



# News Release

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## **Watershed efforts receive continued funding**

*North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership one of three watersheds recognized*

**(Ankeny, Iowa)** — A new water quality initiative in the Raccoon River watershed was announced today to help farmers and landowners adopt conservation practices that reduce nitrates entering waterbodies.

The North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership is a three-year project supported by the Iowa Soybean Association (ISA), Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and managed by Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA).

The three-year project, located in Sac, Calhoun, Carroll and Greene Counties, kicked off with a ceremony at the Mark Schleisman farm in Calhoun County. Schleisman, an ISA member and 2018 recipient of the American Soybean Association's National Conservation Legacy Award, installed a bioreactor on his land in 2013.

Located east of Hwy 71 near Lake City, the site served as an ideal backdrop for the announcement led by Iowa Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Julie Kenney.

"We're [IDALS] proud of this work. It's a great opportunity to showcase the progress that's been made," said Kenney. "As we celebrate Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week, we'll be celebrating successes of 55 projects across the state, with the North Raccoon Farm to River Partnership being one. We are looking forward to continued momentum."

The Farm to River Partnership (formerly known as the Elk Run Watershed Project) has a proven track record of developing effective in-field and edge-of-field strategies for implementation of bioreactors and saturated buffers.

Because of the demonstrated success, this project is one of three in Iowa receiving sustained funding — a cumulative \$1.43 million — through the Iowa Water Quality Initiative over the next three years. In addition to state funding, the projects can access more than \$2.27 million in matching funds to support water quality improvements efforts.

The expanded water quality initiative now encompasses Drainage Ditch 25, Rainbow Bend County Park, Elk Run, Marrowbone Creek and Doe Brook. Specific goals of the Farm to River Partnership include the installation of 15 bioreactors, 15 saturated buffers, two wetlands and 11,500 acres of additional cover crops.

For more information about the project and ACWA, go to [www.acwa-rrws.org](http://www.acwa-rrws.org).

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**The ACWA** is an association consisting of 11 ag retailers and five associate members operating and supporting farmer customers in the Des Moines and Raccoon River basins. Its mission is to help agriculture identify and implement solutions reducing nutrient loss to Iowa waters. From 2001 – 2016, ACWA members and sponsors have invested more than \$3.2 million in the Raccoon and Des Moines River watersheds, with over \$1.9 million directly for projects and programs supporting water quality monitoring, edge-of-field practice demonstration and evaluation and targeted watershed implementation efforts on farms.

**The ISA** ([www.iasoybeans.com](http://www.iasoybeans.com)) implements programs, activities and policies improving the competitiveness of the soybean industry to the benefit of Iowa's nearly 40,000 soybean farmers. Priorities include production research, market development, environmental programming, communications, producer outreach, consumer engagement, transportation and policy. The association, founded in 1964 and governed by an elected, volunteer board of 22 soybean farmers, is funded by the soybean checkoff and non-checkoff resources. It is fact-based and data driven, dedicated to honesty and transparency and committed to sustaining a strong and vibrant soybean industry through collaboration and partnerships.

**The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's** mission is to provide leadership for all aspects of agriculture in Iowa, ensure consumer protection and promote the responsible use of our natural resources. The Department established the Iowa Water Quality Initiative in 2013 to help implement the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, which is a science and technology based approach to achieving a 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus losses to our waters. The Initiative seeks to harness the collective ability of both private and public resources and organizations to reduce nutrient loss and improve water quality.

*Not funded by the soybean checkoff*