

STATE WATER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING

October 21, 2024

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Web-Ex Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members Present:

IDNR – OWR: Loren Wobig, Wes Cattoor, Megan McKinney, Rick Pohlman, Meg Kelly, Steve Altman, Wei Han, Terra McParland
IDNR- Director's Office- Kevin Romo, Jaime Reynolds, Kelly Kupris
ISWS: Laura Keefer, Glenn Heistand, Trent Ford, David Kristovich
IEPA: Jeff Edstrom, Christine Davis, Scott Twait
IDPH: Brian Cox
IDOT: Brian McCoy,
IWRC: Yu-Feng Forrest Lin
IDNR – ORC: Brian Metzke, Seth Love
IDOA: Brian Rennecker,
IEMA- Zack Krug, Jeff Thompson
Agencies not in attendance: DCEO, IPCB,

Non-Members Present:

USGS: Amy Russell,
PRI: Marc Miller
Ashley Rubino
Beckie Maddox
Mark Tarlton
Conсор Engineering: Peter Mulvaney, Guy Carpenter

Welcome: Loren opened the meeting at 1:30 P.M. There is a lengthy agenda to cover. We are codified and in statute therefore that statute is requiring us to expand and move forward into great things. Former director Mark Miller is here and is now at PRI. Meg Kelly is also here in person. Loren acknowledged Kevin Romo who is on DNR's legislative team. Loren announced that he will also be retiring at the end of the year and Rick Pohlman will be stepping in as the interim chair on January 1, 2025. Wes Cattoor will also continue. Loren turned it over to Wes.

Wes began with a statement of nostalgia because the last time we all met it was here, to move forward with the state water plan. It's been almost 5 years since then.

Minutes: Wes asked for comments or suggestions for the minutes. Laura motioned yes and Yung Fon seconded. All for, none opposed.

The state water plan task force is now codified and is now the State Water Task Force Act. The Task Force will be responsible for voting and operational rules. That also includes annual reports and subcommittees and statutes. That will also lead to funding and appropriations. Loren thanked Kevin for getting that through the legislative process. We are also looking at the Carbon Sequestration Act including IEPA and their regulatory roles. The best part of that is the “water resources fund” which means we do have a piggy bank now within DNR. Permit application fees were one of those used to supplement and that money goes into the Boat Fund and that now this legislation will redirect that money into the OWR fund for regulatory purposes. We also updating the Water Use Act of 1983. The Governor’s office is interested in tweaking the water withdraw to include fees for water use including Lake Michigan. Loren opened up for any other knowledge of any other legislative updates. Hearing none, Loren stated that if we start to charge for the use of the public waters, the key there will be outreach and message to really orchestrate how that appears. Loren turned it back over to Wes.

Grants Received by SWPTF Agencies: Loren says the other States and Agencies have been collaborating tightly for grants. We as the SWPTF may identify other uses or work with agencies to use some of these grants as partners to go after more grants. What grants are they pursuing that maybe they are not going for, that they could go for, and could use a partner? Wes will provide a follow up email asking if there are known grants out there and compile that list. Rick asks could we post that somewhere for others to see and take advantage of and work to collaborate? Where will that be provided? Wes says he believes a document will be created and shared within the task force; he doesn’t believe it’s necessary to put it out on the external website. “Amplifund” does something similar and could be useful internally. Mark says this might be a great match making feature. The other agencies might be helpful to include summary paragraphs and what these might benefit. Meg says that her Coastal program is compiling a document that is similar and it could be shared which also might include Federal grants.

With this codifying of the SWPTF, Loren says Laura Keefer with the State Water Plan, had initially suggested this would be a great way to good governance in a very positive way. SWPTF can be used to take these water initiatives and allow this group to lead and start those studies. Loren sees this as creating a subcommittee and to create bylaws as the best way to form a structure.

Dave K. seconded creating a drought committee as well as flooding committee. Loren says they are meeting later regarding the Illinois Water Information Center (IWIC) and that the board of this task force might be useful to help govern that. Yu Feng brought up the use of AI and the SWPTF. Should we start having those discussions? Steve says they’ve started discussing it regarding Lake Michigan and companies are starting to come in and so companies are starting to ask for higher allocations. Mark says there is an initiative by the Governor’s office on quantum computing that if the SWPTF could get behind and ahead of, that could be useful. Should this group be starting to regulate some policy regarding some of these ideas? Mark says in 2010 DNR put out a report on water-based wind energy.

SWP Recommendations Status:

We have completed 14.2% of the 147 recommendations. Please continue to make updates.

1. *Water Quality*- Jeff E. says one of the things he wants to hit on is digging a little deeper and they’re having difficulty quantifying some of them and perhaps revising theirs. The PFAS’ monitoring has been going well, the equipment is in place and the sampling is happening. Tissue samples are being provided and the analyzing is being done by IDNR. Groundwater recommendations are needing clarified. There

are also grant opportunities they are pursuing and one they are accepting Nov. 20 and some new scoring that takes into account the environmental justice issues.

2. *Climate Section*- Dave says he has several points. One is research and climate impact on urban fringe areas. We are studying how thunderstorms are affected by urban areas like areas around Chicago and St Louis. They are also actively looking for funding for agricultural practices and rapid melt events. Thinking mainly from the atmospheric side. Trent is also here but he has two recommendations of availability of future information and web-based tool kit. The state climate office did get some funding from NOAA and they have been working with IEMA to develop a integrated mapping database. There will be meetings coming up in the areas of the state to determine need and encourage use. Hopefully this will all be online by next year. David asked if Glen had any updates he wanted to add. Glen says he is working on the modeling of the future rainfall climate data. They should be wrapping that up at the end of this year. Wes says a "white paper" could be done on that especially from a regulatory side. Loren asked about clarification about thunderstorms and their affect. Dave said an example is thunderstorms are moving toward the city, you will see the thunderstorms lessen.

3. *Integrated Water Management*- Loren says some other states such as North Carolina has gone as far as securing services of a consulting firm to help develop a framework. Sadly, neither North Carolina or Florida are currently in a position to prioritize. They are currently in disaster recovery mode. Loren was recently at a conference and thru the Aspen Institute they are going to be connecting us to partners who can assist us to further that along.

4. *Long Term Funding*- Nidhan is not on. Jeff says the revolving loan funding people have been working on loans. There has also been some lead work done. There is also outreach being done regarding the program and trying to speak to more groups about the funding out there. Loren asked if the starter funds he had heard about from IEMA were still available? Zack says it is not available yet, he did ask recently, and they're being told March. Michigan asked for \$5 million dollars three years ago and they haven't been granted that yet.

5. *Water Sustainability*- Wei says we are working to review CMAP's agreement and we expect a new agreement to start the beginning of next year. State Water Survey has also begun a new contract to help provide assistance regarding sustainability. IDNR was preselected for a federal exchange program with the UMRBA to establish a water use database which will be used with all 5 UMRBA states. Wes is curious to see how evaporation will tie in, that hasn't been looked at in several decades.

6. *Lake Michigan*- Meg says that OWR-CMP continues to help secure federal money to support coastal partners, particularly for restoration projects. In July alone, they submitted requests to federal agencies for about \$20 million dollars. Of those, ~\$6.5M have been invited for full proposals, including requests to support green infrastructure projects in Chicago and a ravine restoration project in Lake County. In addition, OWR-CMP just awarded nearly \$1.1M in pass-through funding from its annual competitive grant cycle to 16 partners in Lake and Cook Counties to support engineering, planning, design, recreation, access and education in the Illinois coastal zone. OWR-CMP continues to make headway on several coastal resiliency projects, including the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, in partnership with USACE and eight other Great Lakes states. They did complete a number of public meetings this year and are working on developing two regional resilience plans - one for the north shore and one for the south shore. And the Illinois Beach State Park breakwaters project was completed, marked by a press event with Governor Pritzker.

7. *Flood Damage Mitigation*- Terra says the flood structure website contract with SWS is working to extend that contract and now we're working on the Rock River and Desplaines River and we're looking at structures and costs that might be incurred with raising these structures. Inundation mapping is continuing and trying to put those tools out there and pull that info in there. Terra wants a meeting with IEMA soon for some recommendations. Loren says the outreach is critical and looking at opportunities along the Mississippi and reaching out to disadvantaged communities and sharing with them the knowledge we have. The legislative structure at the top of DNR and the Governor's office could be used to begin that outreach to get that information out especially for disaster planning. Terra says the outreach has been continuing with IEPA, SWS and the Corps about what information could be disseminated and asking those communities what else we could do for them.

8. *Aquatic and Riparian Habitat*- Brian M is online. Brian says they do have some progress. But he was unable to get it from his staff. He will update more in January. Loren says we are actively removing the Tam O Shanter and the Carpentersville dam. Carpentersville should be out by the end of the month. Mark asked where those funds come from. Loren says Pat Quinn gave those funds during his tenure and we continue to have those funds.

9. *Water Use Laws and Regulations*- Steve says there is a software they are using to monitor water loss that does the job, but it has more whistles and bells than are really needed. It's almost too advanced. So, they're looking at building something different. The communities are struggling to use it and input accurate data. That data is also reported to other states. Loren asked Trent about doing a trends analysis. Loren says we as a society are better at water conservation where it's natural to our children but it was foreign to our grandparents, but the pipes are also 100 years old. We're seeing a lot of water loss and water use especially in Lake Michigan. There are wild variable of water improvement plans and they are trying and come up with a more streamlined survey where we are questioning the water use and water plan and actions. We are then doing direct follow up contact with these communities. A lot of these communities don't even have enough staff to do this, so we're making a more focused effort on water loss and infrastructure. Steve says we've been with some of these communities that have used Lake Michigan water for over 100 years. Thus, why we're putting a limit on how much water they can lose. Yu Feng says it's not a problem unless it becomes an expensive. Mark pointed out that the water use fees could be listed so you could show the stakeholders what they're signing off on. Is there a lead surface replacement? Steve says there is and there is money there and we could tie those two things together. But they are still having discussions. That is also a staffing issue. There are only 3 staff for Lake Michigan and it's a challenge.

Wei says we have proposed to amend the 1983 Water Use Plan and we continue the discussion. They also want to establish regulatory authority over wetlands. That has not passed yet. One that did get passed was the NFIP Act that the State of Illinois is our own entity so if we do any work in the flood plain, we have to meet NFIP requirements as well. We have drafts of emergency rules and administrative rules. We are also working with IDOT so they can understand what it takes to be a floodplain manager. Steve recognized Erin Conley and her work with NFIP. All of this becomes effective Jan 1, 2025.

Rick says water diversion and UMRBA, of which Illinois is a member, there has recently been a proposal regarding diversion of the Mississippi river to N. Dakota. MO contributes 75% of that water and if Illinois diverts it, that could have an effect. During droughts how do we navigation and natural resources during low flow conditions? Diversion is becoming a big deal.

