

2024 Newsletter



Issue 5

Completed Garfield Park Watershed Mural



4 2023 Highlights

6 Volunteering

7 2024 Projects

9 Snapshot Updates

10 Plans for 2025

All About PSCW



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.

2024 July Flood, Downtown Davenport, Mike Ortiz



Today, Partners of Scott County Watersheds 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.

2024 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

Brian Ritter
Nahant Marsh Education Center

Judith Lee
City of Davenport Resident

Jerry Mohr
Iowa Corn Growers' Association

Dave Murcia
Scott County Conservation

Ross Paustian
Scott County Board of Supervisors

Lisa Reisen
Iowa American Water

Brian Wessel
City of Eldridge Public Works

Kay Pence
Eldridge resident

From the Board Chair



Hello Members and Friends! As 2024 draws to a close, I wanted to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude for your continued support of Partners of Scott County Watersheds. It's been another fantastic year filled with impactful projects and community involvement, all thanks to dedicated members and volunteers like you!

This year, we continued our commitment to improving water quality in Scott County through various initiatives that you can read about in this newsletter.

Snapshots remain one of our most important and longest running activities. If

you've never had been to a Snapshot, we'd love to see you and maybe bring along some friends to join in the fun.

We have also continued to work on implementing the Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant from USDA that we received in collaboration with Ducks Unlimited and Iowa State University. We hope to begin signing up Scott County landowners to help them implement conservation practices on their farms very soon. If you know of landowners who might be interested, please have them contact us.

We encourage you to stay involved with PSCW in the coming year! Whether you join us for a cleanup, participate in a workshop, or simply spread the word about our mission, your contribution makes a difference. Thank you again for your invaluable support. We wish you a happy and healthy holiday season!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Paustian".

Mike Paustian

From the Coordinator

What an exciting year it has been! Thanks to your support, we've grown our volunteer base and made strides in expanding our impact. A highlight for me was seeing our fifth education mural come to life—a meaningful addition that we hope strengthens the community's connection to our local watersheds.

As I wrap up my second year and look ahead to my third, I'm filled with gratitude for all we've accomplished together. None of this would be possible without your ongoing encouragement and dedication. Thank you all for your continuous support!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Olivia Humphrey".

Olivia Humphrey

2024 Highlights

Education



2024 Floating Classroom group catch a frog

- Over the year, we held **8 K - College programs**, finishing up our North Scott FFA water quality project and teaching 2nd graders all about litter.
- We partnered up again with Living Lands & Water to host our 4th Floating Classroom. There were a **total of 34 students** who got to learn about the Mississippi River, mussels, riparian habitat, and water quality! We spent a total of 10 hours teaching.
- We reached **1,613 community members** through workshops, forums, and special events.

Technical Guidance

- Performed a site suitability assessment at Goose Creek in Davenport to possibly implement more biofilters
- Tested **188 sites** in 2024 for water quality parameters



Photo from Goose Creek in 2024

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Group from the 2024 City of Eldridge Cleanup



- Provided **4 community cleanups**, picking up a total of **72 trash bags**
- Held an invasive species removal at Sunderbruch Park
- Had a total of **248 volunteers** that helped with cleanups and our Snapshot water quality monitoring events

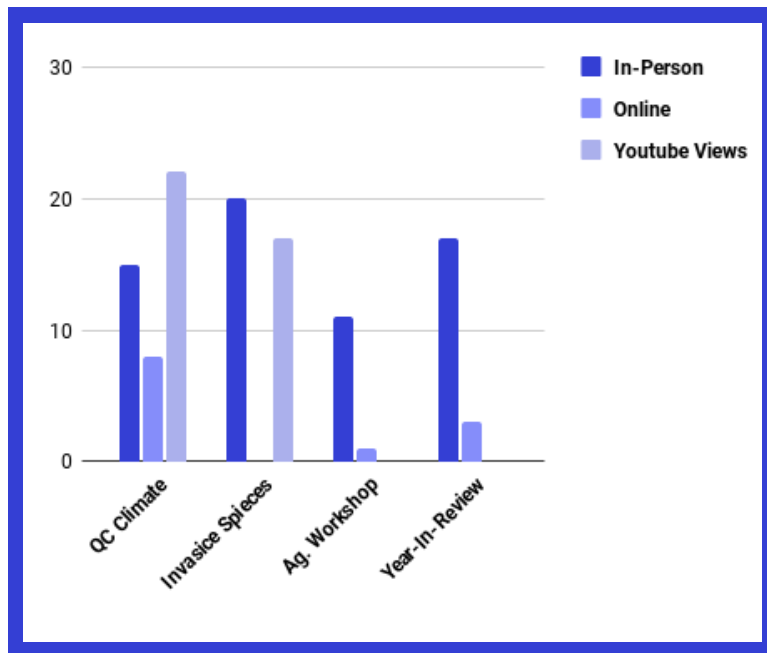
Education

Conservation Quarterly

We were able to complete **4 successful Conservation Quarterly**s, encompassing many different aspects of our watersheds.

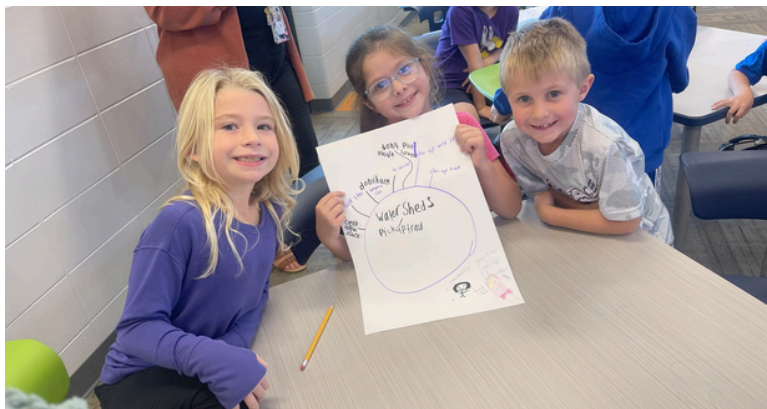
We had in total of **75 community members** attend our forums in-person from the Eastern Ave. Library or virtually through Zoom. Our 4 topics included: QC Climate Assessment, Invasive Species, Agriculture Workshop, and Year-End Review.

You can view our forums from the year on our [YouTube page!](#)



Attendance Chart

K - College Programs



This year, we conducted **6 student programs** about watersheds, water quality testing, litter and pollution, and more. On top of our in-classroom programs.

Through the classroom engagement and student outreach events, we gave watershed education to **491 students!**

Forest Grove Elementary - 2nd Grade Student Anti-Litter Posters

2024 Conferences

PSCWs' Vice Chair, Steve Gustafson, and Coordinator, Liv Humphrey, were asked to speak at two conferences this year.

The first conference was the Quad Cities Stormwater Conference in February. We were asked to speak on Snapshot, the data found over the years, and the overall trends.

The second conference was the Water Summit in October, which was in partnership with the Izaak Walton League and Prairie Rivers of Iowa. We were asked to do another presentation on Snapshot and gathering volunteers, along with the data collected from our Microbial Source Tracking project that was completed in 2023, with data finalized in 2024.

Volunteering

United Way Day of Caring

In April, **43 volunteers** through the United Way Day of Caring worked hard to cleanup around Robin Creek in Davenport. We had the group remove invasive species and work on trail maintenance. They, all together, spent 129 hours making the area around Robin creek that much better!

We would like to thank United Way for hosting such a great volunteer event and a thank you to the John Deere , Impact Life Blood, and Enterprise for volunteering!



Enterprise Volunteer Group Working

Community Cleanups

In addition to the workday at Robin Creek, we also hosted 4 cleanups around Scott County to continue to keep our neighborhoods and waterways clean! This year's cleanups included ...

Earth Month Volunteer Cleanup Crew



Earth Month Cleanup - Davenport at 37th Street
16 Volunteers - 27 bags of trash

City of Eldridge Cleanup
19 Volunteers - 16 bags of trash

LeClaire Silver Creek Cleanup
12 Volunteers - 24 bags of trash

Downtown Davenport Cleanup
23 Volunteers - 20 bags of trash

Invasive Species Removal

In November, we hosted our last volunteer event of the year, clearing Honeysuckle from Sunderbruch Park in Davenport. We were able to gather 15 folks, that all together, worked 30 hours.

Sunderbruch Cleanup Crew



2024 Projects

Duck Creek Watershed Murals - Updates

We are excited to announce that we were able to acquire the final funding needs for the fifth watershed mural through the Iowa Economic Development Creative Catalyst Project Grant. Through that grant, we were able to hire a spray paint mural artist through Quad Cities art. The concepts of the mural was to have an in-depth view of Duck Creek and all the wonderful species that rely on it.

We mural was completed in May and is located at Eastern Ave Park on the maintenance building.



Part of the Eastern Ave Park Mural

Finished Murals



Junge Park Mural



Garfield Park Mural



Northwest Park Mural



Marquette Park Mural

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.

In 2024, we continued sampling April-November and analyzed the results. Over the last four years, we found that **22 out of 26 samples showed a decrease in E. coli** from upstream of the first bio-filter to downstream of the third.

This results in a **31.7% decrease in E. coli.**

In July 2024, PSCW partnered with the City of Davenport to install **six more bioremediation filters** in a stretch of **Goose Creek**. We will now be sampling Goose Creek as we do Robin Creek.

This year, we only had time to take three samples, but are hopeful we will get the same results of decreases in E. coli as Robin Creek has seen.



The locations of the Goose Creek filters

2024 Grant Updates

Microbial Source Tracking Data Summary

In 2023, 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; first sample event was during a prolonged drought with 9 samples collected, second sampling event was during low to moderate flows with 12 samples taken, and the last sample event was during moderate flows and manure application with 12 samples taken. Samples were taken to showcase any biomarkers found in the water to identify different species fecal matter contamination in the water. A finalized report with in-depth data will be available soon on our website.

Data Summary from the 27 samples collected and processed at the USGS Laboratory for Infectious Disease and Environment (LIDE)

- Avian - Found in 15 samples, low to moderately high concentration
- Cattle - Found in 1 sample, low concentration in late Sept.
- Human - Found in 7 samples, low to high concentrations
- Swine - Found in 3 samples, during manure application, moderate concentration
- Canine - Found in 1 sample, Duck Creek on Late Sept.
- Ruminant - Found in 7 samples, low to moderate high concentrations

RCPP Funding Coming Soon

\$5 million was awarded to Scott County for the implementation of agriculture conservation practices.

Supported practices include:

- Wetland restoration
- Conservation plantings
- Filter strips
- Wildlife habitat

Sign ups are anticipated to start in the 1st quarter of 2025.

Contact PSCW at info@partnersofscottcountywatersheds.org if you have any questions or want to be contacted when enrollment opens.



Project Partners

2024 Snapshot Summary

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

2024 brought a year of drought, flood, and rainy weather for our Snapshot Water Quality Monitoring Volunteer Event!

- Spring Snapshot was in May and had 11 kids and 30 adults
- Summer Snapshot was in July and had 30 adults
- Fall Snapshot was in October and had 28 adults

With a total of 11 kids and 88 adults, **we had 99 Snapshot Volunteers!**

For all three Snapshots, chemical water quality data was collected at **54-60 sites**, providing representative data for each of the major streams and tributaries around in the county. 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.

Data Summary

- 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.
- Fecal pollution was detected in rural and urban streams (human and canine predominate)

Overall, we are still seeing too many undesirable trends. Our biggest concerns are with nutrients and fecal bacteria impairments. Since the majority of the streams originate within Scott County's borders, we as a county will need to come together to combat this water quality issue.



Spring 2024 Snapshot Volunteers



Plans for 2025

Education

- Host a community Pond Management Workshop in collaboration with the IA DNR
- Lead a benthic macroinvertebrate sampling and identification workshop
- Increase outreach and educational programming to K-College students
- Continue to host educational quarterly lunch forums
- Host another conservation workshop
- Make more educational graphics for resources for the community



Spring Conservation Quarterly



Volunteers Working at Robin Creek

Technical Guidance

- 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
- Continue working on cleanup efforts at Robin Creek

Volunteer Opportunities

- Conduct community trash removal cleanup events year-round.
- Lead invasive species removal workdays at Duck Creek, Robin Creek, Sunderbruch Park, and more
- Host a volunteer appreciation day
- Host Snapshot water quality monitoring events - **Save the Date!**
 - Spring: **May 6th**
 - Summer: **July 12th**
 - Fall: **October 7th**

Get Involved with PSCW

Volunteering

We often host volunteer events, such as clean-ups, water quality monitoring events, and invasive species removals. Our goal is to provide community members with the opportunity to directly connect with and improve our watersheds.

Memberships

Becoming a member shows that you value healthy watersheds in your community and beyond! Help contribute to PSCW efforts and join the cohort of watershed warriors.

Donations

Whether it's monetary, time, talent, or tools, your donation is incredibly valuable to the success of PSCW and our ability to work towards and maintain healthy watersheds.

Partnerships

Partnerships with local municipalities and businesses are essential to help our organization thrive. PSCW offers benefits for partnering organizations, including PSCW promotional materials and company recognition.

<https://partnersofscottcountywatersheds.org/get-involved/>

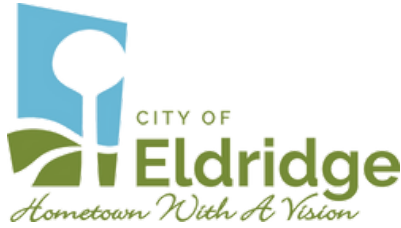


Many community members making a difference

Sponsors



Jerry Mohr



Small Frye Farm



Other Partners



2024 Members

Amy and Kevin Kay
 Angela Groene
 Brian Ritter & Family
 Carter Amundsen
 Colin Shirk
 Damion Sadd
 Elizabeth Schramm

Gary Kerofsky
 Hugh Stafford
 Jen Walker
 Jerry Mohr & Family
 Jolinda Eggers
 Kay Pence & Family
 Keith & Melanie Schneckloth

Mike Paustian & Family
 Remona Druhl
 Robert Thompson
 Scott Bean & Family
 Steve Gustafson
 Tony Knobbe
 Tracy Kuehl

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



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