

# 2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

---

## FLOOD MITIGATION, WATER TRAILS AND WATER QUALITY

The Partnership supports policies and funding that holistically restore and maintain rivers, streams and lakes that provide adventures and peaceful experiences, mitigate the negative impacts of flooding, decrease streambank erosion and improve water quality for drinking and recreation.

Iowa's flood and water quality challenges have received much attention in recent years. From flash flooding caused by record-breaking rain events, to beach closings due to cyanobacteria to high nitrate levels in drinking water, addressing these challenges will take a collaborative approach amongst both urban and rural communities. The Partnership supports federal investments in regional and local flood mitigation strategies including buyouts, structural flood protection, green infrastructure programs and comprehensive long-term water quantity programs. The Partnership further supports dedicated funding to address the connections between water quality and public health.

Additionally, The Partnership supports the enactment of legislation and the implementation of policy initiatives that will modernize the nation's critically important inland waterway lock and dam infrastructure, including programs within the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

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

The Partnership supports:

- Building a regionally connected system of natural resource areas and corridors to support the Greater Des Moines Water Trails Project. The State of Iowa has a strong legacy of investing in Iowa's soil and water infrastructure — an infrastructure that is critically important to the state's wealth and prosperity. In the spring of 2018, business and community leaders from DSM unveiled an ambitious water trails plan to bring recreation to Downtown DSM's rivers and create a network of 80 water trails across the region. As one of many organizations working on the project, The Partnership views the primary pathway to success as a public-private investment. With private dollars from individuals and businesses already committed, The Partnership supports allocating adequate and permanent funding sources to meet the infrastructure needs of the project. Funding options include partnering with federal agencies, nonprofits and other granting authorities to make the project a reality.
- Policy, practices and funding opportunities for progress toward Iowa's share of the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force Interim Target of 20 percent reduction of total nitrogen and phosphorus load by 2025 and 45 percent reduction in total nitrogen and phosphorus load by 2035.
- Securing dedicated federal funding for the Raccoon River Watershed. The watershed provides drinking water to 500,000 of the region's residents.
- 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.
- Funding and support of Watershed Management Authorities and the work executed to develop and implement comprehensive watershed management plans across Iowa.



# 2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

---

## **FLOOD MITIGATION ON THE DES MOINES RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES**

Flooding has always been a reality in the region, and it is likely that future flood events will be more severe and frequent due to extreme weather events and the introduction of more impermeable surfaces in our watersheds. The Partnership supports flood mitigation policies across federal agencies that help states, counties and municipalities manage their changing flood risks. Strategies may include targeted buyouts of repeatedly flooded properties and investments in upstream infrastructure that holds and slows flood waters.

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 and its tributaries.

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 2011, the City has taken significant steps in addressing critical infrastructure needs to address flood mitigation and protection.

To further enhance the efforts of multiple cities and government agencies in the region, The Partnership supports:

- Prioritizing the use of projects using green infrastructure techniques (restored wetlands, restored oxbows, etc.) installed upstream to slow the flow in the upper reaches of the watershed, resulting in lower peaks in flood events in the lower watershed near Des Moines.
- Incentivizing the use of farmland management practices that reduce runoff at its origin (tree intercropping, no till practices, perennial biomass, afforestation, managed grazing, etc.).
- Coordinated 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 of federal funding and determination of required actions to make improvements to the USACE Red Rock Remedial Levee in the southeast Des Moines Levee system to satisfy FEMA accreditation requirements.