

STATE WATER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING

November 22, 2021, 9:00 A.M.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Web-Ex Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members Present:

IDNR–OWR: Loren Wobig, Wes Cattoor, Terra McParland, Rick Pohlman. Steve Altman, Megan McKinney

IDNR–ORC: Brian Metzke, Seth Love, Brian Caputo

ISWS: Laura Keefer, Walt Kelly, Trent Ford, David Kristovich

IDOT: BJ Murray

IEPA: Gregg Good, Gary Bingenheimer, Christine Davis, Michael Summers, Michael Brown, Scott Twait

IDOA: Michael Woods

IDPH: Brian Cox

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

Non-Members Present:

Kelly Thompson: IL Environmental Regulatory Group (IERG)

Kelly Warner: USGS

The Meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. The meeting agenda, meeting recording 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. Loren reminded the group that today we are going to dive into two topic areas for the SWP. We want to have some general discussions and feedback.

Wes reviewed the agenda. There will be no formal presentation today since we are going to be reviewing the submitted topic recommendations instead. Today we’re talking about: *Water Quality* and *Stream Data Management* cross cutting issues. The two topics will be shared online for discussion purposes and we will discuss each issue and recommendation separately.

Topic Discussion: Water Quality – Gregg Good and Mike Brown

- Comments from the Task Force are listed below for the Topic Leader’s use. Blue font is suggestions for word changes noted during the meeting.

- Note: Gregg Good is retiring and will be out after this month. He will be coming back on contract in the new year.
- Overview:
 - describes IL surface and groundwater resources and public water supplies and recommendations were discussed in that order.
 - describes the numerous regulations already in place and programs for protection
 - noted that this topic was not even mentioned in the 1984 report
- Issues:
 - Surface: Lots have been done with point and non-point sources due to voluntary programs but work is still needed
 - Groundwater: important since many underserved communities are less resilient
 - Public water supplies, IEPA and IDPH regulate them
 - New and emerging issues with little data plus new emphasis of ensuring environmental justice.

Recommendation	Comments
<p>1. The state should consider establishing establish substantial, long-term funding to implement Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy so the long-term goal of reducing total phosphorus and total nitrogen by 45%, with interim reduction goals of 15% nitrate-nitrogen and 25% total phosphorus by 2025, can be realized.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The nutrient loss strategy was to reduce N&P from leaving state (started 56 yrs. ago) and entering the Gulf of Mexico. - Noted to make recommendation clearer by deleting consider establishing with establish. - Other states like IA have a dedicated fund for activities. So far, our improvements have been made by voluntary reductions. - It was noted that many of IA fund are going though Dept of Ag for non-pt. source reduction through water districts - Might be best to put both IEPA and DOA as leads since it is a shared effort. - IEPA already has a fund for point source reduction but maybe need to clarify it is needed for non-point sources. - Is there a way to track what has been done and what needs to be done? We'll need to be able to show progress. - Might need to develop a plan to show how to meet the goals but that might bog down the process to make it too specific to explain exactly how they are going to address. - Maybe look at IA, IN and WI to see what they are doing. - IL is one of the 2-3 largest nutrient contributors to the Gulf. - The original target was a non-funded recommendation. The Genl Assembly will need to determine if this goal should be met and if so, they will need to provide funding.

Recommendation	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IEPA is used to getting funding and then determine how to best use the money. Another approach will be to determine how much money is needed to accomplish certain tasks. - This recommendation needs to be a little more specific.
<p>2. State funds should be provided for the continued operation of nine USGS “Super Gages” to provide the data necessary to determine if long-term and interim goals of Illinois’ Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy are being realized.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - USEPA funded a 5-yr monitoring effort with USGS to put up super gauges at strategic locations at lower ends of tributaries so have lots of data. The 8 gauges represent 75% of land area leaving the state. - IEPA only has funding for N&P, might want to monitor other parameters too in future (i.e. DO to measure HAB, etc.). EPA funding is done so now need another source. - For funding, it was requested to make a new category for asking to expand vs. new funding. To be discussed later.
<p>3. Expand funding (double) for existing voluntary nutrient reduction and green infrastructure programs. State and federal agencies should continue to advocate for voluntary nutrient reduction programs promoted by the agricultural and urban nonpoint source sectors (e.g., Partners for Conservation, Section 319 NPS, CRP, CSP, EQIP). Program projects should be prioritized where the highest water quality benefits can be achieved, especially if located in disadvantaged communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we have lots of voluntary programs but need to continue and expand funding. - How will we know when this is accomplished? - Maybe request for doubling of current funding? - Is this recommendation to expand or continue funding? - Note doubling will not get us where we need to be but it is a start in the next 5 years.
<p>4. IEPA will continue to support and expand Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) reduction, monitoring, and safety notification efforts; and support USGS’s 10-year “Next Generation Water Observing System” nutrient and HAB monitoring, modeling, and research efforts in the Illinois River Basin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was no program 7 years ago which has been expanding slightly each year. It needs to expand more. - Needs to also include education component - Need a formal advisory program. They aren’t currently issuing advisories. At this point, not sure how they impact recreational and water supply entities. - Support vs. advocate, advocate was deemed stronger. - Currently tracking 4 toxins. - Would like to monitor more locations. - Ideally could use data to develop early warning systems for downstream. - Cannot put federal agencies as lead in this report.

Recommendation	Comments
<p>5. With the recent purchase of new GC/MS/MS laboratory equipment, IDNR collection and IEPA analysis of PFASs samples in Lake Michigan fish tissues will be used to develop related fish consumption advisory thresholds and issue consumption advisories for the protection of the general population, and especially subsistence fishing populations located in disadvantaged communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the recommendation? Funding for Fish Contaminant Monitoring Program or for the equipment? - The data can be utilized by IEPA, IDNR, IDPH and IDOA - IEPA wants equipment to look at PFAS in Great Lakes but its use and data collection should be expanded.
<p>6. As a member state of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA), provide appropriate input and support for large-scale UMRBA program and federal funding recommendations to protect and restore the Upper Mississippi River (e.g., UMR Water Quality Improvement Act, Upper Mississippi River Monitoring Plan).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are currently lots of task forces and committees but MS River is not a federal priority right now. Want to push for it to become a national priority like the Chesapeake Bay. - Recommendation is to fund state support of this initiative and maybe other Big River basins, to support flood control or drought plans. - Or is goal to ask state to advocate or support a large-scale effort with federal and state partners - Current Lt. Gov has been sitting on a River council/committee and so far seems supportive of funding requests. The current groups seem to be waiting for agencies or other partners to come in with specific ideas - Should other large rivers be added? - Need to be able to coordinate with river's shared states when it comes to fish advisories. - Greg will take comments and try to reformulate recommendation.
<p>7. State funds should be provided to support and expand the ambient groundwater monitoring network to assess the overall conditions of statewide groundwater resource quality (i.e., ambient conditions) for focus or intensive evaluation of chronic or emerging conditions (e.g., Nitrate Trend Network, Chromium 6 project, Chloride Trend Network, VOC Trend Network, Statewide PFAS Network).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The current ambient gw monitoring is biannual. Need to do more frequently and additional parameters. - Instead of saying support, say expand program only.
<p>8. Increased outreach efforts should be conducted to educate private and public well owners on the importance of proper well abandonment and the requirement to seal unused wells pursuant to the Illinois Water Well Construction Code.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this has great potential for public health hazard.
<p>9. The state should consider provide funding for small public water systems that struggle or are unable to fund essential infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a way to partition the SRF and dedicate some to small public water systems? As of now, they rely on their priority scoring system.

Recommendation	Comments
<p>projects through conventional means such as the State Revolving Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a way to allocate to disadvantaged communities since they might not be able to follow the submission process? - Grants vs loans for disadvantaged? -As of now there are more applications for the funds than available but they cannot obtain funding until they are ready to proceed. - Some of the funding issues from SRF is for private water supplies do not qualify. - Maybe look at ways to get funding with fee collection from some of the communities. - Maybe start with a pilot project for next 5 years. - Someone suggested that public water supplies need to develop capacity development plans like other states and need to fund that program. Could be a new recommendation. Will be added as a new recommendation by looking at other states for their requirements
<p>10. The state should consider providing provide funding for the regionalization of small public water systems that struggle or are unable to fund the essential planning, required testing, and or infrastructure projects through conventional means such as the State Revolving Fund.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maybe pilot?
<p>11. The state should consider providing provide funding for capacity development for small public water systems to develop long term technical, financial, and managerial resiliency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do a CBR to determine if it is beneficial and then provide cost share. - Reminder that the disadvantaged groups have trouble getting funds for an initial engineering study and no agency does that work right now. - IEPA could fund outside consultants but would need funding to do so.
<p>12. State funds should be provided to support and expand sampling and data gathering on how new and emerging issues such as microplastics, endocrine disrupters, and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) affect drinking water supplies as well as surface and groundwaters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No comments
<p>13. All Illinois' citizen, business, industry, agricultural producer, and other populations want and deserve safe and abundant waters. The state will support equitable and prioritized administration of existing programs that protect surface, groundwater, and public water supply resources to safeguard human and environmental health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is overarching and maybe should be discussed more in the introduction. - IEPA follows ECO rating - Perhaps this is a recommendation to develop a criterion to rate underserved communities for all agencies

Recommendation	Comments
14. The state will continue to support and expand funding for programs that monitor and assess the quality of Illinois' surface and groundwater resources so scientifically based decisions can be made.	- This is a placeholder for IEPA/USGS sampling
15. The state will improve its public outreach and education efforts related to water quality via the Illinois Water Center as described in the Integrated Water Management issue paper.	- No comments - Might need to update wording for all sections to use as needed or moved to front as overarching issue/recommendation. - Need rating matrix to determine priorities.
16. <i>A working group will be formed to discuss support and development of an Illinois Water Monitoring Council, allowing for better communication, collaboration, and coordination among Illinois' monitoring organizations. (Should there also be a Stream Gaging Council, a Flood Management Council, other councils, one council under one new umbrella, the "Illinois Water Center"?)</i>	- Need to discuss more in future - Might be addressed with Water Center.

- Brian Cox had some comments but will reach out to Gregg/Mike directly about monitoring pathogens. Also need to discuss lead pipeline replacement somewhere.

Topic Discussion: Stream Data Management –Laura Keefer

- Comments from the Task Force are listed below for the Topic Leader's use. This section still needs to be taken to committee for review
- Overview – Talks about how this is a cross cutting issue. There are currently lots of needs from different groups for data but there are also some great resources currently out there with NWS, USGS, etc.
- Issues:
 - Fewer stations in smaller rural areas, might highlight missing rural for a figure.
 - Need longer term datasets
 - Funding issues, to discuss next month since needs lots of coordination.

Recommendation	Comments
1. Form a working group to assess and identify needs for more stations in rural/smaller watersheds.	- Who leads? IDNR can fund but ISWS would be lead. - Maybe can install lower tech but with communication. Perhaps only need water levels for modeling, etc.
2. Form a working group to assess the viability of retaining current long-term stations to meet multiple programmatic needs and identify current shorter-term stations for continuation.	- Similar to above for lead - Need to consider specific needs of gauge locations. Might not need full monitoring.

Recommendation	Comments
3. Create working group to develop business model for creation of a state-wide <i>Stream Data Collaborative/Council</i> with the objective in promoting collaboration and leveraging of current and future stations with mechanisms to reliably secure funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The working group will collaborate, develop a funding model and establish partnerships. - This recommendation might need to be more specific as to what the funding will be used for. - Will it be for funding staff from different agencies to collaborate?
4. Support formation of <i>Illinois Water Monitoring Council</i> [Water Quality critical issues] to expand inclusion of water conditions (temp, pH, conductivity, ...) and quality (nutrient, sediment, emerging contaminants, etc.) at streamgaging station locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water quality and quantity go hand in hand so need dedicated people to coordinate the work. - IEPA can probably not take lead on this at this time due to staffing retirement. They support the idea though. -Laura will update this recommendation.

- The big takeaway was that state has to fund these groups to develop plans to fund staffing to dedicate to these tasks. These are probably one-time funding.
- The working groups can look at each location and determine creative options. Each might not need the Cadillac version of monitoring.
- Increase staff resources to fund these working groups long-term. Not like the name task force as that usually sounds like a shorter duration group.
- It was noted that this issue was supposed to be called data management and cover data needs for all topics. However, Laura's group currently only address stream data management. No one expressed concern but it was noted that each group's data collection and storage needs will now have to be addressed in each section.

General:

- Cross-cutting exhibits will be started when all these individual discussions are done.
- Meeting Schedule:
 - Dec: Water Funding and Law
 - Jan: Erosion & Sedimentation and Climate Change
- Project Schedule:
 - Final Sections due in mid-Feb.
 - Combined Draft report in March
 - July/August to publish the report. The hard deadline is end of 2022.
 - Remember this is a fluid document and work will be continued through the Task Force. Annual reports will be likely required to show progress and entire report will be updated in 5 years

Schedule: The schedule will be revised and posted on the website.

Next Meeting Outline: It was determined using a poll that the next meeting will be set for **December 16, 2021 at 10:30 A.M.** to be held via Web-Ex. The agenda will include a discussion about 2 topics to identify cross-cutting issues and recommendations. If time remains, we'll talk about report section format and the plan-wide cross-cutting issues.

The meeting was concluded at 11:47 A.M.