JANUARY 2023 | Osceola Water Works

QUENCH

news by the glassful

FEATURING THE IOWA NUTRIENT COLLABORATIVE

CONTENT

QUENCH
news by the glassful

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QUENCH Magazine is published 2 times per year by the Iowa Rural Water Association (IRWA). The magazine is distributed by mail to IRWA members' consumers.

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OSCEOLA WATER WORKS NEWS

OWW Switching to FrontDesk Billing/Transaction Service

Beginning February 1, 2023 Osceola Water Works will be launching a new online billing and payment service called FrontDesk. This will offer our customers greater flexibility to view and pay utility bills online. In addition, customers will have options to enroll in AutoPay and receive electronic notifications.

With FrontDesk, you can look forward to being able to:

- Pay utility bills any time with an easy-to-use online portal
- 24/7 access to your account to manage and gather information including utility usage, track multiple accounts, submit service requests, and view payment history
- Customers can avoid late or missed payments, by using AutoPay with a credit card, debit card, or E-Check.
- Get emails or texts when your bill is ready, when a payment is scheduled, and after payment has been received
- Update your notification settings so you can receive other important messages and notifications
- Easy access to Public Notices and answers to Frequently Asked Questions so you can see important Osceola-related information.
- Fill out and submit forms directly online and pay associated fees. The Osceola Water Works staff will review and process the forms – no more paper required!
- Review Meeting Agenda's and Minutes.
- Use Citizen Requests to submit requests directly to the necessary government officials with a few clicks of a mouse or taps on a smartphone.

What does this mean if you currently already receive electronic bills or are enrolled in AutoPay with ACH?

Starting February 1st, 2023 customers can go on to our website at www.osceolawaterworks.com and select the link to sign up for FrontDesk. When activated, customers will need to log into FrontDesk and create a new account. You will be required to update your preferences and set up new AutoPay information. Because we value the security of your information and respect your privacy, we will not be transferring your payment information from your current online accounts or your Osceola Water Works accounts. Please be sure to create your FrontDesk account as soon as possible as your current AutoPay settings will be deactivated on February 28, 2023.

If you have questions or need assistance with FrontDesk and setting up your online account, please reach out to Osceola Water Works, 208 W Jefferson St, Osceola, IA 50213, phone: (641) 342-1435, email: osceolawater4@windstream.net.

BILLING STATEMENTS

Beginning February 1st, 2023, mailed Osceola Water Works billing statements will transition to full-page, paper bills in an envelope. After discussions with many of our customers, the board found the smaller "Postcard-sized" statements were not as user-friendly with some statements getting lost in the shuffle with other mail. Therefore, the board decided to change to a full, paper bill for those who use that channel for payment.

If you have questions, please reach out to Osceola Water Works, 208 W Jefferson St, Osceola, IA 50213, phone: (641) 342-1435, email: osceolawater4@windstream.net.

SAY "HELLO" TO THE OSCEOLA WATER WORKS TEAM

BRANDON PATTERSON – *Water Superintendent*
CORY GALLUP – *Water Distribution Foreman*
ROYCE ROBERTSON – *Water Plant Foreman*
PATTI SNYDER – *Utility Business Manager*
SIERRA MANN – *Utility Office Associate*
DEENA SNYDER – *Water Maintenance Operator/ GIS Specialist*
KEVYN MUMAW – *Water Plant Operator*
CASEY FLUCKEY – *Water Plant Operator*

OSCEOLA WATER WORKS *RESOURCE WATCH*

Osceola Water Board Increases Conservation Plan to "Water Warning" Level

(OSCEOLA, IA – NOVEMBER 28, 2022)
For much of 2022, the State of Iowa has been at or hovering precariously close to severe drought levels. According to mid-October measurements, 57% of the state was experiencing moderate drought levels — an increase from 52% just weeks before. Moving into November, statewide averages improved, but with little increase in precipitation the Osceola Water Board moved to increase the city's water conservation plan from Section 1: Water Watch to Section 2: Water Warning. According to Brandon Patterson, Osceola Water Superintendent, the Board decided to take this step based off of current water levels in West Lake and as a precautionary measure to mitigate potential water shortages in the spring and summer of 2023.

"The issues for Osceola regarding water supply at this point are two-fold," said Patterson. *"Water levels for West Lake are already below acceptable annual withdrawal rates and water quality continues to be a challenge."*

Currently, the daily safe raw water withdrawal rate out of West Lake — Osceola's only current water source — is 900,000 gallons/day. Based on an engineer's recent estimate, capacity of West Lake will likely decline to 800,000 gallons/day in the future. The most recent 12-month average shows a water withdrawal rate from West Lake at 1,479,994 gallons per day. With water usage projected to increase into the new year, the ability to source from West Lake at higher and lower intake levels becomes not only a quantity issue, but also a quality issue.

In the past, reduced lake levels along with water quality concerns have pushed the Board to utilize the lower intake source located at 20' below normal pool levels. That option, as it stands, is considered non-viable due to poor water quality at that level — below Iowa State standards — potentially causing higher treatment costs.

"Until we can resolve the lower intake quality issues, the Osceola Water Board is tightening the water conservation standard based on the supply available to the top water intake at about 12 feet below normal pool level," said Patterson.

The Osceola Water Board and staff are working diligently to address the intake issues. By working through an agreement with Liquid Engineering Corporation (LEC) out of Billings, Montana, come spring, divers will survey West Lake's intake engineering, providing data on the viability of raising the lower intake. This will not only mitigate potential water quality issues when used, but continue to avoid algae and other contaminants found at the higher pool levels as the weather gets warmer.

Of course, moving the intake levels will not solve Osceola's water shortage issue. Encouraging the community to conserve water, no matter the season, is an integral part of the Board's ongoing water quality and management focus.

What does Section 2: Water Warning conservation plan mean to Osceola water customers?

A. Outdoor watering and irrigation is prohibited, except as follows.

B. Watering or irrigation of flower and vegetable gardens, trees and shrubs less than 4-years old, and new seeding or sod is permitted once a week with an application not to exceed 1-inch. Watering shall only be done between the hours of 8:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M.

C. Car washing is prohibited, except at commercial establishments that provide that service.

D. No water shall be used to fill private swimming pools, children's wading pools, reflecting pools or any other outdoor pool or pond.

E. No water shall be used to wash streets, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks or building exteriors.

F. No water shall be used for nonessential cleaning of commercial and industrial equipment, machinery, and interior spaces.

G. Water shall be served at restaurants only upon request of the customer.

Penalties for violation of the water warning restrictions range from a written notice on the first infraction up to a $130 surcharge for three or more violations.

While the move to this level of conservation, at this time of year, shouldn't impact many within the community, the Osceola Water Board wants to make sure everyone is aware of the restrictions. Pending winter precipitation levels, the need for changes in conservation levels may require additional evaluation.

"We'd love to see more than normal precipitation this winter and coming spring," said Patterson. "But due to El Niño, Osceola's winter should be slightly warmer with less snow and ice than in 2021, and that's concerning."

If you have questions or would like more information on the Osceola Water Works Conservation Plan or services provided through Osceola Water Works, please contact Brandon Patterson, Water Superintendent at the Osceola Water Works, 208 W Jefferson St, Osceola, IA 50213, phone: (641) 342-1435, email: osceolawater2@windstream.net.

OSCEOLA WATER CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATE / CLARKE COUNTY RESERVOIR NOTES

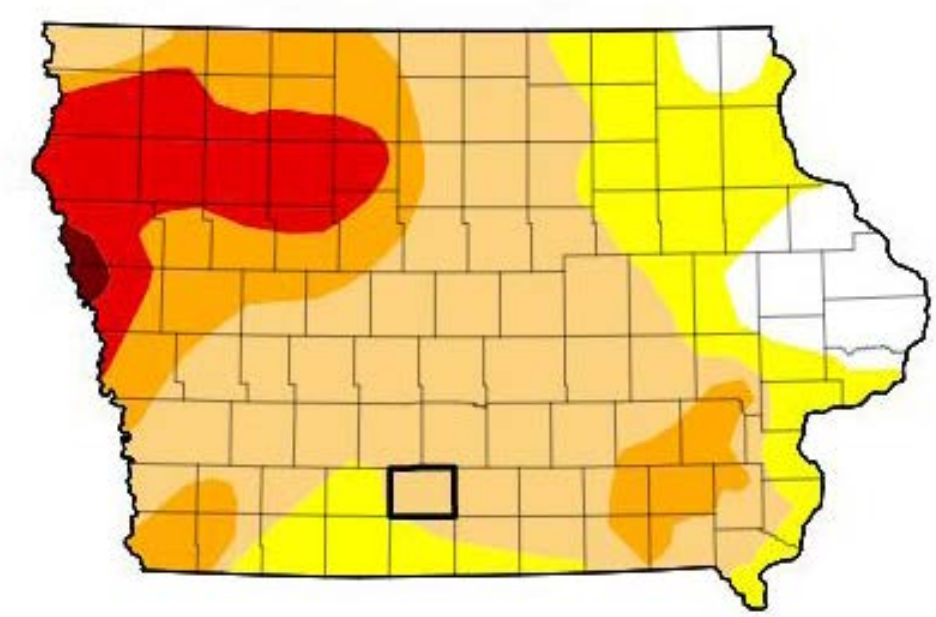
Clarke County Reservoir Notes

The Long Path to Sustainable Water for Osceola and Surrounding Communities

Since the early 1990's it was clear that the water supply limits to the city of Osceola and surrounding communities would need addressed if consumer use and business development were to continue at the rate community leaders hoped. These leaders began working with the NRCS (previously the Soil and Water Conservation Service) to identify and establish a new water resource to augment what is currently drawn from West Lake. This new resource would focus not only on water sustainability for the community but also support and enhance future economic development.

"As it stands, West Lake's draw capacity is approximately 900,000 gallons per day and predicted to decline to 800,000 gallons per day in the near future," says Brandon Patterson, Osceola Water Works Superintendent. "The most recent 12-month average showed a water withdrawal rate from West Lake at 1,479,994 gallons per day. That's concerning for citizens and businesses alike."

In 2003, the Clarke County Reservoir Commission (CCRC) – an intergovernmental agency recognized by Iowa law, includes the Cities of Osceola, Murray, and Woodburn; Clarke County Board of Supervisors; Osceola Water Works; and the Southern Iowa Rural Water Association (SIRWA) – was formed specifically to address these water challenges. In the Fall of 2004, the CCRC formally requested NRCS planning assistance through the PL-566 Watershed Protection Program. Planning by NRCS began in December 2004 to develop a project in the Squaw Creek Watershed that would provide an additional 2.0 million gallons per day to the area water supply. This planning process resulted in a NRCS watershed plan-EIS (May 2011) known as the Clarke County Water Supply Project.



Ultimately, through years of location evaluation, groundwater testing, geo-surveys, and land-owner negotiations, the area chosen as the most suitable for such a project was locked in (May 2011-13) located just five miles northwest of the City of Osceola.

"The project will provide water security to over 10,000 people, more than 330 businesses, and over 110 livestock operations through the Osceola Water Works and SIRWA." Said Dave Beck, Project Coordinator for the CCRC. "It will also allow for future economic development in a part of Iowa that suffers from lower than average personal and family incomes."

In 2020, the PL-566 watershed program received new appropriations from Congress. In April 2021, the Commission entered into an agreement with NRCS to update the August 2013 plan in order to be eligible for financial assistance to construct the new water reservoir with assistance from this new funding. The updated plan will be completed in 2023.

The current total estimated cost of the project is $96.2 million. The NRCS funding could provide up to 75% of the cost of construction. The Commission is currently working with the State of Iowa to secure additional funding through the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provided through the American Rescue Act (Covid relief funds). Remaining construction funding will be locally provided using contributions from SIRWA, Osceola Water Works, and the CCRC using funds received from the local option sales tax.

It has been a long and winding road to bring a new source of clean and plentiful water to Osceola and Southern Iowa. Osceola Water Works and the Water Board are grateful to those leaders who had the foresight to start the journey more than 30 years ago.

If you have additional questions or need more information on the Clarke County Reservoir, please reach out to Dave Beck, CCRC Project Coordinator, PO Box 343, Creston, IA 50801, phone: 641-782-4033, email: dave.beck@southerniowarcd.org

OSCEOLA WATER WORKS: BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

ALISHA KALE

Board Chair

Board Member since 2012

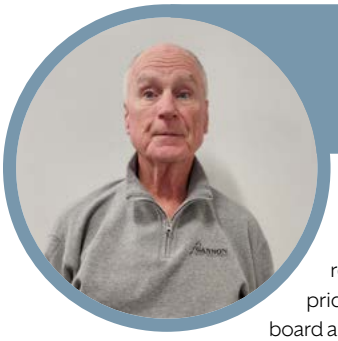
Alisha was born and raised in Northeast Missouri on a century farm. After graduating from high school, she received her bachelor's degree from Iowa State University and continued on to Villanova University receiving her Masters in Lean Six Sigma. Alisha is currently a Business Process Engineer for a Fortune 500 company.

Highly involved in her community, Alisha serves on a number of Boards of Directors and Trustees as well as works tirelessly to represent the citizens of Osceola through various community organizations.

"When a position became available on the Osceola Waterworks Board of Directors, I knew I could use my skill to represent our community and ensure we had safe and fresh water for our residents." says Kale. *"If I can improve one thing within our Water Department it would be to have easier access to phone app payments."* She went on to say, *"In the changing world of technology, the utility sector seems to be slightly harder to apply some really slick payment options. We, as a board, are working on making that an easier option for the future."*

Alisha is also active in Order of the Eastern Star, P.E.O, Beta Sigma Phi, Process Excellence Network, Process Excellence in Financial Services, Master Black Belt in Lean Six Sigma, Certified Project Manager, Certified Facilitator in The Oz Principle, Certified Facilitator in Theory of Participation, Instructor for Six Sigma for Managers, Instructor for White Belt, Yellow Belt, Green Belt and Black Belt process improvement and six sigma learning, and a Dale Carnegie graduate. She is a member of the Osceola Christian Church.

Married to Todd Kale, Alisha is also mom to Ely Crawford, and step mom to Reed, Abby, and Ethan Kale. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking, camping, antiquing, travel, volunteering and spending time with her family and friends.



LARRY BISHOP

Board Vice-Chair

Board Member since 2015

Having worked in the private sector for more than 50 years, Larry saw the need to get involved to help his community receive clean water at the lowest possible price. Larry is finishing his 8th year with the board and says he is willing to contribute another 6 years. Larry became a part of Osceola Water Works Board to help in the infrastructure of Osceola and provide a new Reservoir for growth.

If Larry could improve one thing with the water department it would be *"...seeking and obtaining a good working and reliable staff."* Larry was born in Des Moines, Iowa and grew up in Norwalk, working at Texas Instruments, Honeywell, and Schneider Electric throughout his long career. Larry is married to Ruth, his wife of 54 years, together they have 2 sons and 5 grandsons.

Larry enjoys traveling to see family in Colorado and Wisconsin, reading books, and dining out at new restaurants.

DR. JAMES KIMBALL

Board Member since 2017

Dr. James Kimball grew up in Murray, Iowa, just 10 miles west of Osceola in Clarke County. There, his parents owned an implement store. After High School, Kimball went on to Grinnell Medical School in Iowa City. In 1968, after serving in the Army, Dr. Kimball along with his wife, Mary Ellen and their two sons, moved back to Osceola and have lived there ever since.

Dr. Kimball says, *"Osceola is a good community to live in."* In his spare time, Dr. Kimball enjoys flying and golfing.

SARA O'HAIR

Board Member since 2020

Sara grew up south of Osceola between Weldon and Van Wert, she is a part of a generation farm.

When asked why she decided to become a part of our Osceola Water Works Board Sara replied, *"I love giving back to my community. I was very uneducated with the water process before and I have learned so much since becoming part of our Water Board."* *If Sara could improve one thing with the water department it would be, "...working on communicating with the public on projects, {and} being proactive — not reactive — on our infrastructure."*

Sara enjoys traveling and being with her family.

KEVIN RIVERA

Board Member since 2022

Originally from El Salvador, Kevin Rivera came to the United States to pursue a better life and more opportunities. Kevin has been in Osceola for 10 years; he has since had a family. Kevin decided to become a part of Osceola Water Works Board to represent the Latino community and also learn a little about the treatment of water.

Kevin says if there is one thing he could change with the Water Dep-artment it would be, *"...to have better solution to the economic inflation."*

Kevin loves spending time with his family and enjoys fishing.

IOWA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

THE GIFT OF WATER

LIFE SUSTAINING

Our bodies use water in all the cells, organs, and tissues, to help regulate body temperature and maintain other bodily functions. Because our bodies lose water through breathing, sweating, and digestion, it's crucial to rehydrate and replace water by drinking fluids and eating foods that contain water.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Without water service, there would not be growing communities. Homes, offices, businesses and restaurants all need water service in order to become a part of a community.

FAR REACHING

The water drop represents the concept that from one drop, the ripples can travel very far. Our actions can have a lasting and far-reaching effect. It is also a reminder that a small but consistent action can, like the water drop, produce a very dramatic change. Just as a drop of water can change the shape of a stone, so too can our efforts bring dramatic change to Iowa.

BUDGET FRIENDLY

Currently, the average price of water in the United States is about $1.75 for 1,000 gallons. At that price, a gallon of tap water costs a **little more than a penny**.

Compare that to:

Milk	$ 2.45 per gallon
Cola (20 oz @ 2.39)	$15.23 per gallon
Bottled Water (20 oz @ $1.69)	$10.82 per gallon
Flavored Coffee (16 oz @ 4.55)	$36.40 per gallon
Gasoline	$ 2.70 per gallon

FACINATING

Water is special in that it is the only substance that can exist in liquid, gas and solid form at Earth's ordinary temperatures. And, it is common to have all three phases together at the same time, such as in clouds. These three phases are the key to the water cycle. Here's how the cycle works:

Water evaporates from oceans, rivers and lakes and rises into the atmosphere where it condenses to form clouds. Precipitation then falls to the earth in the form of rain or snow where it flows into oceans, rivers and lakes and the process begins again.

IOWA NUTRIENT COLLABORATIVE creates network to raise of nutrient contamination in state's water supplies

By: Melissa Walker-Coordinator, Iowa Nutrient Collaborative

Dozens of public water supplies, golf course and even trailer parks, both rural and urban, are at risk from contamination from nutrients, mostly nitrogen and phosphorus.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources knows of at least 50 that have had to either treat for or blend water sources in order to meet drinking water regulatory standards for nitrate. Because of continued water quality challenges, a group of Iowa public water supplies formed the Iowa Nutrient Collaborative for Public Water Supplies in 2021. The group aims to serve as an information source to build collaborative among Iowa's rural and urban public water supplies that are challenged by management and treatment of nitrate in the state's rivers, lakes and streams.

This year, the Collaborative expanded to include stormwater and wastewater professionals in recognizing that all entities have a responsibility to educate the public about nutrient contamination in Iowa, work together to problem-solve, and engage new audiences in protecting source water.

As a state, Iowa realizes the need to reduce nutrient pollution in waterways. In 2013, the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy (INRS) was introduced as the plan for reducing nutrient overload, which are largely created by non-point agricultural sources. The INRS has been codified as the state's official water quality policy.

Protecting source water in Iowa's lakes, rivers, and streams has multiple benefits that include:

- Protection of drinking water sources and public health
- Protection and enhancement of recreational waters and aquatic habitats
- Promotion of economic development and prosperity, and an enhanced quality of life for all Iowans

While the INRS contains valuable and useful science, reductions in nutrient pollution have yet to be achieved; meanwhile, source water continues to suffer from the effects of excess nutrient loads. The Collaborative brings together the technical, scientific and professional expertise of water professionals from across the state who, collectively, could have a powerful influence on the conversation around source water protection in Iowa. Support is needed to inform the public about the nutrient problem in Iowa and a network is needed to support water professionals in expanding the conversation across the state and to new audiences.

Collaborative takes message on the road

The Iowa Nutrient Collaborative is passionate about telling its members' stories about source water protection and the challenges Iowa's public water supplies face to provide safe, affordable drinking water to customers.

Since its creation, the group has presented at several events throughout Iowa, including the Iowa Chapter of the American Water Works Association fall conference in 2021. The Collaborative is scheduled to present again at the 2022 event and at the 2022 Iowa Water Conference. Collaborative members this spring talked about watershed protection with more than 100 land appraisers and farm managers at the Iowa Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers meeting.

Sharing the stories of its members is important to provide perspective and understanding of what treating and monitoring water quality means on a daily basis.

Almost 50 public water supplies in Iowa treat for nitrate, as shown with these green dots. Information courtesy of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

A source water specialist with the Iowa Rural Water Association and a member of the Iowa Nutrient Collaborative for Public Water Supplies, discussed the importance of source water protection, how utilities and water supplies can develop a plan and what resources are available for implementation. Part of developing a plan is talking to landowners about implementing management practices that can improve water quality, so Velvet Buckingham, an environmental specialist with IDALS and project coordinator with the Rathbun Lake Watershed project, joined the presentation. She shared "boots on the ground" methods for how to work with landowners on source water protection methods and where drinking water utilities of all sizes can seek resources and program assistance.

Des Moines Water Works CEO/General Manager Ted Corrigan speaks at the unveiling of the cover crop seeder about the utility's efforts to collaborate with others in a goal to increase the number of cover crops in the Des Moines River and Raccoon River watersheds.

Jennifer Terry, External Affairs Manager, Des Moines Water Works

Mary Beth Stevenson, Watersheds & Source Water Program Manager, Utilities Department, City of Cedar Rapids

Marty Braster, Support Services Officer, Rathbun Regional Water Association

Diverse membership offers variety of perspectives

Active members in the Collaborative come from diverse organizations across rural and urban Iowa and represent a number of perspectives. Current Collaborative members include small, medium and large utilities, Iowa Rural Water Association, Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership and advisers from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 7.

Additionally, the group established the following initiatives to protect source water:

- Raise awareness of the multiple benefits of reduced nutrient levels in Iowa's waters and elevate the urgency around reducing nutrient loads
- Identify and share "best practices" for the protection of drinking water sources. Best practices may be at the treatment level and/or at the watershed/prevention level
- Provide education and training opportunities for drinking water professionals
- Provide opportunities for networking and professional development
- Provide communication strategies for outreach to landowners, the public and policymakers that accurately represent the urgency of nutrient reduction

In addition to presentations, the Collaborative hosts field day opportunities for its members to learn about best management practices, partnerships and other work being done in Iowa to improve water quality.

In July, members attended a field day in Des Moines, where the Central Iowa Cover Crop Seeder Project was unveiled. The seeder was purchased in a partnership among the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Polk County Supervisors, City of Des Moines and Des Moines Water Works, with ag retailer Heartland Cooperative managing the use of the seeder for interested customers in central Iowa who want to apply cover crops to their land.

Collaborative members had an opportunity to view the seeder, listen to representatives from each entity discuss the importance of the project, ask questions of those individuals, and network with water professionals and water quality partners and stakeholders from across Iowa and even the world.

Filling a Gap in Source Water Protection Education

The Collaborative, a grassroots-based organization, is building momentum. Collaborative members have together developed presentations and engaged new audiences around the state to demonstrate the need and develop support among new and unlikely allies in the importance of source water planning and protection efforts.

In addition to educating new audiences about source water protection, the Collaborative continues to work to establish education and outreach for public water supplies across the state and provide water professionals with education, training and a sense of community as they struggle to meet regulatory standards.

In order to ensure sustainability for the Collaborative, the executive committee is seeking funds to support the coordinator position, fund academic research about source water protection communication, and offer in-person educational and networking opportunities for water professionals around the state including important work in rural and suburban areas.

Drinking water utilities that treat for nitrate are welcome to join, along with any utility, no matter how big or small, or any interested water quality stakeholder organization.

For more information about membership or to request a meeting with the Collaborative, contact coordinator Melissa Walker: mwmediaconsultants@yahoo.com.

Will Hoffmann, a conservation agronomist with Heartland Co-op, explains how the cover crop seeder works to members of the Des Moines Water Works senior management team and others from the utility. Ag retailer Heartland Co-op is managing use of the seeder for interested customers in central Iowa who want to apply cover crops on their land. The seeder was unveiled at a public event, which was a field day opportunity members of the INC could take advantage of to learn about the project and network with other drinking water producers.

The Central Iowa Cover Crop Seeder project is a partnership among Des Moines Water Works, the city of Des Moines, Polk County Supervisors with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

WEST O BREWERY

ARTICLE DRAFT:

West Lake Okoboji, the deepest natural lake in Iowa, was carved by a glacier over 14,000 years ago – and to this day is one of only three blue water lakes around the world. Home to one of the most robust summer tourism communities in the midwest, and the oldest roller coaster west of the Mississippi, West Lake Okoboji is also the source of some of the softest water around. Perfect for brewing beer.

HOME BREWED

After 10 years of homebrewing, and then market and feasibility research, Matt and Michaela Matthiesen opened up West O Beer in 2013. "We loved brewing beer, and we saw an opportunity in Okoboji to share that love.

Really, of all the goals that people set when they start a company, we simply wanted to be recognized as "the local craft beer" by members of our already amazing community." Matt said. Why here, of all places? "Okoboji is known for one thing: water. This resource also happens to be the most important ingredient in beer. And we wanted to brew it where we could get, and showcase the best."

Two coveted Great American Beer Fest gold medals and nine years later, West O Beer has showcased this water source to the tune of 19,000 barrels of brewed beer—roughly enough beer to fill at Olympic-sized swimming pool.

At seven miles long by two wide, and protected by surrounding wetlands, West Lake Okoboji is fed by a subterranean spring, making its water naturally soft. Most breweries have to add minerals necessary to artificially treat and soften their water, or simply leave them out. Matt and Michaela knew this unique resource was also one their business should help protect. Part of West O Beer's mission from its very founding was the will to work hand in hand with local and regional clean water groups, to connect their beer directly with Lakes Area efforts protecting that very water source, and the very livelihood of the Lakes Area. An early conversation with Keep Okoboji Blue's Deidre Rosenboom and Kyle Hamilton sparked a deep partnership between the two–and Blue Canoe was born, a collaborative beer that raises money and awareness for Keep Okoboji Blue's efforts.

Founded in 2005, Keep Okoboji Blue spreads the importance of water quality and the protection of the Iowa Great Lakes' ecosystem through environmental campaigns, water and beach cleanups, and other efforts. Fighting the potential impact that pollution runoff and aquatic invasive species can have on the lake's environment, and the potential considerable economic impact on the people that live in the Lakes Area, Keep Okoboji Blue frequently organizes volunteer cleanup efforts both on and off the water, educational events around the Lakes Area, and advocacy campaigns around lake friendly lawn care, low impact developments, and those invasive aquatic species.

"Keep Okoboji Blue's long-term vision and specific focus on the Okoboji area made for a natural partnership," Matt said. "Our beer starts with our water, and each and every pint of Blue Canoe poured goes right back into taking care of that very water and the Lakes Area ecosystem." Since releasing the beer on May 21st, West O and Keep Okoboji Blue have partnered on water and lakes cleanups, an environmental symposium, and the proceeds from those events and Blue Canoe sales have raised over $8,000 for the Keep Okoboji Blue endowment.

TAKING ROOT

For West O, such programs reflect their increased commitment to water quality initiatives, land and soil conservation efforts, and community engagement. In April of 2022, West O Beer launched their Taproots initiative as a way to formally and more deeply establish a framework for giving back to the community that has given so much to the brewery. Formally, Taproots draws deeply from West O's passions – tapping into its beers and spaces to give back through the following programs:

(1) ON TAP: Beers brewed at the source with collaboration and community in mind from step one.

(2) ON THE GROUND: Activities throughout the Lakes Area that clean, conserve, preserve and showcase our home.

(3) ON US: Fundraising events at the West O Beer taproom that highlight the incredible work of area nonprofits and initiatives.

(4) WEST O GIVING: General donations and sponsorships benefiting the Lakes Area. To date, West O Taproots has raised over $30,000 for area organizations and initiatives, as well as deepening relationships in the Lakes Area.

BLUE WATER

Two of those important relationships are set to directly engage West O further in water quality efforts state-wide next year.

Starting in 2023, one student from an Iowa Board of Regents university will spend a summer researching at the Lakeside Lab as the "West O Water Quality Research Intern." Founded in 1909, Lakeside Lab is now a 147-acre research lab and outdoor community resource located on Little Miller's Bay, West Lake Okoboji. Each year, the Lab hosts dozens of researchers, artists, and experts across disciplines and scientific fields. Partnering with Lakeside Lab will now also directly impact one Iowa students' education – and water quality research not only in the field, but in West O's backyard.

Further afield, West O looked at Blue Canoe and their distribution map and wondered if that same playbook could do more–if connecting their beer with water quality efforts could take root across the entire state of Iowa.

Beginning in late-2022, West O Beer began rebranding their tap handles as part of a commitment to cleaning up waterways beyond the Lakes Area. In partnership with Doll Distributing, "Blue Taps = Blue Water" will feature new, water-inspired blue coated tap handles – signaling to patrons that West O Beer enjoyed anywhere those blue handles are found is directly impacting and protecting *their* water. To start, West O Beer and Doll Distributing are donating a portion of each keg sold in Northwest Iowa to Keep Okoboji Blue. Further partnerships with water quality nonprofits and efforts in Central Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota are forthcoming.

"Again, it always comes back to water for us,' Matt said. "Awesome Water = Awesome Beer has always been a kind of slogan for us. And if West O Beer can connect craft beer lovers across the state and beyond with water quality initiatives protecting their water, wherever our beer is sold, poured, and enjoyed...that just makes for even more awesome water, and more awesome beer."

(And for what it's worth, anyone who would like to see their local watering hole contribute to making their water better, kindly ask them to put West O Beer's blue handles on their tap lines!)

Osceola Water Works
P.O. Box 515
Osceola, IA 50213

Water Matters

DID YOU KNOW.....?

- 2 % of the earth's freshwater resources cannot be used because they are in glaciers.
- 10 inches of snow is the equivalent of one inch of rainwater.
- The world's snowiest city is Aomori City in Japan.
- Flushing toilets uses the most water in a household.
- About 5 gallons of water will run down the drain if you leave a faucet on for one minute.
- A watershed is an area of land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river or lake.
- Plant roots are especially good at holding soil in place and keeping dirt from washing away.
- Snowflakes have six sides.
- Sand and gravel are very good at removing dirt and contaminates from river water as water sinks down through it.
- The zone of water saturation below ground is called a water table.
- 75-80% of the earth's surface is water.
- The world's largest snowman was built in Austria and is 38.04 meters tall or around 124 feet.
- People are being encouraged to plant wetlands because they are especially good at soaking up pollutants like fertilizer and pesticides so they do not get into lakes, rivers and streams.