

# Iowa Values: Safe and Healthy Water

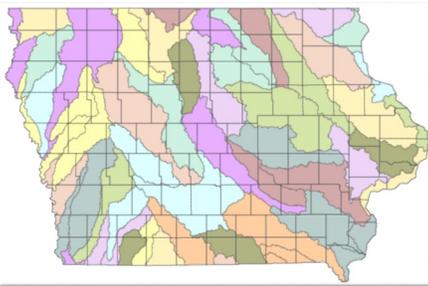
All Iowans value **clean, safe water** for drinking and recreation. Our state is in the midst of a public health crisis on many fronts and it is past time to address polluted rivers, lakes, wells, and groundwater.

We know what it will take to put Iowa on a path to safe and healthy water:

**Hundreds of Millions of Dollars of Investment per Year.** Iowa has over 750 lakes, rivers, and streams that are too polluted to function correctly, putting drinking water supplies at risk and limiting outdoor recreation opportunities that benefit local economies. Cleaning up Iowa's water will cost billions over the course of decades. If we want to see progress for our kids and grandkids, we need to start making some big investments now.

**Long-Term, Dedicated Funding, Held in Trust.** Improving and protecting the health of Iowa's water requires a commitment that goes well beyond the state's two-year budget cycle. Funding for natural resources must be treated as a sacred trust for future generations. Raising the state sales tax to fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund is one way to do this and recent polling shows **almost 70% of Iowa voters support this approach, including a majority of conservatives.**

**Setting up a program without requiring planning or making Iowa's government accountable for results is a recipe for abuse. Fiscal responsibility requires a **Watershed Approach**.**



Iowa's 56 large watersheds

A **watershed** is an area of land that includes all of the farmland, homes, factories, cities and towns—every piece of land and property that drains into one lake, river, or stream. **We all live in a watershed!**

A **watershed approach** brings together everyone in a watershed to talk about both the problems and the solutions and to make and carry out a plan to clean up and protect the water. It is about people working together to solve a problem they can't solve alone.

**What could be more Iowan than that?**

## Four Keys to a Watershed Approach

1. When it comes to spending the public's money, the watershed approach is fiscally responsible because it includes **planning and setting priorities** so dollars are spent where Iowans will get the best return on investment. Plans must be based on good science and use methods that are research-based.

3. Once the money starts rolling out, Iowans also need to know that their investments are paying off. We have to test the water on a regular basis and measure over time to see if the plans are working and then make changes where they are needed. We must set **goals, timelines, and benchmarks** to measure progress.

2. A watershed approach can address statewide priorities like the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, but should be locally-led and flexible to address important local issues including things like flooding, soil erosion, drinking water safety, and economic development. Funding to hire technical experts as Watershed Coordinators helps with structure and making sure projects stay on track over time.

4. Finally, information about our water quality should never be kept secret, but should be available to the public so we can make sure our money is being spent well and actually making our water safer and cleaner.

**Good Government and Working Together—it's the Iowa Way!**