

STATE WATER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING

10:00 A.M. July 14, 2021

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Web-Ex Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members Present:

IDNR–OWR: Loren Wobig, Wes Cattoor, Terra McParland, Rick Pohlman. Jim Casey

IDNR–ORC: Brian Metzke, Seth Love

ISWS: Laura Keefer, Walt Kelly, Trent Ford, Yu-Feng Forrest Lin

IDOT: BJ Murray

IDPH: Brian Cox

Agencies not in attendance: IDNR – OMM, IDOA, IEMA, DCEO, IPCB. IEPA, IWRC

Non-Members Present:

Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC): Rick Twait

IL Environmental Regulatory Group (IERG): Kelly Thompson

IL Farm Bureau (IFB): Lauren Lurkins

The Meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. The meeting agenda, presentation and minutes are posted on the State Water Plan Task Force (SWPTF) website. The website also contains general information about the State Water Plan's history and current activity.

<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/WaterResources/Pages/StateWaterPlanTaskForce.aspx>

Note: An Illinois State Water Plan (SWP) was first published in March of 1967 and was updated in 1984. The Task Force which compiled the 1984 report continued to meet and publish several subsequent documents to continue the planning process and to provide updated information. That State Water Plan Task Force (SWPTF) continues to meet quarterly to address issues related to the waters of Illinois. The SWPTF is comprised of state agency representatives and invited federal and local partners.

Welcome: Loren welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending and participating in this effort. The agenda was reviewed and approved with no changes. He noted that we have a short agenda but significant items to cover. We will be spending time today on the outreach feedback and overlapping recommendations or cross cutting topics. Recently, there have been media reports and questions about public use (kayak and tubing) on non-public waters. The media helps to educate the public but sometimes mixed messages can be confusing. One of the potential recommendations in the SWP will be determine the best way to interact with the public.

Outreach Summary: Similar to last time, we recorded the overview ahead of time and the public was supposed to review that first and join in the breakout meetings to address specific questions or concerns. The public could also respond via email or survey.

- Do we want any changes for the third and last public meeting? It was noted that many of the public comments addressed items are already recommended to date. However, the group felt that this serves to verify that we are on the correct path.
- One prevailing comment related to reaching out better to disadvantaged communities during the outreach. We asked what we can do better?

- Laura mentioned reaching out to the groups that already serve those communities for advice and recommendations.
- It was noted that IDNR-OWR sends out a press release about the public meetings that also feeds into IDNR's social media.
- It was felt that interested environmental groups would also be sharing the information with their members and stakeholders.
- It was noted that the draft report will need to suggest recommendations related to improving communications with disadvantaged communities.
- Lauren mentioned that the format of the outreach was challenging to some communities since it required watching the video ahead of time and some people don't have access to technology or might not be computer literate.
- We all know that in-person outreach would have been better but how do we work within COVID-19 restrictions? Lauren felt that other groups have handled outreach smoother so Wes asked her to send him an email about those groups so we can look into their methodology.
- Another option is to reach out directly to those that had comments regarding this issue for recommendations.
- Final Outreach:
 - The plan is to submit a draft report prior to the outreach and to present the highlights during the meeting.
 - The final meeting was originally planned to be an in-person meeting in Springfield only because the previous meetings would have pulled input from the northern and southern regions. However, due to COVID-19, the first two outreach meetings were virtual. Therefore, the group felt it might be best to hold the meetings throughout the state to better reach everyone for the final outreach effort.
 - Depending on COVID-19 restrictions, we will hold the meetings both online and in-person.
 - Topic leads can attend virtually if conflicts arise.
 - We will need someone to monitor the chat to make sure that questions in the virtual platform are also addressed.
 - We will likely ask that all attendees wear masks but will follow the group meeting requirements at that time.

Outreach Feedback:

- The results of the survey and individual emailed comments were distributed to each topic leader last month and it is assumed that they have been read and shared with the committees.
- A common comment was that we need to look at water issues at a comprehensive watershed level by looking at the water quality, flooding impacts, water quantity, erosion, etc. all at once.
- After the meeting, Wes emailed a request to the committee leaders to provide a summary paragraph explaining any changes (or why a lack of changes) to public outreach comments (due Aug. 6).
- Some commenters felt that the SWP was being rushed, not getting needed attention or that some agencies are not grasping how important this plan is to the public. It was noted by the commentors that several topics did not provide recommendations during the last public outreach, specifically Water Quality, Long-Term Funding and Erosion & Sedimentation.

- It was acknowledged that this is a volunteer effort with overworked staff and the limits imposed by the pandemic.
- The task force reviewed the upcoming schedule but wondered if extending the deadline will help those groups that have been not productive yet? What benefits will come from the delay? Will we be able to do more outreach? In general, additional time might lose some of the project momentum. The downside of not delaying is to risk putting out a non-integrated plan.
- The group was reminded that the 1984 Plan included grant funding, took four years and allowed for additional coordination.
- The question is how to prepare a meaningful and valuable product without new resources. Specifically, what resources do we need?
- The group was reminded that this plan will not be a finite product but will be updated online as recommendations are completed and as the groups continue meeting. Coordination will continue after the report is published.
- Much discussion ensued about the remaining project schedule.
 - One idea was to roll out one topic at a time or a phased rollout to allow additional coordination.
 - It was noted that some agencies require earmarked funding (such as ISWS) to allow staff to work on the project. One option is to hit pause on the project and request funding from the Governor's office or allocation of additional staff.
 - Another option was to perhaps start over and pull in a consultant using Rebuild IL funds? IDNR does not have funds to hire a consultant but IDOT might. However, if a consultant is hired, the appropriate parties that should provide input might inadvertently provide less effort if they are not involved in the Plan.
 - Instead of delaying the product, Loren/Wes will reach out to the non-responsive topic leaders and their management and find out what is needed to allow them to continue efforts to meet the schedule.
 - In the end, several new Task Force coordination meetings were added to the schedule to allow each topic lead to present their recommendations to the group to allow identification of cross cutting ideas and compare complementary benefits. Additional time was added at the end of the schedule to allow adequate time to address public input for the final product. Final product will be completed in spring 2022.

Overlapping Recommendations and Cross-Cutting Topics:

- Additional Task Force meetings were added to provide better integration between the topics.
- New meetings will be held on Aug. 11 and Oct. 7 along with the currently scheduled Sept. 8 meeting.
- Recommendations from 3-4 topics will be reviewed in detail during each of these meetings to allow coordination. These meetings will start an hour early (at 9:00 am) to allow for adequate discussion.
- Wes followed the meeting by requesting volunteers to present their recommendations at the Aug. meeting. Wes would like to see the draft material one week prior to the Task Force meetings to allow the groups to read through the recommendations.

- It was discussed that cross-cutting topics will need to be referenced to each other in respective chapters. The group was reminded that at the last Task Force meeting, it was decided that the introduction and the conclusion will have a spiderweb type graphic showing the cross-cutting issues and recommendations. Laura will get something started (at first a spreadsheet showing interrelationships). This can be used for development of the graphics.

Schedule: The schedule was reviewed and revised as follows.

Red font = Committee Deadlines; Blue font = Public Outreach; Green font = Task Force Meetings

Developing Recommendations Phase

Aug. 11 – SWPTF meeting – Review 3-4 Topics and coordination

Sept. 8 – SWPTF meeting – Review 3-4 Topics and coordination

Oct. 7 - SWPTF meeting – Review 3-4 Topics and coordination

Final Report Phase

Nov. 3 – Submit Committee’s Draft Section

Nov. 10 – SWPTF meeting – Discuss draft report

Nov. 30 – Combined Draft report published

Jan. 12 – SWPTF meeting – Final Public Outreach coordination

Jan. 25-27 – Final Public Outreach on draft report

Feb. 28 – Close Public Comments

Spring 2022 – Publish Report

Discussion of Next Steps:

- Groups will generate Recommendations table for review at the next 3 coordination meetings

Next Meeting Outline: The next meeting was set for **August 11 14, 2021 at 9:00 A.M.** to be held at the IDNR building in a room TBD or via Web-Ex depending on COVID-19 restrictions at that time. The agenda will include a discussion about the connectivity exhibits, and discussion of up to 4 topics to identify cross-cutting issues and recommendations.

The meeting was concluded at 11:56 A.M.