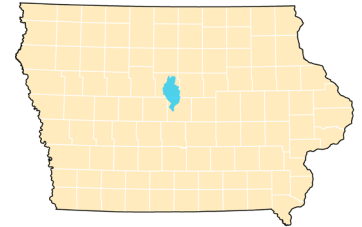


# Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Plan Executive Summary



A watershed management plan was prepared for the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed located in north central Iowa (shown in blue on map at right). This plan was sponsored by Headwaters of the South Skunk River Management Authority (WMA), a voluntary coalition of local counties, cities, and soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) within the watershed.



The plan identifies and prioritizes projects and activities to address water quality issues such as high nitrogen, phosphorus, and bacteria levels; stream bank erosion; and flooding concerns across the watershed. Implementation of the plan is based on voluntary cooperation between WMA members, landowners, and other stakeholders. It will be updated every 5 years to maintain eligibility for funding assistance with implementation efforts.

Implementation of the plan relies on the voluntary adoption and use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), a broad set of conservation practices such as terraces, reduced tillage, grassed waterways, in-field and edge-of-field conservation practices, and actions that help conserve soil and water resources. The plan helps to target BMPs for the most needed areas while also ensuring they can be adopted to fit the unique needs, lands, and budget of each farmer, landowner, and city.

The plan contains a long-term implementation strategy (20-years), short-term action plan (5-years), and an education plan.

## VISION FOR THE WMA

The Headwaters of South Skunk River WMA will bring together farmers, landowners, residents, soil and water conservation districts, cities, counties, and other stakeholders through an “all in it together” approach towards watershed management. Education, outreach, and voluntary efforts will be used to improve water quality, increase flood resiliency, and enhance soil health across the watershed.



**Chapter 1** of the plan provides a brief overview of the plan and history of the watershed.

**View the full plan at [www.jeo.com/headwaters-south-skunk-wma](http://www.jeo.com/headwaters-south-skunk-wma)**

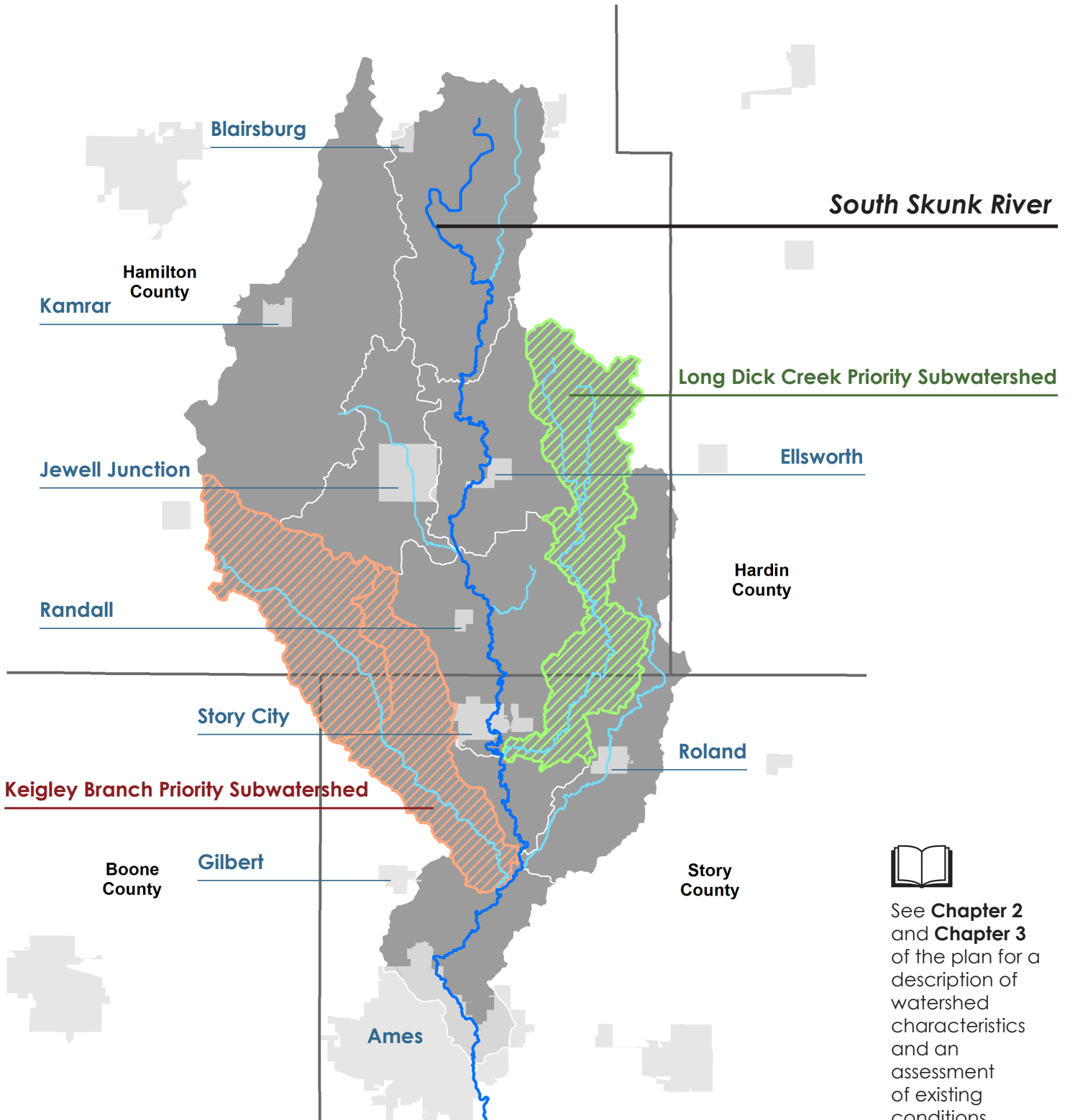
# Building on Iowa's legacy of conservation

**Cutting edge research on riparian buffers** was completed on Bear Creek, through the establishment of a nationally recognized demonstration site.

Interest in **conservation tillage (strip till or no till) and cover crops** is increasing.

Roland and Ames are actively **implementing urban stormwater conservation projects**.

2.8 million feet of **grassed waterways** | More than 9,000 acres of **cover crops planted**



See **Chapter 2** and **Chapter 3** of the plan for a description of watershed characteristics and an assessment of existing conditions.

# More than a plan. A path forward.

The watershed plan includes goals and objectives that are **SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.**



Goals and objectives are identified in **Chapter 4**. While **Chapter 5** outlines a long-term implementation strategy, **Chapter 6** provides a plan to involve and educate stakeholders throughout the watershed, and **Chapter 7** is a short-term action plan to provide initial focus.

## GOALS

1. Generate and maintain full political, technical, and public support across all participating political subdivisions and other stakeholders to ensure plan sustainability.
2. Improve water quality to enhance quality of life, environmental integrity, and recreational opportunities, within the watershed.
3. More widely and deeply affect water quality improvements in the watershed by increasing individual and community commitment to water quality.

The action plan identifies priority activities that each city, county, and SWCD, along with the WMA, should take over the next 5 years.



## EDUCATION

Outreach, education, or technical assistance aimed at various target audiences that helps to increase awareness of the WMA, the watershed plan, or assists in the increased adoption of BMPs.

## PROJECTS & STUDIES

A standalone or specific effort meant to produce a product, tool, report, or achieve a tangible result.

## PARTNERSHIPS & POLICY

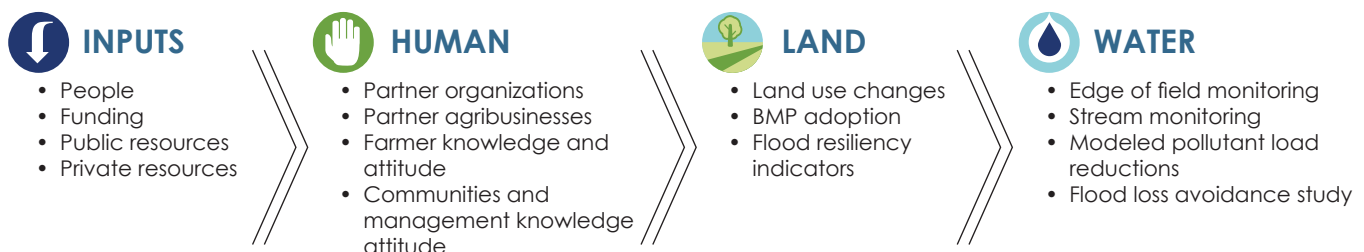
Collaboration between WMA members or other partners and the resulting actions, guidelines, or protocols set forth to achieve a specific outcome.

## MONITORING & PLAN EVALUATION

Efforts to collect, manage, and utilize data over time to track progress of meeting watershed plan goals.

Monitoring and assessing progress towards improved water quality and increased flood resiliency will be completed through long-term and short-term metrics.

## Measurable Indicators of Desirable Change



Adopted from the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy's (IDALS, 2017) logic model for measurable indicators of desirable change

# JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS

Together we can continue to improve the watershed!

## WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

- Act as the lead facilitator and coordinator for projects throughout the watershed
- Help identify and connect funding opportunities with local project sponsors
- Serve as a regional source for information
- Recruit additional members and build partnerships

## CITY & COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

- Serve as local sponsors for implementing projects
- Leverage local funds against other grant programs
- Adopt policies that reduce runoff or protect floodplains
- Identify and implement urban storm water BMPs, like:
  - » Stormwater management
  - » Infiltration basins
  - » Dams and levees
  - » Channel improvements
  - » Bridge improvements
  - » Non-structural strategies (zoning, acquisitions, floodplain remapping, etc.)
  - » Join the Community Rating System program

## LANDOWNERS & RESIDENTS

Voluntarily adopt BMPs, using cost-share opportunities, such as:

- Cover crops
- Drainage management
- Soil health
- Saturated buffers
- Rain barrels
- Nutrient management
- Farm ponds
- Rain gardens
- Bioreactors
- Wetlands
- No-till/strip-till
- Prairie strips

## SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

- Provide technical and financial support for BMPs

**WE CAN  
DO MORE  
TOGETHER**

## LEVERAGING THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Local project sponsors use the action plan to direct resources toward meeting goals and objectives. When a local champion can assemble partnerships to contribute towards a project, even more can be achieved.



**Chapter 8** identifies funding and technical resources that can be used to help with plan implementation.

