

Wrap-up Comments for Karst Forum

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Thanks to the speakers and everyone for a very good meeting and discussion. Thanks again to our sponsors.

If you want to stay in touch with the Iowa Environmental Council and find out about future events, be sure and sign up at our table before you leave.

This meeting has been about sharing information to help find a balanced approach to managing what can too often be competing interests for private enterprise, clean or cleaner water, community vitality and the rights and interests of neighbors, rural and urban. As John Beard commented in introductory comments this morning, it is best of all is when we can find and support opportunities for these interests to align rather than clash.

What is Iowa's long-term vision? Can it better set the stage for communities and regions to develop and implement positive visions that will encourage local economic development and sustainable agriculture that can nourish quality of life for residents?

As we look for those opportunities, it is so important to look for balance -- and to keep learning. I hope this meeting will inspire many of you to find ways to use some of the information that's been shared here today. Changes in livestock facility siting and manure management rules are being courageously called for by a growing number of counties and communities across the state. Here in northeast Iowa's karst region, the implications of those choices are especially evident for the future of drinkable water, public health and the beauty and diversity of this vital region.

If these things matter to enough people, positive change can happen, but it will require listening, speaking, writing, and communicating with policymakers at every level, as well as with neighbors and friends. Don't forget that you have influence in many ways, including through the choices you make at the grocery store and the farmers market to support farmers who are striving to care for soil, water and the health of their customers, neighbors and fish and wildlife.

Keep up the good work that so many of you are doing to care for this region and for Iowa. It matters.