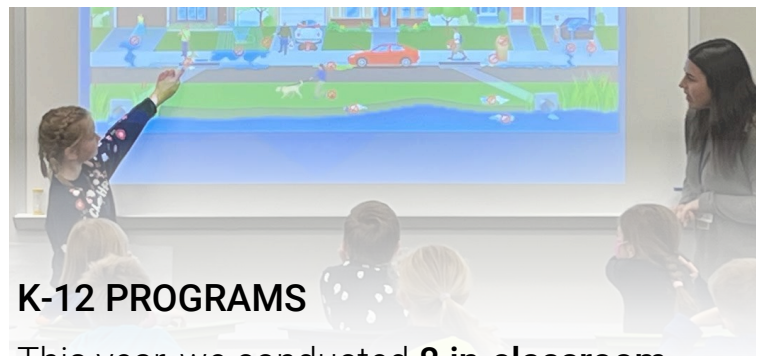
FORUMS

For much of 2022, we continued the trend set by the last two years and held our monthly forums virtually. This format allowed us to reach a greater geographic audience and record our presentations for later viewing.

This year, our nine forums reached a total of **167 live participants**, with an additional **78 views** through [YouTube](#). Topics for 2022 forums included agricultural best management practices, Iowa conservation programs, urban water quality improvement practices, and more. To wrap up forums for the year, we finally got back in person and held a hybrid November forum from the Eastern Avenue Library. There, we discussed the year's Snapshot data, highlights, and plans for 2023, which include changing up how we host forums. Next year, be on the lookout for a new name and new dates, as we make the switch to quarterly hybrid events!

FLOATING CLASSROOM

In late June, we partnered with Living Lands & Waters and Spring Forward for the second year to host the Floating Classroom. Over two days, we brought **25 students** from Rock Island to the Mississippi River to learn about water quality, mussels, riparian habitat, and of course, explore the Mighty Mississippi.



K-12 PROGRAMS

This year, we conducted **8 in-classroom programs** about watersheds, water quality testing, pollution, and more. Through classroom engagement and community events, we provided watershed education to **496 kids** in 2022!

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

SITE VISITS

In 2022, we provided free site assessments to **eight landowners** across the county. Through these visits, we tested **nine ponds** and **one creek** to provide insight to landowners on their site's water quality.

Many landowners expressed concerns with the amount of algae and other aquatic vegetation on the water's surface. At most sites, we found the issues to be associated with an overabundance of nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen, that stimulated aquatic plant growth. As a result, many of the sites tested high in nutrients and low in dissolved oxygen and transparency.

While many of the sites experienced similar problems, each landowner received an individualized site assessment and full report, complete with suggestions on how to remediate the problem. Through this avenue of technical guidance, we hope to improve the landowners' local water quality and overall watershed health.



ROBIN CREEK

In 2020, PSCW partnered with the City of Davenport and received a grant to install three bioremediation filters in a stretch of Robin Creek in order to test their effectiveness in removing fecal bacteria. Since then, we have conducted monthly sampling throughout the warm season to monitor water quality parameters and coliform levels.

This year, we continued sampling April-October and analyzed the results. Over the last two years, we found that **13 out of 15 samples** showed a decrease in *E. coli* from upstream of the first bio-filter to downstream of the third. While the percent of decrease varied, it overall shows promising and statistically significant results. We plan to use the data and lessons learned from this pilot project to apply to other stretches of streams throughout the county.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



CROW CREEK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

From snowy days to cleanups in costume, we had plenty of ways for volunteers to get involved with improving our watersheds this year!

Starting in mid February, we worked with **20 volunteers** and the Iowa DNR to cut cedar trees from the banks of Crow Creek Wildlife Management Area and tied them to cinder blocks on the frozen lake for future fish habitat.

Later in the year, we continued the work at CCWMA with the United Way Day of Caring. On September 15th, almost **50 volunteers** from all around the community helped to cut and clear brush, spread mulch on the trail, and pick up trash around the natural site.

About a month later, we partnered with **11 members** of the St. Ambrose University's men's lacrosse team to provide community service hours and clear more brush along the lake's west shoreline.

Throughout these three workdays, **76 volunteers** donated **208 hours** of their time, and helped to remove **13 bags of trash** from the site!



COMMUNITY CLEANUPS

In addition to our work at Crow Creek Wildlife Management Area, we coordinated trash and invasive species cleanups around the county! This year's cleanups included...

DAVENPORT

- Kimberly Road & Welcome Way trash removal
- Valle Vista-Duck Creek invasive pull & native planting
- Robin Creek honeysuckle removal
- Davenport North High School rain garden invasive species removal
- St. Ambrose University campus & neighborhood trash cleanup

PRINCETON

- Whiskey Run Creek brush & trash cleanup
- Princeton Paddle kayak cleanup

LECLAIRE

- Silver Creek trash cleanup

Overall, we held **11 community cleanups**, removed **26 additional bags of trash**, and had a total of **306 volunteers** in 2022!

2022 SNAPSHOTS

A Snapshot is a day of water quality monitoring, which altogether, provides a 'snapshot' of the water quality conditions around Scott County.



Despite rainy days and a following drought, 2022 yielded another successful year of Snapshot testing! Through our spring, summer, and fall events, had a record total of **125 participants**, with 63 kids and adults just at the summer testing event!

For all three Snapshots, chemical water quality data was collected at **62 sites**, providing representative data for each of the major streams and tributaries around in the county. Additionally, 10 sites were surveyed for benthic macroinvertebrate populations during the summer Snapshot to determine the index of biological integrity and indicative water quality status. Lab analyses were also conducted for nitrate, nitrite, and orthophosphate for all three events, thanks to the City of Davenport.



Last year, we started using new equipment to test water quality parameters and record data. Thanks to the grant funds and organizational partnerships secured in 2021, we have been able to continue with these procedures through 2022. Hach PocketPro Meters, a Hach Orthophosphate Colorimeter, and tablets equipped with ArcGIS Survey123 applications remain pivotal in our reliable, accurate, and efficient collection of water quality data.

Snapshot Findings

Data from this year's Snapshots indicate that there are concerns for nitrate and phosphate level trends in both rural and urban streams, along with concerns for fecal bacteria. Transparency has somewhat undesirable trends, with a few streams of greater concern. pH is okay, but seems to be trending slightly higher, and dissolved oxygen is generally in range with a few streams of concern.

Overall, most of our streams originate within the borders of Scott County, so it is up to us to address these concerns and improve the health of our watersheds!



PLANS FOR 2023

2022 has been packed full of projects and programs! We look forward to continuing and expanding these watershed improvement efforts in 2023. Check out some of next year's plans!



EDUCATION

- Partner with school groups to design and create community watershed murals.
- Lead a benthic macroinvertebrate sampling and identification workshop.
- Increase outreach and educational programming to K-12 students.
- Host quarterly lunch and learns in place of monthly forums.
- Increase watershed signage throughout the county.

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

- Complete accessibility improvement project at Crow Creek WMA.
- Work with Davenport to add more small boat and fishing access points along Duck Creek.
- Continue to partner Augustana College for student-led watershed assessments.
- Encourage and assist landowners and citizens to help address water quality concerns.
- Create a digital platform for macroinvertebrate data collection.
- Work with agricultural producers to understand needs and increase conservation practices in the county.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

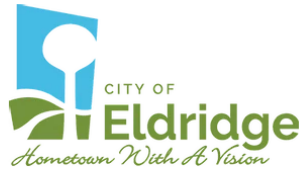
- Conduct community trash removal cleanup events year-round.
- Lead invasive species removal workdays at Duck Creek, Robin Creek, and other sites,
- Host Snapshot water quality monitoring events- *save the dates!*
 - **SPRING:** May 2nd
 - **SUMMER:** July 15th
 - **FALL:** October 3rd



2022 SUPPORTERS



Cal Werner
Curtis Lundy



Jerry Mohr
Judith Lee

OTHER PARTNERS



2022 MEMBERS

Amy Kay and Family
Brian Ritter and Family
Brian Wessel and Family
Brinson Kinzer
Carter Amundsen
Cassie Druhl
Claire Wilson and Family

Dale and Kelly Morrow
Damion Sadd
Ed Kocal
Gary Kerosky
Heather Ballou
Jen Walker
Jolinda Eggers

Josh Patterson
Linda Molyneaux
Lisa Reisen
Lori McCollom
Mike and Kay Pence
Mike Ernster
Mike Paustian

Mona Druhl
Nathan and Elizabeth Schramm
Phillip Harpole and Family
Sarah Urtnowski
Steve Gustafson

Show that you value healthy watersheds in your community and beyond by becoming a member.
Learn more at www.partnersofscottcountywatersheds.org/become-a-member/

2022 SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Partnerships and support from local organizations and municipalities are essential to the PSCW mission. See how our two Mississippi River Level funders have helped to improve the health and stewardship of our watersheds in 2022.

CITY OF DAVENPORT

For the past several years, including in 2022, the City of Davenport has co-sponsored the Spring Snapshot events, providing event space, volunteer lunch, and even assisting in lab analysis costs.

This year, our partnership has continued with the Duck Creek Access Project. This project, funded in part by the Regional Development Authority, includes streambank stabilization, habitat restoration, interpretive signage, and a small boat access point and launch point on Duck Creek at Eastern Park Avenue. Our goal is to provide residents of Scott County an innovative connection to a major urban stream and to provide education about the importance of water quality and aquatic habitats. Learn more about this exciting project on our [website](#).



SCOTT COUNTY

The county continues to provide support to PSCW through financial contributions, technical support, and event partnerships.

This year, the Scott County GIS team helped us to fine-tune our Snapshot data collection app and create watershed-specific landowner contact lists for future projects.

Additionally, Scott County Conservation joined us to host our second Pond Management Workshop at West Lake Park by providing an event space, education programs, and refreshments. Thank you Scott County!

With the help of these and other organizations, Partners of Scott County Watersheds can continue to make our watersheds healthier and our communities stronger.

See how you can support PSCW in 2023 at www.partnersofscottcountywatersheds.org/

Partners of Scott County Watersheds

Our Mission is to improve the stewardship of Scott County watersheds through education, technical guidance, and volunteer opportunities.



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