

## CONSERVATION AND FLOOD MITIGATION

In 2015, The Partnership convened the Iowa Soil and Water Future Task Force to outline recommendations to address the state's water quality challenges, with the intention of positioning Iowa agriculture, Iowa communities and Iowa businesses as global leaders in water quality and soil health. Accordingly, The Partnership supports policy and funding that holistically restores and maintains rivers, streams and lakes that provide adventures and peaceful experiences, decrease the negative impacts of flooding and eroded streambanks and improve water quality for drinking and recreation. Further, The Partnership supports the enactment of legislation and implementation of policy initiatives that will modernize the nation's critically important inland waterway lock and dam infrastructure. The Partnership encourages passage of a water resources development policy conference report once the conference committee negotiations are completed.

### **WATER TRAILS AND HEALTHY RIVERS, LAKES AND STREAMS**

The Partnership supports policy and funding that holistically restores and maintains rivers, lakes and streams that provide adventures and peaceful experiences, decrease the negative impacts of flooding and eroded streambanks and improve water quality for drinking and recreation. The Partnership supports:

- Building a regional connected system of natural resource areas and corridors, including a trails network.
- Policy, funding and practices that help meet Iowa's Hypoxia Task Force goal of 45 percent reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus by 2030.
- Funding and development of an implementation plan and implementation infrastructure for Iowa's nutrient reduction strategy including a "watershed approach" to address water quality problems for nonpoint source pollution that relies on private-public partnerships and collaboration.
- A "culture of measurement" of water quality, including the establishment of measuring and monitoring tools that assist in quantifying environmental benefits of practices and policies.

- Additional federal funding for the Raccoon River watershed and the inclusion of the watershed as a specific line item in future appropriations bills to allow for dedicated funding. The Raccoon River watershed has received much attention with the ongoing discussions around improving water quality in Iowa.
- Understanding of the value of Watershed Management Authorities and the work executed to develop comprehensive watershed management plans across Iowa, outlining key areas of concern in the watershed, leading contributors to identify flooding and poor water quality and call for action steps to address the issues.

### **DES MOINES RIVER FLOOD PROTECTION**

The Partnership will continue to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Congress, the City of Des Moines (the City) and other partners to identify and secure timely approvals required to address flood control and mitigation on the Des Moines River.

In response to the USACE Des Moines River Regulated Flow Frequency Study issued in January 2011, the City has pursued analysis and hydraulic modeling to propose improvements to the City's flood protection system that will address the increased flood risk communicated to the City and to provide reliable protection against a 100-year flood with a FEMA accredited flood protection system. Since January 2011, the City has completed the following:

- Invested \$4.2 million to modify construction projects underway to increase the level of protection consistent with the increased risk.
- Invested \$3.9 million in study costs and have another \$300,000 underway for analysis and design required for USACE approval.
- Secured \$111 million in Iowa Flood Mitigation Program funding for long-term flood mitigation projects to benefit the City and Des Moines Metropolitan Wastewater Reclamation Facility.
- Participated in the USACE \$1.3 million feasibility study, which was terminated based on the determination that a federal project was not economically justified by USACE.

- Proceeded with flood mitigation improvements that can be accomplished without USACE approval of the Section 408 submittal, including floodgate design, raising the Principal Riverwalk “Red” Bridge, Corps of Engineers Downtown Closure project and replacement of storm water pump stations.

To further address these issues, The Partnership supports the City’s efforts to:

- Coordinate timely actions with USACE to obtain the necessary approvals, including Section 408 and actions related to the Federal Southeast Des Moines levee, to reduce flood risk in the City. This may include any agreements necessary to receive credit for future matching fund requirements once future federal funding is authorized.
- Resolution of outstanding issues related to the 1987 Consent to Easement Structure between the City and USACE that involve a portion of the Southeast Des Moines Levee that was relocated in the late 1980s to accommodate the construction of wastewater treatment facilities.
- Request federal funding and determination of required actions to make improvements to the USACE Red Rock Remedial Levee in Southeast Des Moines Levee system to satisfy FEMA accreditation requirements.

## **CONSERVATION**

The Partnership supports expanding conservation programs that address environmental challenges including soil erosion, water quality and wildlife habitat, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Crucially, conservation programs should empower farmers and land managers to make environmentally-compatible land and water management improvements without worsening the competitive posture of American agriculture. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- Continuation and expansion of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), which targets funding for USDA conservation cost share programs to high-need areas, leverages funding for greater impact, encourages public-private partnerships across the agriculture sector and engages USDA with private sector agriculture organizations and businesses.

- The precision conservation pilot program which aims to improve soil health and water quality by targeting conservation practices, increased adoption of innovative and effective conservation practices by agricultural producers and the collection of data to measure the effects of precision conservation practices.
- Continuation and expansion of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), which targets funding for USDA conservation cost share programs to high-need areas, leverages funding for greater impact, encourages public/private partnerships across the agriculture sector and engages USDA with private sector agriculture organizations and businesses.
- Sustained levels of funding for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) lab in Ames, which is a necessary program that provides critical research to the agricultural sector and conservation programs. The ARS is the USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency on farming productivity, sustaining natural resources and addressing food safety and nutrition priorities. The National Lab for Agriculture and the Environment, an ARS lab, is in Ames and provides research on water quality, soil health research, cover crops, saturated buffers and emissions related to agriculture.