Meeting Summary
Iowa Nutrient Research Center/INRC – Advisory Council Meeting
March 24, 2020 (11:30 am – 1:00 pm) Videoconference Meeting via Zoom

Attendees:
• Dan Robison, CALS Dean, ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
• Matt Helmers, INRC Director, Professor Agricultural & Biosystems Engineering, Dean Professorship, Associate Chair for Research & Extension, Iowa State University
• Maureen Clayton, University of Northern Iowa, Associate Dean
• Chris Jones, Research Engineer, IIHR-Hydroscience and Engineering, University of Iowa
• Susan Kozak, IDALS, Director Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality
• Adam Schneiders, Iowa Department of Natural Resources
• Keith Summerville, Drake University Deputy Provost, Associate Dean College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Environmental Science
• INRC Staff/Iowa State University: Wendy Borja-Diaz, INRC-CALS Accountant; Malcolm Robertson, INRC Program Coordinator, Ann Y. Robinson, INRC-CALS Communications Specialist; Kay Stefanik, INRC Assistant Director

The INRC Advisory Council Teleconference convened at 11:30 a.m. CALS Dean Dan Robison, Iowa State University, led introductions and welcomed advisory council members with appreciation for INRC and the Advisory Council's contributions and encouragement to "stay well" during an unprecedented time.

Review and Approval of Minutes from September 2019 in-person meeting
The Sept. 19, 2019, Advisory Council meeting minutes posted at https://www.cals.iastate.edu/inrc/advisory-council were approved by council members.

Center Activities - 2019-2020 (October-March) – INRC Director Matt Helmers
The Director reviewed outreach efforts since the last meeting, which have included:

- A fall 2019 field tour for researchers and graduate students, development of an INRC Cover Crop Research Video, presentations to the Legislature and Iowa Learning Farms webinars.
- Spring seminar series, "Iowa Water Research: Past, Present & Future," Two held so far with 35-40 people each, 10-15 online. March and April postponed. May be able to have field tour in May. Updates posted on website under Events. Invite input on future speakers/topics.
- March 2020 - Unveiled Iowa Water Quality Research Map and related communications. Has received a lot of interest and gave a big boost to INRC website visits.
- February 2020 – Held INRC Stakeholder Meetings.
- News releases on INRC-funded projects and related articles, posted on INRC website, at: https://www.cals.iastate.edu/inrc/news. Interest in website continues to grow.

Budget Update – Matt Helmers
Since establishment in 2013, INRC has allocated 10.27 million, with projected expenditures of about $10.75 by the end of the fiscal year, which includes obligations for research projects into FY2021. Anticipate total allocations for FY2020 will be about $1.2 million, a little less than in the past. This coming year the amount could be lower, which will likely impact the number of grants INRC can fund.

Discussion: There used to be a requirement to spend INRC funds within two years. Now, have more flexibility for extensions, which may be needed due to COVID-19 and unavoidable disruptions to projects. INRC is communicating with researchers and trying to capture how this could impact their work. Will share information on significant challenges expected with the Dean's office.

2020 RFP Process and Review – Matt Helmers

Shared draft RFP. This year, INRC held two roundtables to gain input on Feb. 19. A morning roundtable was primarily stakeholders (farmers, landowners, NGOs, agency partners) and an afternoon meeting with researchers. Responses regarding the greatest research needs moving forward were compiled and used to develop the next RFP, to be sent out March 30. Proposals will be due May 15, for a start date Aug 15. (Final schedule may depend on Covid-19 situation.) Top priorities in the draft RFP were outlined.

Discussion: Should we add something that encourages folks to consider opportunities to leverage state sensor network? Agreed that this is a good idea. IIHR has some flexibility to support monitoring if a project would benefit from a sensor. Send requests to Chris Jones at: christopher-s-jones@uiowa.edu.

Center Director Update – Matt Helmers

Continue to do more on strategic planning and leveraging dollars we receive. Catching up on reporting to highlight and communicate results of work. Plan to continue seminar series with focus on fostering networking, info sharing. Working with Iowa Learning Farms, going to weekly webinars at noon on Wednesdays during this period. Planning field tour for beginning of 2020 school year. Welcome suggestions for locations where there is research to highlight.

Discussion: With respect to COVID issue, but even otherwise, consider possibility of sharing virtual site visits. Might be able to highlight with short videos.

Mapping Project Review – INRC Assistant Director Kay Stefanik

Stefanik demonstrated the new interactive, zoomable Water Quality Research Map designed to highlight research throughout state. Projects shown are mostly funded by INRC, but not limited to that. Pins represent different categories of research and connect to tiles with project description, time period, contacts, funding sources, related publications and more. Includes public and private land, but don't put pin directly on private locations to protect privacy. Disclaimer asks people to schedule a visit to avoid disrupting research activities. New projects can be submitted for consideration via a downloadable form at the top of the main map page. Plan to add link to Iowa Water Quality Information System, as a resource with compilation of real-time water quality measures reported, at https://iwqis.iowawis.org/.

Discussion: Summerville/Drake University reported using with a senior capstone research groups this spring (great public and educational resource!). Question: For all water quality research or just nutrients? Helmers: For now at least, focused on nutrients. Also note: Can include past projects.

Future Meetings – Matt Helmers

Hope to schedule in-person meeting again in September. Group agreed that should work for most.

Advisory Council Comments/Discussion

Brief updates and questions were offered by several advisory Council members. Members discussed need to come up with more coherent standards for monitoring information to standardize, enhance understanding. Agreed this may be outside INRC's mission, but INRC could possibly facilitate discussion.

IIHR informed group of new NSF-supported regional website for Mississippi River portal, at https://umissis.org/about.php.

There were no public comments.

Dean Robison wrapped up the meeting, thanks participants and invited comments, suggestions.

The meeting adjourned at 12:36 p.m.