



## **Lyons Creek** | *a partnership model in north-central Iowa*

The Iowa Soybean Association (ISA) and The Nature Conservancy are working in the Lyons Creek watershed. Lyons Creek is an 11,000 acre watershed nested in the Boone River watershed in north-central Iowa.

Roger Wolf, director of Environmental Programs for the Iowa Soybean Association, says that the work in Lyons Creek is helping stakeholders better understand the responsiveness of agricultural and hydrologic systems in the upper Mississippi River Watershed.

ISA has implemented a paired watershed study in Lyons Creek watershed. Paired watershed design compares differing management in micro watersheds — areas of around 1,000 acres — to see if changing management results in a water quality response.

Data from automated water monitoring stations at the outlet of two treatment watersheds — where alternate management will be applied within the watershed — will be compared with data from automated water monitoring stations at the outlet of two control watersheds — where management will not be altered.

“Our plan in the Lyons Creek watershed is to develop individual management evaluation plans for farmers and then link back what those plans mean to the aggregate scale. If we achieve a reduction in nutrient loading, we can then investigate how the farmer’s plans relate to that,” Wolf said.

“The vision is for the two activities — in-field evaluation and adaptive management on the farm and water quality monitoring — to converge in the Lyons Creek watershed. Ultimately, the goal is to find ways to keep farmers productive and profitable and find ways to protect and improve water quality.”