

Ames Tribune

Watershed meeting held in Story City

By Ronna Lawless Staff Writer

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Prairie Rivers of Iowa held a meeting in Story City on Monday to discuss the Keigley Branch watershed and the South Skunk River.

“In attendance were the mayors of Story City and Randall and staff from Story County and from the City of Roland (Deb Schildroth and Nathan Hovick), a candidate for Supervisor (Linda Murken) as well as some local farmers,” said Dan Haug of PRI.

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.

Prairie Rivers of Iowa received a two-year, \$71,000 Conservation Innovation Grant from the Natural Resource Conservation Service to help local leaders develop a watershed management plan. A watershed plan can help counties, cities and conservation districts coordinate their efforts and attract outside funding.

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.

“From the range of concerns discussed — livestock manure and lawn fertilizer, runoff from new development and water from drainage tiles — it was clear that we’re all responsible for water and will need all hands on deck to address water

quality in the Skunk River and throughout the state,” Haug said.

“The opportunity with this watershed plan, as several people pointed out, is that we can be get projects and partnerships ready so that when state or federal funds become available, we can make sure some of them are spent to benefit our local waters and our local communities.”