Understanding perceptions of Iowa’s water resources: Who is shaping our attitudes and influencing our behaviors?

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What do Iowan’s think about their water resources?

- Iowan’s prioritize agricultural industry when asked about sustainability of water resources
  - 51% claim ag industry is responsible for poor water quality
  - 71% believe there is little they can do to improve water quality

Dilemma: high public concern, but little agency
What do Iowa newspapers tell us about our water resources?

- Articles focused on concerns regarding quality and flooding of surface water
  - Emphasis on importance of ag industry for Iowa’s economy
  - However, ag stories often prioritized environmental goals
  - Strong sense of “Iowa pride”

Conflict: prioritization of environment or ag industry?
Encouraging agency where it matters

- Results point to need to engage Iowa farming communities
  - Understand how land managers are making decisions about practices
  - Work with existing watershed groups to understand structure and influence within communities

- Resolve conflict between environmental and farming decisions
Recognize true impact of Iowa farmers