

STATE WATER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING

July 10, 2023

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Web-Ex Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members Present:

IDNR–OWR: Loren Wobig, Wes Cattoor, Terra McParland, Megan McKinney, Rick Pohlman, Tara Jagadeesh, Wei Han

ISWS: Laura Keefer, Trent Ford,

IEPA: Jeff Edstrom, Christine Davis, Gary Bingenheimer, Nicole Vidales, Michael Summers, Nidhan Singh

IDOA: Brian Rennecker

IDPH: Gerrin Cheek-Butler

IEMA: Zachary Krug,

IDOT: BJ Murray, Brian McCoy,

IWRC: Yu-Feng Forrest Lin

IDNR – ORC- Brian Metzke

Agencies not in attendance: IDNR–OMM, DCEO, IPCB

Non-Members Present:

None

Welcome:

Meeting began at 1:35 pm. Loren welcomed everyone to the July 10th meeting. Wes apologized for the technical issues we had getting the meeting set up. Loren began working his way through the agenda starting with the approval of the April 10th meeting minutes. Wes interjected saying that unfortunately due to an oversight on his part the meeting minutes from that date were never sent out for the committee's review. They would be sent out very shortly and during the October meeting both minutes would be approved then: April and July.

Minutes:

See comment above.

Outreach: Loren circled back to the Legislative Breakfast that was held previously. Loren said the turnout was nice, but not quite as heavily attended as he would have liked. However, the Lt. Governor did make an appearance and that he believed that was crucial to getting her behind this effort and helping promote the Plan and advocating for a lot of the recommendations and legislation in there. Loren also mentioned she appeared at his Great Lake's Commission meeting that was hosted in Chicago and specifically mentioned the Plan to that group and tied it nicely to the River's Coordinating Council that she also leads.

Wes mentioned that there was also some outreach specifically with the Illinois Groundwater Association. Some stakeholders have also expressed an interest in doing more outreach in the Chicago area, so they are trying to coordinate that.

SWP Recommendations Status:

There were 147 total recommendations. 32 have been started, 29% average progression has been started. 6% average progression overall, with 10 sections reporting. Each topic lead provided a brief report for the group.

1. *Water Quality*- Jeff Edstrom from IEPA was on the call and had an update. The first recommendation-supporting nutrient law reduction strategy implementations- they are continuing to move forward on that. Jeff also said that the green infrastructure annual report will be coming out very soon with some new funding. It does have a lower match requirement for environmental justice communities. Jeff went on to say that they are looking to at how best to apply these impacts. Algae blooms are being monitored and there seemed to be a new dashboard on the website that will be going live soon. There are some other smaller updates going on, but Jeff will send that list to Wes to update the spreadsheet.

2. *Climate Section*- Dave was unavailable, so Trent Ford stepped in. He says there are a few initiatives that are having plans being developed and are at the beginning stages of getting funding, toolkits, and updating local rainfall data. New models are something that is ongoing, and they are evaluating impacts on flash drought and droughts in general. They are working in conjunction with Laura Keefer and Jason Zang at ISWS. Wes says he is very excited about getting that contract with State Water Survey going about the drought task force and having an open discussion.

3. *Integrated Water Management*- Loren says there have been a few updates. First up, the integrated water information center is being brought up to the Governor's office in some briefings and the Lt. Governor has been helpful in pushing for that. She is attempting to get some legislation that we would need as well as the appropriations that would need to be created.

Loren reminded the group that Ania Bayers of Coastal Management will not be with IDNR much longer but that we have interviewed and are close to making an offer to an individual that will be a part of our new Coastal Management program. Nothing has been finalized but is all under continued development.

4. *Long Term Funding*- Gary from IEPA was unavailable, but Nidhan Singh was on. Nidhan is the deputy section manager for these state evolving funds. Three big highlights: firstly, mandating wastewater and storm water providers and their continued support of the use of asset management plans and fiscal sustainability plan. Currently in Illinois we have the ability to encourage these types of things in the communities and that can have an affect on their loan application as well. The second part is the technical and financial support for underserved communities. EPA has entered into a 5-year contract and is being partially funded by CAP grants. This is a very successful program because it helps communities become SRF ready and then loan ready. EPA is containing to look for ways to streamline and make the path as efficient as possible. Terra had a statement. This particular recommendation isn't specific to IEPA, it relates to all the Agencies, so she appreciated all the things EPA had done. She was glad that we haven't lost sight that it is inter agency and what those technological advancements mean to us all.

Wes mentioned that Gary Bingenheimer is looking into retirement in the near future.

5. *Water Sustainability*- Wei Han from DNR was on and that his update is undertaking the state order supply planning program; the regions is divided into 10 sections. 5 have outreach planned and those regions cover 93% of the state's population. They will continue to support the water supply planning program. Wes says they have a new website that says our survey's show a statewide supply vs demand.

6. *Lake Michigan*- Loren says Lake Michigan is currently in transition. We will likely have Ania for another 6 months or so. Once the new person gets on and is up and running more progress can be made. Lake Michigan is wrapping up several water allocation funds and hearings showing that we are being good stewards of the water in Lake Michigan. Now that there is data to back up the communities and how much water they are or are not spending they actually ended up reducing most communities' allocation of water. The good news is since we are using the water responsibly these communities know that if a big corporation moves in and they need more water, they can ask, and we have a solid grasp of their usage.

7. *Flood Damage Mitigation*- Terra stepped in and said that a contract was signed with State Water Survey and work should begin shortly. We are assisting with some models and are more of developing a database and technical support.

8. *Aquatic and Riparian Habitat*- Brian Metzke says that they are currently working on building new initiatives and reaching out for funding and staffing requirements.

9. *Water Use Laws and Regulations*- Steve Altman was not available but Wei Han stepped in and said some loss and regulations and have funded some applications in doing water governance survey. It's done periodically.

10. *Navigation*- Brian McCoy stepped in for Navigation. 5 projects are planning for feasibility studies and are currently in development and Brian will update the spreadsheet in further detail. The governor also signed the Illinois' Waterway Ports Commission Act which establish there is 5 port districts with their area along the Illinois River into a district. Moving along to the Corps of Engineers; the fish passage will be opening as well as a 200 ft lock and they are currently tracking those improvements. There will also be a new directors and transportation database and will provide truck rates and see if there can be a needs assessment provided in that project.

11. *Erosion and Sedimentation*- No current update

12. *Data Management*- Laura Keefer with ISWS's first recommendation is the need to perform a stream gage assessment and the viability of meeting people's needs for stream gaging. There is a scope being drafted by the water survey team and hopefully will show a strong need and then funding and sponsors can be found.

13. *Recreation*— No current update.

Loren pointed out that DNR is pushing for outdoor recreation and attempting to make parts of water that perhaps were private before, public. These need to be addressed legislatively though.

Wes asked about anymore questions/comments/concerns. Terra McParland asked was anyone else struggling with the percentage on completion? For instance, if a progress takes 8 years dividing that by 8 years really makes the percentage itself of completion really low even if you are making good headway on it. Terra also mentioned that while some of us on these meetings are the leads of their particular

section, there should be delegation, committee meetings and the leads job is to be the facilitator or the liaison between the committee and the Task Force.

Closing out: Legislative updates- Loren has spoken with the legal council about going forward with a formalization of the State Water Plan Task Force. Now whether that form goes thru as an executive order or a senate joint resolution remains to be seen, but they will try and move it forward in the next session if possible. Laura Keefer joined in that she would like some authority about drought response and maybe flood response to be designated under the task force. However, once the language is designated, perhaps it could be discussed with the whole of the group. Wes wanted to circle back to a topic brought up at the last meeting that there was a recommendation about having multiagency collaboration especially in the Metro East area.

Schedule:

Future Meetings: **Oct 16- 1:30-3:30 pm- in person (virtual will still be available) at Department of Ag Building**

January 8, 2024

April 8, 2024

Future Agenda: *Connectivity Exhibits
*Make the SWP Dynamic/Updateable
*Add-on reports

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM.