

Water Quality Research Map Highlights Projects on ISU Farms

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A new Iowa water quality research map has been launched by the Iowa Nutrient Research Center (INRC), Iowa State University.

The “zoomable” map, at <http://www.cals.iastate.edu/inrc/map/> shows locations of water quality research projects around the state. Each pin on the map links to a project description, location, contacts for more information, and relevant research reports or publications. Projects on both public and private land will be included, but location information will be limited for research conducted on private land.

The map will include projects funded by the INRC through Iowa State, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa. Other research-based water quality efforts can be included if these meet the mapping criteria, primarily that the project is focused on some aspect of water quality research.

A number of the projects featured on the map take place on Iowa State University research farms. “This shows how often researchers depend on assistance and resources provided by the farms and their staff,” said Iowa Nutrient Research Center Director Matt Helmers. “Much of this research couldn’t happen if it weren’t for that support and involvement.”

Color-coded pins on the map indicate research categories developed for [Iowa Nutrient Research Center-funded projects](#): nutrient management, edge-of-field, land management, and multi-objective. These areas of research help support the [Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy](#) and its [Nonpoint Source Nutrient Reduction Science Assessment](#).

Kay Stefanik, INRC assistant director, has been the lead developer, working with Iowa State University’s [CALs/LAS Web Team](#) to create a web map viewers can access from diverse computer platforms.

“Initially, we have about 30 projects identified,” said Stefanik, “but we expect this to increase rapidly as scientists learn about the map and want their projects added. We hope to capture as many water quality research projects in Iowa as possible, to showcase the work being done throughout the state.”

“We’re excited about the ability of a map to visually communicate the extensive water quality research being sponsored by INRC and others,” said Helmers. “We think it has a lot of potential to be used by the public and STEM educators around the state, and possibly lead to related efforts, such as water quality research tours or interpretive signage.”

A form on the map website at www.cals.iastate.edu/inrc/map/ allows researchers to view criteria for the map and submit a project for potential inclusion. For questions, contact Kay Stefanik at kcstefan@iastate.edu.

A viewer interested in visiting a research site is encouraged to make arrangements with the project contact in advance. Sites may be off-limits during some phases of research to protect data and avoid liability issues.

The [Iowa Nutrient Research Center](#) was established by the Iowa Board of Regents in response to legislation passed by the Iowa Legislature in 2013.

The center pursues science-based approaches to areas that include evaluating the performance of current and emerging nutrient management practices, and providing recommendations on implementing the practices and developing new practices. Iowa State University leads the partnership that includes the University of Iowa and the University of Northern Iowa. Since its inception, the center has supported more than 92 projects.