

Life in the Raccoon River Watershed
Something in the Water:
The Environmental Quality of Iowa's Waters
A Virtual Mini Conference
March 20, 2021 9:30 am -11:30 am

A VIRTUAL look at environmental and agricultural diversity and aspects of water quality through the eyes of some of our watershed's research Heroes!

Keynote speaker, Dr. Chris Jones, currently a research engineer at University of Iowa, is well known in the RRWA from his work in Central Iowa for DM Water Works and IA Soybean Assoc. Chris's Blog posts are must-reading for water quality advocates.

Dr. Paul Weihe, Central College; Dr. Peter Levi, Drake University; and Dr. Adam Dixon; U of Maryland, will present on their RRWA grant-funded projects.

Dr. Silvia Secchi, University of Iowa, will wrap up with a brief history of Iowa agriculture, and conservation policies and practices.

Register on this link, and a secure link will be emailed to you.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87951007148?pwd=U1F6YTNBd3lIWmxJdmJtQS9Ra2ZZQT09>

Registration is **free and open the public**. We do however appreciate free-will donations to support research or to renew your membership. You may donate or renew your membership at: <https://www.raccoonriver.org/>

Schedule:

- 9:30 am Opening remarks: Chris Henning, RRWA President
- 9:35 am *Iowa Stream Nitrate: 2020 Update.*
 - Dr. Chris Jones IIHR-Hydroscience and Engineering, University of Iowa
- 10:10 am *Monitoring Cattail species and the environmental conditions leading to the establishment of invasive species in local wetlands.*
 - Paul Weihe: Biology & Environmental Science, Central College

5 -minute break

- 10:30 am *Using Aquatic Drones to Explore Changes in Stream Water Quality.*
 - Peter Levi, Environmental Science & Policy, Drake University
- 10:50 am *Songbirds in Agricultural Fields and Along Fencerows.*
 - Adam Dixon: Postdoctoral fellow
- 11:10 am *A Brief History of Iowa's Agricultural Conservation Policies and Practices.*
 - Silvia Secchi: Department of Geographical and Sustainability Sciences, University of Iowa



Dr. Chris Jones, University of Iowa

Chris Jones is a Research Engineer at IIHR-Hydrosience and Engineering, University of Iowa. He manages the university's network of water quality sensors deployed across the state of Iowa. His research focuses on contaminant of hydrology of nutrients and sediment in agricultural landscapes and municipal drinking water. He holds a PhD in analytical chemistry from Montana State University and a BA in chemistry and biology from Simpson College in Indianola. Prior to working at UI, he held positions at Des Moines Water Works and the Iowa Soybean Association.



Dr. Paul Weihe, Central College

Paul Weihe has taught at Central College since 1998. He also teaches Aquatic Ecology at the field station of the Iowa Regents, Lakeside Laboratory. His education is in biology (ecological emphasis) with a doctorate in environmental science. Paul's professional activity includes field investigations of emergent plants in Midwest wetlands and the consequences of changes in plant communities. In recent years he has published a blog (99wetlands.wordpress.com) as public outreach and education.



Dr. Peter Levi, Drake University

Peter is an assistant professor at Drake University. His research in Central Iowa focuses on patterns in water quality and stream ecosystem health in watersheds in human-dominated landscapes. He is working with several local and state partners to assess the efficacy of in-stream and riparian restoration projects, including saturated buffers along an agricultural headwater stream and constructed wetlands within suburban and urban landscapes.



Dr. Adam Dixon, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

My research investigates the ecology of agricultural landscapes to produce actionable information for wildlife conservation initiatives. I focus on the use of wildlife monitoring, geospatial, and social science methodologies as tools for agricultural land system synthesis. I completed my Ph.D. in Geography & Environmental Systems in December 2020 from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. I currently hold a postdoctoral fellowship at Ag-Analytics Technology Company, where I am helping to integrate geospatial models of row-crop production into precision agriculture decision support systems and conservation financing proposals.



Dr. Silvia Secchi, University of Iowa

An Associate Professor in the Department of Geographical and Sustainability Sciences at the University of Iowa, Dr. Secchi holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Iowa State University. A natural resource economist by training, her work combines the social sciences, natural sciences and engineering. She has published on the environmental impacts of agricultural land use change in the Corn Belt, particularly water quality and carbon, and the interplay between agricultural, conservation and energy policies in the region. Dr. Secchi was born in Italy but has called the Mississippi watershed home for a quarter of a century. At Iowa, she teaches classes on Sustainability, Environmental Economics and Policy, Environmental Impact Analysis and Contemporary Environmental Issues.