

Ames Tribune

Community members invited to provide input at Keigley Watershed meeting

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Residents of Story City, Roland, Randall, Gilbert, Ames and the surrounding areas are invited to attend a community meeting concerning the development of a watershed management plan to address water quality and other issues in the Keigley Branch and the South Skunk River. The session will take place Friday, Feb. 9, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Story County Conservation Center at McFarland Park in Ames.

Story County Supervisor Rick Sanders will open the session with an introduction to the project and the work happening throughout Story County. A representative from Story County Conservation will be on hand to answer questions about the South Skunk River Water Trail Plan, and there will be time for questions and open discussion.

The Keigley Branch-South Skunk River Watershed is an area of land in Story and Hamilton counties that drains to Keigley Branch, Bear Creek, Long Dick Creek and the South Skunk River. Conservation practices in this area can support Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy while also improving soil health, reducing flooding, benefit pollinators and wildlife, and improve fishing and boating opportunities along the Skunk River Greenbelt.

The goal of the listening sessions is to hear stakeholders concerns about local waterways and their ideas on how to encourage good stewardship of both urban and rural land in the watershed to address those concerns. The planning team hopes to learn more about what farmers, community groups, and local government are already doing for conservation and discuss opportunities for collaboration.

“Hearing from community members is absolutely vital to the success of this plan,”

said Sanders. “Water quality is an essential part of a thriving community and economy, and I encourage all residents to share their perspectives on this issue.”

Dan Haug, watershed educator at Prairie Rivers of Iowa, will facilitate the meeting.

A meeting has also been scheduled for March with Hamilton County Conservation. That meeting will be an open house format and will include information on soil health, conservation efforts in Hamilton County, and opportunities to improve the South Skunk River and Little Wall Lake. It will be held Monday, March 12, from 3 to 6 p.m. at Lakeview Cabin, Little Wall Lake, 3540 Little Wall Lake Road, Jewell.