

PROGRESS REPORT



INSIDE:

2 LE(a)Ding the way • Iowans call for increased conservation • Protections for clean water prevail • Pro H2O propels work forward • Chad Pregracke to headline 2015 Annual Conference 3 Watershed communities • Powerful potential 4 A letter from Executive Director Ralph Rosenberg

PERSISTENCE BEGETS PROGRESS

The 2015 Iowa Legislative Session ended late and in a flurry of last minute legislation. When the dust settled, it was evident that from an environmental perspective, this session left much unfinished business.

However, crucial legislation was introduced, and several modest, but important bills that benefit Iowa's environment, communities and economy were signed into law by the Governor earlier this month.



Expanded access for solar

Surrounded by solar energy advocates including the Council, Governor Branstad signed HF645 into law on June 26, increasing the annual amount of solar tax incentive funds available from \$4.5 million to \$5 million. HF645 also expands and makes improvements to the 476 C production tax credit for solar energy, which can be used to support community solar projects.



Funding for water quality monitoring equipment

A total of \$9.6 million for water quality was funded in the Agriculture and Natural Resources appropriation bill (\$4.4 million) and the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF) budget (\$5.2 million), both signed by the Governor on July 2. RIIF includes \$450,000 that the Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality will pass through to the Nutrient Research Center at Iowa State University for the Iowa Flood Center for "nutrient water monitoring technology and equipment."



Introduction of IWILL bills

We joined other conservation-focused groups to call upon legislators to fund the Iowa Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. Although a final bill was not passed, both chambers filed bills – the most progress since Iowans voted to create the Trust in 2010. Both bills remain alive for the 2016 session.

The Council also supported legislation to expand access to wind energy, which remains alive for next year, and defended against and improved bills that would have hindered clean energy progress. We also advocated for sustained funding for natural resources, and while funding again falls far short of program needs, current allocations for critical programs, including REAP, were maintained.

These accomplishments are significant, but the Legislature must do more to support a sustainable future for Iowa. It will take determination, persistence and all of us working together to elevate our issues and move legislative action beyond the status quo. In the coming months, we can channel our frustration into increased advocacy and meaningful conversations with policymakers, so when we return to the Legislature in 2016, our collective voice and influence will be even stronger. ✨

Our summer 2015 update for members and friends.

WHY I SUPPORT THE IOWA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Rose Green

*Individual member,
Pro H₂O event
committee member
Des Moines, IA*



I've always cared about protecting our environment, but when I became a parent, the issue took on a whole new meaning.

We all work so diligently to make sure our kids are healthy, that they get enough sleep, eat well and stay active. If we want our children to grow up in a healthy environment, we also need to protect the water they drink and swim in, and the air they breathe every day.

My kids motivated me to get involved, and the Iowa Environmental Council's community and advocacy approach really appealed to me. You can never underestimate the power of one individual, but together, we're a little louder.

Advocacy can be intimidating, and I am so glad the Council raises Iowans' voices on behalf of the environment at the Legislature and brings to light all of these going on that we care about but may not catch. They advocate on a level that makes all of us more informed and powerful.

On whatever scale you're involved with the Council – as a supporter, committee or board member – you're part of an organization that's moving the issue forward. I'm proud to be a part of this effective, present voice in the community. ✨

Iowa Environmental Council • A safe, healthy environment and sustainable future for Iowa.

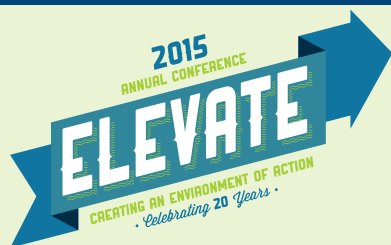
521 E. Locust Street, Suite 220 • Des Moines, IA 50309 • tel: 515-244-1194 • iaenvironment.org



[Facebook.com/IAEnvironmentalCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/IAEnvironmentalCouncil)



[@Iowa_Env](https://twitter.com/Iowa_Env)



CHAD PREGRACKE TO HEADLINE 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Registration for our 2015 Annual Conference, Elevate: Creating an environment of action, Fri., Oct. 2 at Drake University in Des Moines, is now open.

This year's conference, which also marks the Council's 20th anniversary, features keynote speaker Chad Pregracke, 2013 CNN Hero of the Year, founder and president of Living Lands and Waters.

Take advantage of early bird rates and register online at www.iaenvironment.org or by calling Communications & Outreach Director Katy Heggen at 515-244-1194 x210. Exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities are also available.

PRO H₂O PROPELS WORK FORWARD



On Thurs., June 11 nearly 250 people braved stormy skies to gather at Brenton Skating Plaza in Des Moines for Pro H₂O. The evening commemorated our 20th anniversary, honored early leaders, and toasted a shared vision for a clean water future and continued advocacy on behalf of Iowa's environment. The crowd included new and familiar faces, and left no question that the Council community is as committed as ever to creating a sustainable future for Iowa.

LE(a)Ding THE WAY

Streets across the state – as well as Iowa's energy efficiency future – got a bit brighter this summer. In July, MidAmerican Energy began converting all 100,000 MidAmerican-owned streetlights to LEDs – a direct result of advocacy efforts led by the Council.

In 2013, after a series of meetings and a final proposal that lacked an effective LED transition plan, the Council intervened in MidAmerican's rate case, providing testimony on behalf of the Council and the Environmental Law and Policy Center in favor of a full LED conversion. Following the case, we reached a settlement that outlined a plan to begin the transition, which was finalized this spring.

"LEDs are extremely energy efficient. They last longer, offer lower lighting costs, fewer maintenance issues and less hazardous waste," said Energy Program Director Nathaniel Baer. "LEDs also improve visibility, reduce glare and limit spill light. Transitioning to LEDs protects our environment and makes our communities safer and healthier."

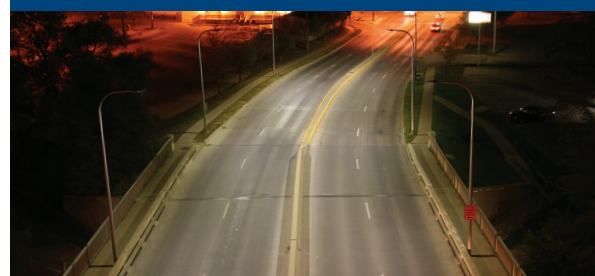
MidAmerican estimates that once the installation is complete, approximately 40 million kilowatt-hours will

be saved annually. The Council has also worked with other utilities including Alliant Energy, which has already replaced about 1/3 of their streetlights, and several municipal utilities on LED transition planning. ✨



ABOVE: High pressure sodium streetlights.

BELOW: LED streetlights. Photo credit: Alliant Energy



PROTECTIONS FOR CLEAN WATER PREVAIL

Some of Iowa's most important waters are on their way to being better protected thanks to the action of environmental advocates including the Council.

This spring, the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers announced the finalization of the Clean Water Rule,

which confirms protections for headwater streams and wetlands in the floodplain adjacent to these streams under the Clean Water Act.

"This is a major victory for clean water," said Water Program Director Susan Heathcote. "U.S. Supreme Court rulings in recent years had created confusion about which waters are protected under the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Rule clears up that confusion."

The final standard also clarifies which waters do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, including streams that don't contribute flow to downstream waters, irrigation ditches, waste treatment lagoons, and ag stormwater runoff.

"The Council and its allies have worked for years to elevate awareness, understanding and action to advance the Clean Water Rule. Now, we must maintain that momentum and work with the EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, political, business and industry leaders to ensure the standard is implemented in Iowa efficiently and effectively," Heathcote said. ✨



Photo credit: David Hance.

WATERSHEDS ARE COMMUNITIES

For the past year-and-a-half, Agricultural Policy Specialist Jennifer Terry has sought to create dialogue around the state's plan to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution — primarily caused by agricultural pollution — entering our waterways.

This has included hundreds of meetings with diverse stakeholders, but an equally important component of advancing the dialogue is creating a space for others in the conversation.

"If we want to make measurable progress on improving Iowa's water quality, we need to start viewing our watersheds as a community where our actions impact our watershed neighbors," said Terry. "The Council can provide a platform for the people, practices and projects that embody this approach."

Watershed Management Authorities (WMAs), legislatively-created, locally-led groups administered by DNR that work cooperatively with individual landowners, farmers, cities, counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts within their watershed, are an excellent example of this community-minded approach.

The Council hosted a Watershed Approach Roundtable at its 2014 Annual Conference, supported a WMA presentation at a Watershed Planning Advisory Committee meeting, and advocated for increased support for WMAs at the legislature this year.

"What's good for water quality is also good for soil health, flood mitigation, recreation and conservation. When we improve our watersheds, our communities, economies and environment benefit," Terry said. "Iowa's leaders should be looking at how they can implement a watershed framework statewide, and we're ready to help elevate that conversation." ✨



In a watershed community, diverse stakeholders work cooperatively in watershed planning and management. Here, farmers check cover crops, a conservation practice that improves water quality.

POWERFUL POTENTIAL

As this goes to press, the EPA is preparing to release the final Clean Power Plan, a landmark standard that will set the first-ever federal limits on carbon pollution from existing power plants by establishing state-specific reduction goals based on each state's energy portfolio.

Per the Council's own analysis and *Iowa's Wind Potential for Addressing III(d) Goals: The Potential for Tapping Iowa's Wind Resource to Reduce CO₂ Emissions*, a report released by the Iowa Wind Energy Association this spring, Iowa is well-equipped to meet its proposed 16% carbon pollution reduction goal¹, and could achieve a more stringent goal.

"At the end of 2014, Iowa already had over 5,700 MW of wind energy installed," said Climate and Energy Policy Specialist Cindy Lane. "Iowa could meet a 16% reduction goal with wind energy alone by building approximately 2,300 MW, 1,200 MW of which is already being built."

Iowa's wind energy potential is over 570,000 MW, and recent studies show 20,000 MW could be developed by 2030. This potential perfectly positions Iowa to benefit from an increased regional or national demand for clean energy.

The Council has spent the past year raising awareness of the significant economic, community and environmental opportunities the Clean Power Plan presents, and it has not gone unnoticed. Diverse stakeholders including the Governor's office, and state natural resource, utility and economic agencies

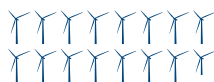
remain engaged. MidAmerican Energy and Alliant Energy also recently announced two new major wind projects that would result in an additional 752 MW in Iowa.

Following the finalization of the Clean Power Plan, the Council will continue to work with the state's leaders to shape a strong implementation plan. ✨

¹ From 2012 levels

IOWA CAN MEET AND EXCEED ITS CARBON EMISSIONS GOAL

Iowa can achieve its proposed 16% carbon reduction goal by 2030 by building a modest amount of wind and taking no other actions.
Iowa could also meet a more stringent carbon reduction goal by building wind energy alone and taking no additional actions.



For Iowa to meet its goal, approximately **2,300 MW** of additional wind is needed by 2030.



1,212 MW of wind is already being built in Iowa and will be in service by 2016. Once this additional 1,212 MW is constructed, Iowa will already be **half way (52%)** to meeting its proposed goal of **1,301 lbs/MWh** by 2030.

2016: **52%**

2030: **1,301 lbs./MWh**



To reach the remaining 1,112 MW of wind, an average of **75 MW** would need to be built per year between 2016 and 2030.

PROGRESS REPORT

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Make a tax-deductible gift to the Iowa Environmental Council to ensure a safe, healthy environment and sustainable future for the next 20 years.

To give, contact Development Director Jamie Burch at 515-244-1194 x202. You may also visit the Council's website at iaenvironment.org/donate.php or return the enclosed card.

SAVE THE DATE

2015 Annual Conference

Friday, Oct. 2, 2015

Drake University, Des Moines

Register at iaenvironment.org

A LETTER FROM RALPH

It's summer, and Iowans across the state are exploring and enjoying all that Iowa's landscape has to offer. During this time of year, I am grateful to live in such a beautiful place, but I am also reminded of the urgent need to make Iowa's water, land and energy safer, healthier and more sustainable.

The 2015 Legislative Session ended in disappointment and frustration for many natural resource advocates. However, several modest, but important bills prevailed thanks to your support. The crowd at Pro H₂O: Celebrating 20 Years, including incredible event committee member Rose Green, proved Iowans are energized and ready to call upon our state's leaders to prioritize clean water, land and energy.

The Council is working to advance and implement two landmark standards, one confirming protections for headwater streams and wetlands in the floodplain adjacent to these streams under the Clean Water Act, and the other setting the first-ever federal limits on carbon pollution.

We are hitting the road this summer, continuing to promote dialogue and pursue a platform for conversations about watersheds as an extension of Iowa communities. Streets of many of those communities across the state will soon be brighter, safer and more efficient thanks the Council's persistence and work with one utility to replace over 100,000 streetlights with LEDs.

The Council's approach is rooted in the belief that by joining together, we elevate each other and the importance of Iowa's environment. I look forward to working with you on this uphill but worthwhile climb.



Ralph Rosenberg

Executive Director

Rosenberg@iaenvironment.org

