

ITEM #:	35
DATE:	07-14-26
DEPT:	W&PC

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR FY 2025/26 STORY COUNTY EDGE OF FIELD PROJECT

BACKGROUND:

The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy has identified saturated buffers and bioreactors as cost effective and efficient nutrient reducing practices. The City of Ames, along with the project partners identified below, has prioritized installation of these practices in the South Skunk River watershed. Collectively, this work has been named the Story County Edge-of-Field Project.

Increasing the number of saturated buffers and bioreactors within the South Skunk River watershed will help to improve water quality in the watershed. The City will also capture any quantifiable nutrient reduction credits. These credits will help offset any new nutrient reduction requirements imposed on the City in the future.

Story County Edge-of-Field Project Partners include:

- Story County Conservation
- Story County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
- Natural Resource Conservation Services

The City and its partners have identified 50 potential sites for saturated buffers and bioreactors, contacted landowners to obtain permission to access their properties, and performed initial field investigations at each property.

The proposed design contract includes a further review of those potential sites to confirm their suitability for the planned practices. Upon direction from City staff, the firm will then be asked to complete final design for a subset of the 50 tile outlets. The number of final designs that will be requested will be determined based on site suitability, the landowner's willingness to continue participation, and the anticipated construction budget.

On August 27, 2025, a Request for Proposals (RFP) document was posted on AmesBids by the City's Purchasing division. On September 18, 2025, three proposals were received. The proposals were scored by staff from the Water & Pollution Control Department, Story County Conservation, and the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship (IDALS).

FIRM	PRICE	RANK (Score)
Eocene Environmental Group West Des Moines, IA	\$106,500	1 (113)
Bolton & Menk Ames, IA	\$126,000	2 (99)
AgriVia PLC Perry, IA	\$118,589	3 (87)

After evaluating the proposals, staff determined that the proposal from Eocene Environmental Group, of West Des Moines, Iowa, is the highest-ranked proposal as well as the lowest cost, making it the preferred option.

Funding will be from carryover in the Water and Pollution Control Department's Watershed-based FY 2025/26 Nutrient Reduction CIP Project (\$421,881). Story County Conservation and the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship are reimbursing the City for a portion of the costs related to this project. The cost-share for design services is 1/3 each, meaning the net cost to the City for this contract will be \$35,500.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Award a contract to Eocene Environmental Group, of West Des Moines, IA, for Engineering Services for FY 2025/26 Story County Edge of Field in the amount not-to-exceed \$106,500.
2. Award a contract to another firm.
3. Reject all proposals and provide direction to staff on the future of the edge-of-field activities.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Treatment of sub-surface drainage from agricultural tile outlets with bioreactors and saturated buffers is an effective method for reducing nutrient loading to surface waters. The Water & Pollution Control Department can 'bank' these nutrient loading reductions in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Exchange and will be able to apply any banked reductions to future nutrient reduction requirements in the Water Pollution Control Facility's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[FINAL E500-2020 - Agreement Edge of Field BS AM.pdf](#)