



Partners of Scott County Watersheds

2023 Newsletter



In This Issue:

- 4** 2023 Highlights
- 6** Community Cleanups
- 7** Watershed Murals
- 8** Crow Creek Project
- 10** Snapshot Recap
- 12** Our Supporters

All About PSCW



Partners of Scott
County Watersheds

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.

This year, **we are celebrating our 20 years of services to Scott County!**

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, Downtown Davenport, The Quad-City Times



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.

Our 2023 Board Members

Chair: Mike Paustian
Iowa Pork Producers, Walcott resident

Vice Chair: Steve Gustafson
Bettendorf resident

Secretary: Amy Kay
City of Davenport Public Works

Treasurer: Carter Amundsen
RSM Assurance Manager

Coordinator: Liv Humphrey

Rob DePover
City of Bettendorf Public Works

Brinson Kinzer
Blue Grass Resident

Judith Lee
City of Davenport Resident

Brian Wessel
City of Eldridge Public Works

Jerry Mohr
Iowa Corn Growers' Association

Dave Murcia
Scott County Conservation

Kay Pence
Eldridge resident

Ross Paustian
Scott County Board of Supervisors

Lisa Reisen
Iowa American Water

Brian Ritter
Nahant Marsh Education Center

From the Board Chair

Hello Members and Friends of PSCW! Looking back at 2023 it is exciting to reflect on what we were able to accomplish together this year. Some highlights include the installation of a boat ramp at the Crow Creek Wildlife Management Area, classroom educational events (both indoor and outdoor!) and our snapshot water quality testing days. Something new this year was our partnership with Quad City Arts to install watershed murals along Duck Creek. Be on the lookout if you are in Marquette, Junge, Northwest or Garfield Parks - the artists did an amazing job. What a fun way to help educate the community about watersheds and water quality.



We are thrilled to welcome Liv Humphrey as our new PSCW Coordinator! She has not wasted any time getting her feet wet (both literally and figuratively) this year, so Partners has not missed a beat. Liv is passionate about water quality and we are excited to have her on board - make sure you say hello and introduce yourself at the next PSCW event. Looking ahead to 2024, we will be ramping up our activities in rural Scott County thanks to an \$8 million grant we received in partnership with Ducks Unlimited. We will be reaching out to farmers and providing cost share funding for implementing new conservation practices on their farms.

As always, none of the activities described in this newsletter would be possible without our sponsors, members and volunteers. Thank You! There is still a lot of work to be done, but together we can have a positive impact on our communities.

Mike Paustian

From the Coordinator



Hi! This is my first year being the PSCW coordinator and it has been such a rewarding start. I started in August, so I had the opportunity to close the year out and see all the great things Partners accomplished in 2023. The past few months, I was able to run my first Snapshot water quality event and our Fall Conservation Quarterly, such great programs. Through these few events, I was able to meet some of our dedicated volunteers and board members!

With that being said, I want to extend gratitude towards the community and Partner's board and volunteers for the support, guidance, and patience as I stepped into this new role. I look forward to continuing Partners mission in 2024 with you all!

Olivia Humphrey

2023 Highlights

Education

- Over the year, we held K - College programs, starting our first FFA project at North Scott Junior High, being all about water quality testing
- We partnered up again with Living Lands & Water to host our 3rd Floating Classroom. This year we had elementary students from Denkmann and Ridgewood in Rock Island, IL. There was **a total of 25 students** who got to learn about the Mississippi River, mussels, riparian habitat, and water quality! mussels, riparian habitat, and water quality
- **Reached 1,667 community members** through workshops, forums, and special events.



1 - NSJH FFA Group, 2 - 2023 Floating Classroom Group



Technical Guidance

- Finished the boat ramp and access area for the Crow Creek Wildlife Management Area improvement project
- **Tested 83 sites** around Scott County for water quality parameters
- Provided **4 site visits** throughout Scott County to provide water quality testing, an assessment, and recommendation to improve the local watershed

CCWMA Boat Ramp & Sign

Volunteer Opportunities

- Provided **4 community cleanups**, picking up a total of 42 trash bags
- Had a total of **219 volunteers** that helped with cleanups and our Snapshot water quality monitoring events

1 - BHC Cleanup Group



Education

Macroinvertebrate Workshop

Partners of Scott County Watersheds and Nahant Marsh teamed up to hold a Benthic Macroinvertebrates workshop on July 5th. The workshop gave **16 community members** an opportunity to learn about these organisms and how to catch and identify them.

Macroinvertebrates are an important educational tool as they help indicate the quality of the body of water a person is examining.



Workshop Attendees catching Macroinvertebrates

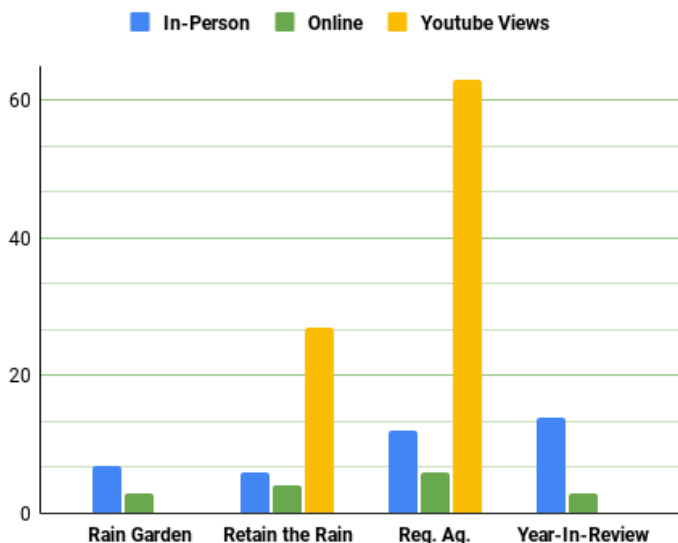
Conservation Quarterly

This year was the first year we hosted our newly branded Conservation Quarterly. Our goal was to change up the way we host forums to be more accessible for our community members.

We had in total of **55 community members** attend our forums either in-person from the Eastern Ave. Library or virtually through Zoom. Our 4 topics included: Rain Garden Fundamentals, Learning how to Retain the Rain, Regenerative Agriculture, and our year-end wrap up.

You can view our forums from the year on our **YouTube page!**

Conservation Quarterly Attendance



K - College Programs

NSJF FFA Project



This year, we conducted **7 in-classroom programs** about watersheds, water quality testing, litter and pollution, and more. On top of our in-classroom programs, we helped or planned **4 different field days** for students. Through the classroom engagement and community events, we gave watershed education to **515 students!**

Volunteer and Getting Involved

United Way Day of Caring

In mid-May, **25 volunteers** through the United Way Day of Caring lent a hand to start priming walls for our Duck Creek Watershed Mural Project. We had a select amount of volunteers at each of the 5 sites, priming for 3 hours. We would like to thank United Way for hosting such a great volunteer event and a thank you to the John Deere for allowing your staff to participate!



Community Cleanups

In addition to the mural painting volunteer event, we also hosted cleanups around Scott County to continue to keep our neighborhoods and waterways clean! This year's cleanups included ...

- **Princeton Whiskey Run Cleanup**
31 Volunteers - 8 bags of trash
- **Davenport Fairmount Street Cleanup**
13 Volunteers - 14 bags of trash
- **Le Claire - Silver Creek Cleanup**
23 Volunteers - 13 bags of trash

Duck Creek Cleanup



Fairmount Cleanup



- **Davenport Duck Creek - Garfield Park Cleanup**
15 Volunteers - 7 bags of trash

How To Get Involved

We host many volunteer opportunities through out the year to provide people with the opportunity to directly connect with and improve our watersheds!

Want to be apart of positive watershed change, participate in cleanups, water quality monitoring events, invasive species removals, and more? **Scan the QR to fill out an interest form!**



Educational Project

Duck Creek Watershed Murals

In the spring of 2023, Partners of Scott County Watersheds and Quad City Arts teamed up to create a series of watershed education murals along the Duck Creek Parkway. Once primed from the Day of Caring volunteer event, artists began to sketch designs for each mural location. These murals were designed to educate users and neighbors of the Duck Creek Parkway about the watersheds they live, work, and play in; invoke curiosity and connection to watersheds through visual arts; and improve the aesthetic vitality of the community.

Four out of the five murals have been completed, with funding for the fifth in the works, here are the completed murals. Head out to these sites and don't forget to **take a photo and tag PSCW** and use the **#EnjoyRespectProtect** when you post!

Junge Park Mural



Northwest Park Mural



Garfield Park Mural



Marquette Park Mural



Watershed Signage

While you are out looking for the Duck Creek Murals, do not forget to look for Duck Creek and Silver Creek Signage. These help us to continue to educate our community about the watershed they recreate in and ways to protect its health. Duck Creek signs were done by funding from the Scott County Regional Authority in 2021 and Silver Creek was done with a partnership with the City of Davenport, and Augustana College in 2022.



Technical Projects

Robin Creek Biofilters Update

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 three years, we found that **18 out of 20 samples showed a decrease in E. coli** from upstream of the first bio-filter to downstream of the third.



Biofilter Installation

Crow Creek Wildlife Management Area Boat Access

During Construction



Finished Construction with Signage



Owned by the Iowa DNR and adopted by PSCW in 2020, the Crow Creek Wildlife Management Areas (CCWMA) is a popular site for local outdoorsmen and recreationists alike.

During the summer of this year, we collaborated with the IA DNR to complete CCWMA accessible boat ramp project. The goal of this project was to showcase the current recreational space while creating a safe and sustainable access point for those who want to enjoy the lake. This was accomplished by establishing a boat ramp, improving the trails, and adding educational signage.

The other partners on this project was River Action with their Conservation Consortium grant which contributed \$7,500, helping in the development of the sign and Scott County Regional Authority, who supplied the rest of the funding.

The project was officially completed in September!

Recent Grant Action

Microbial Source Tracking for Streams in Scott County

Over this Fall, PSCW went out to 14 sites in the Hickory Creek and Duck Creek watershed to collect samples for Microbial Source Tracking (MST). Samples were collected at three separate times, during low and average flow, and manure application time. We are partnered on this grant with Prairie Rivers of Iowa and the funding is from the USEPA.

Our goal is to show other water quality focused organizations how to conduct qPCR testing and then we will write a report on implementation.

We are sampling for these fecal qPCR analyses:

- Bacteroidales-like Cow M2
- Ruminant Bacteroides
- Pig-1-Bacteroidales
- Avian associated Bacteroidales (GFD)
- Goose Bacteroidales
- Poultry parvovirus
- Canine Bacteroides
- Human Bacteroides (HF183/R287)

A total of 33 samples were taken in the Fall

Samples Grabbed from Each Flow			
Sample Site	Low Flow	Average Flow	Manure Application
DCW2	X	X	X
DCW1	X	X	X
HCW5			X
HCW10			
HCW6	X	X	X
HCW7	X	X	X
HCW8	X	X	X
HCW2	X	X	X
HCW1	X	X	X
HCW9	X	X	X
HCW4	X	X	X
HCW11		X	X
HCW3		X	
HCW12		X	X

USDA - Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

PSCW was asked to be the local representative in Scott County, working along side Duck Unlimited, on the newly awarded RCPP grant. This grant will be issued over a 5 year span, with a total of \$8 million dollars, allowing:

- 11,500 acres are enrolled with more than 50 producers in Scott County, IA, for potential conservation practice implementation on agriculture fields.
- Based on some modeling we did, we think this project could reduce N runoff by 7%, P runoff by 10%, and TSS by 11% for 5 or more years. Surface runoff during peak floods is estimated to be reduced by 8%.

The approach with this grant is to sign up interested producers in Scott County to work on practices like wetland restoration and cover crops that might make measurable differences in tributary flood events, water quality, and/or wildlife habitat by implementing ecological restoration of wetlands and riparian areas, and agricultural best management practices.

2023 Snapshots

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

Following yet another year with drought conditions, 2023 brought another year of success for Snapshot water quality monitoring! Through our Spring, Summer, and Fall events, we had a total of **106 volunteers, 8 of them being kids.**

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 phosphate for all three events, thanks to the City of Davenport and the Water Pollution Control Plant.

Snapshot Data Summary



Spring Snapshot Volunteers

- Nitrate & Phosphorus are a concern in urban, suburban and rural areas, not just coming in from rural to urban.
- Transparency has somewhat undesirable trends, few streams of concern.
- pH is okay, but seems to be trending slightly higher overall.
- Dissolved Oxygen generally okay, except for a few streams of concern.
- Chloride trends currently as an urban/sub concern, but no WQ standard exceedances.
- Drought played a role in this year's data.
- Fecal Matter (Human and Dog) were detected in rural and urban streams.

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!

Want to Participate?

Join in on our Snapshot Water Quality monitoring event! Subscribe to get our email reminders for upcoming events and follow our Facebook @PartnersofScottWatersheds to see the latest information.



Fall Snapshot Volunteer



Scan to Subscribe!

Plans for 2024

2023 was a year full of projects and programs, which we are very proud of! We look forward to continuing and expanding these watershed improvement efforts in 2024. **Check out some of next year's plans!**



Conservation Conversation Program

Education

- Host a community Pond Management Workshop.
- Lead a benthic macroinvertebrate sampling and identification workshop.
- Increase outreach and educational programming to K-College students.
- Continue to host educational quarterly lunch forums.
- Finish up the Duck Creek Watershed murals.
- Increase watershed signage throughout the county.

Technical Guidance

- Work with Davenport to add more small boat and fishing access points along Duck Creek.
- Encourage and assist landowners and citizens to help address water quality concerns
- Work with agricultural producers to understand needs and increase conservation practices in the county utilizing the RCPP grant.
- Continuing working on Crow Creek WMA improvements .

Volunteer Opportunities

- Conduct community trash removal cleanup events year-round.
- Lead invasive species removal workdays at Duck Creek, Robin Creek, and other sites.
- Host the first Partner's Open House to meet volunteers, members, and donors.
- Host Snapshot water quality monitoring events - **Save the Date!**
 - **SPRING:** May 7th
 - **SUMMER:** July 13th
 - **FALL:** October 1st

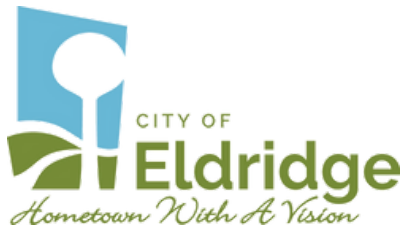


Fall Snapshot Volunteers

Sponsors and Members



Jerry Mohr
Cal Werner
Curtis Lundy



SMALL FRYE FARM



Other Partners



2023 Members

Amy and Kevin Kay	Cassie Druhl	Hugh Stafford	Lisa Reisen	Steve Gustafson
Brian Ritter	Damion Sadd	Jolinda Eggers	Mona Druhl	Sue Albrecht
Brian Wessel	Gary Kerosky	Linda Moluneaux	Robert Thompson	

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



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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