



# BEYOND THE WATERSHED

Over the last 20 years, ACWA has steadily increased their involvement within the Raccoon River watershed and beyond its geographic boundaries. The organization has become a leader in water quality improvement efforts in Iowa and beyond.

From the humble beginnings of collecting water samples to gauge nitrate levels of the Raccoon and Des Moines rivers, ACWA is setting an example for improved water quality within the watersheds. The goals of ACWA align with the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, which calls for a 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus in Iowa waterbodies and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico.

Representatives from ACWA are participating in regional and national conversations. They are sharing how the organization is structured to collaborate with others for improved water quality.

## ONE WATER SUMMIT

The U.S. Water Alliance is driving a national One Water movement “to ensure that clean, reliable water is available for all, now and in the future.” The organization hosted its annual One Water Summit in 2018 in Minneapolis, Minn., with delegate groups attending from across the country.

ACWA leaders Harry Ahrenholtz, Roger Wolf and Dan Dix were part of the 51-strong Iowa delegation, the largest at the event. More than 900 attendees gathered to find solutions for water issues across the nation. The Iowa delegates were encouraged that agriculture was a significant component of this national conversation.



**“The One Water Summit is a reinforcement of the ACWA plan — to reach out to our urban neighbors. The more we do that, the better off we’ll be. It’s not technology that is the issue, but it’s relationships,” Ahrenholtz said.**

The event was a venue for attendees to learn from one another, to take ideas that could be applied elsewhere in regard to water quality, flood and stormwater management and more.

“The summit was an eye-opener for me. Nutrient loading is a problem in Iowa and the Midwest, but there are different issues across the country,” said Dix. “Others spoke about water equity, safety and affordability. Water is such a large issue. Often, we put our blinders on and focus only on one thing.”



To build upon the One Water movement, ACWA is collaborating with urban partners for improved water quality for the future. Through upstream-downstream partnerships, ACWA is ensuring key entities are included in the efforts to scale up practices that contribute to the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy goals. ACWA members continue to open the dialogue between each other, their customers and urban residents to inform and advance the One Water movement.

## IOWA WATER CONFERENCE

The Iowa Water Conference, held annually in Ames, is focused on forwarding the national One Water movement. The conference is hosted by the Iowa Water Center, which is part of the national network created by U.S. Congress. After attending the One Water Summit, Iowa Water Center leaders were empowered to forward the One Water movement to their conference attendees.

ACWA furthered their leadership in the water quality arena by holding a workshop at the conference. The goal of the workshop was to engage agribusiness with water quality programming and conservation delivery.

ACWA Executive Director Roger Wolf moderated the workshop. ACWA chair Harry Ahrenholtz, Kent Klingbeil, Landus Cooperative; and Gregg Schmitz, Nutrien Ag Solutions, told of their experiences in advancing water quality improvement in the Raccoon and Des Moines River watersheds. They also facilitated small group discussions with attendees comprised of conservation professionals, agriculture retailers and farmers.

The nearly 50 participants discussed barriers that conservation professionals perceive when working with agribusinesses as well as ways to overcome them to move toward future collaboration. Retail agronomists must manage many variables and some of them can be conflicting when it comes to conservation, and workshop attendees were understanding of these positions. The consensus was that communication between ag retailers, landowners and farmers is crucial and will serve all stakeholders as they move forward to improve Iowa's rivers and streams.

