



Healthy Waters Coalition Update

October-November 2014

The Healthy Waters Coalition is a diverse group of municipal and state water and wastewater organizations, and conservation and sustainable agriculture organizations working in Washington DC and in communities throughout the country. The Coalition is focused on strengthening links between our working agricultural lands and the quality of our Nation's waters with a specific focus on nutrients. Please feel free to circulate this list to your members and let us know if you have any colleagues who would find this monthly update informative. If you do not wish to receive these updates, we can remove you from our lists.

Below is an overview of the related press coverage and other materials from the month of October and November.

National Activities

[EPA awards \\$8.6 million to state agencies in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana to fight algal blooms](#)

Crain's Cleveland Business

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Monday, Oct. 20, awarded about \$8.6 million to state agencies in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana to help combat harmful algal blooms in western Lake Erie. Ohio will receive the vast majority of the money from the Great Lake Restoration Initiative grants. The grant money goes to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (\$5.9 million), the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (\$1.5 million), the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (\$807,000) and the Indiana Department of Agriculture (\$360,000) and will fund eight projects.

[Interior, Agriculture Departments Partner to Measure Conservation Impacts on Water Quality](#)

USGS Report

The United States Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a new partnership agreement today that will provide a clearer picture of the benefits of farmers' conservation practices on the quality of our Nation's water. Working together, USDA's NRCS and DOI's USGS will quantify the benefits of voluntary agricultural practices at a watershed scale. This information will strengthen the effectiveness of state and federal nutrient reduction strategies while protecting the privacy of individual farmers. The agreement was announced at the Mississippi River Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force Meeting.

State Activities

[Teaming up for Iowa's water](#)

The Des Moines Register

The conservationist hired to lead Iowa agriculture's newest effort at reducing runoff from farm fields wants partners — big food and beverage corporations, elevators and cooperatives, private foundations,

seed and fertilizer companies, even agriculture's biggest critics. McMahon and the three agriculture powerhouses that formed the alliance — the Iowa Pork Producers, Soybean Association and the Corn Growers Association — face a significant challenge: Reduce by 45 percent the nitrogen and phosphorous that make their way into Iowa waterways and contribute to the Gulf of Mexico's dead zone.

[Governor Cuomo Announces \\$39.5 Million for Water Quality Improvement Projects Across the State](#)

Long Island News

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced \$39.5 million in grants that provide funding for 134 local and regional projects across New York State. The projects are aimed to improve water quality, reduce polluted runoff and restore water bodies and aquatic habitats in each region of the state. This funding will provide the assistance communities need to increase resiliency against storms, implement effective pollution control projects and better protect critical natural resources for years to come.

[EPA Approves Missouri's New Water Quality Standards, But Do They Go Far Enough?](#)

St. Louis Public Radio

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has signed off on a major overhaul of Missouri's water quality standards. The state approved the new regulations in November but needed federal approval to start enforcing them. John DeLashmit directs the water quality management branch for EPA Region 7. He said prior to this, about 80 percent of Missouri's waters lacked the specific pollution limits required by federal law. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources estimates that to comply, the state's water treatment plants may need to spend more than \$1.1 billion in capital costs to disinfect and remove ammonia from their discharges, along with tens of millions more in additional annual operation and maintenance costs.

[DNR Mapping Software Helps Reduce Runoff, Phosphorus Pollution](#)

Wisconsin Ag Connection

A new software tool developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is being touted as an effective way to help reduce agricultural runoff and erosion. Developed to integrate satellite imaging and geographic information system or GIS technology, the erosion vulnerability assessment for agricultural lands tool--known as EVAAL--depicts areas susceptible to runoff based on topography, land cover and soils. Detailed maps produced by the software highlight areas where large gullies or tiny rills may carry nutrients away from fields and toward bodies of water.

[Illinois EPA designing plan to reduce nitrogen, phosphorous in waterways](#)

Rockford Register Star

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency plans to release a "document of strategic actions" in November, designed to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous in the state's rivers and lakes. The document is the result of months of talks between environmentalists, agriculture interests, municipal wastewater agencies, academics and others to develop the plan. And Illinois is not alone. Other states in the Mississippi River basin have been working on similar plans, partly in response to federal efforts to address problems in the Gulf of Mexico caused by nutrient runoff.

[Iowa Watershed Improvement](#)

KMA Land

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey today encouraged eligible groups to apply for grants to support projects that will improve water quality in the state. Approximately \$830,000 is available through the Watershed Improvement Review Board to support qualifying projects. Projects eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, those addressing agricultural runoff and drainage, flood

prevention, stream bank erosion, municipal discharge, storm water runoff, unsewered communities, industrial discharge and livestock runoff.

[Water quality falling, treatment costs rising](#)

The Des Moines Register

Iowa's policy to address national water pollution — the nutrient reduction strategy — continues to fail, despite the public relations investment of its many industrial agriculture advocates and many Iowa policy makers. September 2014 set another record for Des Moines Water Works and our 500,000 water customers. This is the first September, since at least 1974, in which Des Moines Water Works recorded an average nitrate concentration in the Raccoon River above the Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water standard of 10 mg/l.

[Alabama NRCS Revises Nutrient Management Standard](#)

Southeast Ag Net

State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett today announced that the USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Alabama has revised its conservation practice standard on nutrient management. This conservation practice standard will help producers manage the application of nutrients on agricultural lands in Alabama. NRCS' nutrient management experts worked with universities, non-government organizations, industry, and others to revise the standard to ensure it is scientifically sound.

Regional and Local Activities

[Algae threatens Wabash River](#)

AgriNews

On a late August morning a day after heavy rains, the Wabash River looked the color of caramel syrup as it meandered toward Bluffton. A week later, it was back to its usual late summer tint — leaf green, from all of the algae in the water. Just as excess nutrients in the Maumee River and its tributaries contributed to the algae problem that shut down the drinking water system in Toledo, Ohio, for two days in early August, nutrient pollution causes similar problems in the Wabash.

[Board of Public Works Approves \\$187K in Agricultural Cost-Share Grants](#)

WBOC16

The Board of Public Works approved more than \$187,000 in Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share grants this week, including grants for counties on the Eastern Shore. The Maryland Department of Agriculture says the grants help farmers install best management practices that significantly reduce nutrient runoff in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and accelerate Bay restoration. The MDA says the O'Malley-Brown Administration has supported more farmer pollution reduction projects cost-share program than any other administration in the nearly three decades since the program began.

Research and Studies

[Study shows boombacks reduce run-off by 24%](#)

The Prairie Star

Irrigation Accessories Co. (IACO) is delighted to announce that independent results confirm its' 15 foot Hose Booms™ reduced the amount of run-off by 24% during a multi-pass center pivot irrigation test. The study, which was completed by Dr. Peters and 4 other prominent members of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers clearly states: 1. A 24% reduction in run-off by the 5th pass 2. The use of boom systems is an effective way of lowering the water application rate by increasing the wetted

sprinkler area thus minimizing soil surface sealing and encouraging infiltration of water into the soil. 3. Minimizing runoff will result in water savings, savings in pumping costs and minimize crop water stress.