Invitation to a Focus Group on Cooperative Development of Wetland Mitigation Projects

March 1, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Room 260-262, Scheman Building, Iowa State Center
Ames, Iowa

About the focus group

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) is hoping to identify future partners and establish a framework for mitigating unavoidable wetland impacts. This focus group will be a first step toward documenting the need for a mitigation banking process and/or in-lieu fee mitigation process in Iowa where impacts to wetlands by public or private improvements cannot be avoided.

Who should attend

Anyone involved with Section 404 permits or Section 401 water quality certificates under the Clean Water Act would benefit. Representatives of the following groups are invited:

• Consulting engineers
• Construction contractors
• County and city engineers
• Municipal authorities and utilities
• Conservation organizations

About the project

Research objectives

• Determine the need for cooperative wetlands mitigation in Iowa
• Identify resources for cooperative wetland mitigation
• Develop a conceptual framework to facilitate more centralized wetland mitigation strategies that would reduce costs and improve effectiveness
• Identify potential partners
• Develop a draft mitigation banking instrument and in-lieu fee programmatic agreement

The combined results of the focus group will be incorporated in the final project report. The attendees will form the core group for implementation of the final report recommendations.

Background

The Iowa DOT is seeking to involve other agencies in the location, development, and enhancement of wetland mitigation projects and is interested in three strategies:

1. Where feasible and appropriate, develop a centralized approach to wetland mitigation.
2. For small mitigation sites, create a framework for paying fees to an established wetland in-lieu of on-site mitigation.
3. Involve counties and local communities in wetland mitigation planning, development, and land management.

This focus group will evaluate the need for cooperative wetland mitigation, identify the benefits, identify the difficulties and potential problems, and develop a conceptual framework to implement cooperative strategies.

Format

A plenary session will describe the purpose and goals of the focus group. Breakout sessions on wetland banks and in-lieu fees will encourage discussion of each issue in more detail. The breakout sessions will be repeated so participants will be able to participate in discussion on both topics. Sessions will include discussion of at least the following topics:

Breakout session: Wetland banks—when, where, why, and how
Is there a need for a wetland banking program in Iowa?
Service area/watershed issues
Wetland quality/functional assessments
Ownership
Financing
Price of credits
Maintenance over time
Mitigation banking instrument terms
Overall Iowa framework for wetlands mitigation

Breakout session: In-lieu fee mitigation—when, where, why, and how
Is there a need for an in-lieu fee program in Iowa?
Why isn't this approach more prevalent?
Programmatic agreement terms
Service area/watershed issues
Overall Iowa framework for wetland mitigation

Registration

Registration is free. Lunch will be provided.

Name _________________________________________
Organization ___________________________________
Address _______________________________________
City, State, Zip __________________________________
Phone ________________________________________
Email _________________________________________

To attend, please submit this form by February 25 by mail, fax, or email to

Lori Wildeman
CTRE
2901 South Loop Drive, Suite 3100
Ames, IA 50010-8632
Fax: 515-294-0467
lwild@iastate.edu
An important event about Wetland Mitigation

Questions
If you have questions about this project, contact Steve Andrle at CTRE, 515-294-8103, andrle@iastate.edu. If you have questions about registration, please contact Lori Wildeman, 515-294-1866, lwild@iastate.edu. For hotel questions and information please call the Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau, 515.232.4032, www.visitames.com.

Sponsors
Iowa Highway Research Board; the Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Environment and Right of Way; Federal Highway Administration

Project team
Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) and the Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering at Iowa State University

Technical advisory committee
Scott Marler, Iowa DOT • John Goode, Monroe County • Jeb Brewer, City of Des Moines • Mike LaPietra, Federal Highway Administration • Rick Robinson, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
Iowa Mitigation Banking Review Team: Neal Johnson, US Army Corps of Engineers • Heidi Woeber, Fish and Wildlife Service • Jason Daniels, Environmental Protection Agency • Mark Lindflott, National Resources Conservation Service • Christine Schwake, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Center for Transportation Research and Education
ISU Research Park
2901 S. Loop Drive, Suite 3100
Ames, IA 50010-8632