

# Illinois NLRs Urban Stormwater Working Group

April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 1:00 – 2:00pm

*In attendance:* Steven Brendel, Madison County; Tyler Carpenter, Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission; Reid Christianson, University of Illinois; Alec Davis, Illinois Environmental Regulatory Group; Jeff Edstrom, Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Mary Beth Falsey, DuPage County; Holly Hudson, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Lisa Krause, Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Heidi Leuszler, Parkland College; Scott Marlow, Illinois Department of Transportation; Sally McConkey, Illinois State Water Survey; Lisa Merrifield, Illinois Extension; Mary Mitros, DuPage County; Austin Omer, Illinois Farm Bureau; Trevor Sample, Illinois EPA; Cindy Skrukrud, Sierra Club; Kelly Thompson, Illinois Environmental Regulatory Group; Eliana Brown, Illinois Extension; Kate Gardiner, Layne Knoche, Illinois Extension; and Tony Heath, Illinois Extension

## Summary

### Introductions

Eliana Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting and initiated roll call for attendance. She also introduced Layne Knoche, who was recently hired as a Visiting Extension Outreach Associate.

### Member Updates

Several members provided updates.

Jeff Edstrom shared that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is working on a water quality trends analysis in partnership with the Illinois State Water Survey using data from the Illinois coastal region.

Lisa Krause shared that IDNR is developing a pilot training for an introduction to green infrastructure maintenance. They held a training event in March and will report on the needs assessment and training event at the upcoming Equitable Green Infrastructure Summit.

Lisa Merrifield shared that the North Central Region Water Network is hosting an Equitable Green Infrastructure Summit on April 28<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 3pm. For more information, you can visit: <https://northcentralwater.org/land-use-and-developmental-practices/greeninfrastructure/>.

Mary Mitros shared that DuPage County is offering virtual workshops and their annual Sustainable Design Challenge has been moved to a virtual challenge. “Rainy Days Are Here Again” Webinar, Thursday, April 23 at Noon CST, Register at [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUud-igrD8icZE-ImOvzw\\_epyNbqxLZSA](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUud-igrD8icZE-ImOvzw_epyNbqxLZSA); “Stormwater: Behind the Scenes” Webinar, Thursday, April 30 at Noon CST, Register at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/uJQtde2vqzksGRMUmJlMuuAGWfRaa69jmg>

Scott Marlow shared that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is now offering its training modules online. Additional information and links for registration are available on the Illinois Center for Transportation website. Classes are open to anyone who is interested in how IDOT does stormwater. The courses can be accessed here: <https://ict.illinois.edu/outreach/erosion-control-workshop/>.

Heidi Leuszler shared that rather than offering the traditional in-person training in May, Parkland College is offering NGICP training material online with a two-day, in-person training in the fall.

Holly Hudson shared that the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) was just starting to work out agreements with municipalities for the Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program when the shelter-in-place order went into effect. While this may affect municipalities' ability to do these projects, CMAP will continue to advance the work with those that can. LTA projects include comprehensive plan updates and stormwater plans.

### **Subgroup Updates**

**Education Subgroup:** University of Illinois Extension is offering a series of webinars, some of which are related to stormwater, climate, and gardening. With that in mind, Eliana is putting together a small webpage of resources on the Illinois Extension site. In contrast to the USWG Resource Repository, which is still housed on the IAFSM website, the Illinois Extension site would include more homeowner-focused resources. Once the webpage is set up, Eliana will share it with the group for feedback.

**Tracking Subgroup:** Eliana Brown and Reid Christianson have collaborated with Illinois EPA on a stormwater and green infrastructure calculator, which would help track their Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant, should it come back online. That work was started before the shelter-in-place order, so it hasn't gone any further. However, Reid had previously developed a calculator as part of the Chesapeake Bay project and it can be modified to fit Illinois' needs, including adding different BMPs.

### **Next Steps**

- Eliana will set up a stormwater webpage on the Extension website and share it with the group for review and feedback.
- Mary Mitros will send Kate Gardiner the URL for the DuPage County programs once it becomes available.
- The group will start monthly Zoom meetings. Kate Gardiner will send out a Doodle Poll to determine the best standing time.
- Save the date for the 2020 Illinois Nutrient Loss Partnership Workshop on November 6<sup>th</sup> in the iHotel.

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Introductions**

Eliana initiated a roll call for attendance and introduced Layne Knoche. Layne has been working with Eliana and Kate for a couple years and is familiar with the Illinois NLRS and urban stormwater. He was recently hired as a Visiting Extension Outreach Associate.

### **Member Updates**

**Jeff Edstrom:** The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Coastal Program must have an approved nonpoint program. All outstanding sections have interim approval, so it will go to public comment in six months to a year and finalized after that. The Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources is working on a water quality trends analysis, taking data from the Illinois coastal region to better understand the trends. This will let us know what needs to be done. We are partnering with the Illinois State Water Survey, who will use their Fox River model for the Illinois coastal region to determine gaps in data. Once we figure out the trends, we can determine what data we need and how to think about data collection and analysis into the future. Should we consider real-time or continuous data? Do we need to look at modeling like

we have with beaches and is it useful? The idea is to look at management actions to take now, actions to take soon, and how to collect data in the future. We think this could have potential implications for data collection in urban areas statewide.

Eliana Brown: What is the timeframe?

Jeff Edstrom: The contract date goes through June 2021 for the trends analysis, which will have three components: (1) collecting the data, (2) initial analysis, and (3) determining if we have enough data to do a model analysis of the trends.

Sally McConkey: What parameters are you looking at?

Jeff Edstrom: We are looking at anything that will affect the water quality of the coastal areas, including Lake Michigan tributaries and sediment data.

Holly Hudson: Is it purely coastal or are you including areas that lead into the coastal area?

Jeff Edstrom: We're considering tributaries like the Waukegan River, Chicago River within the coastal boundaries, Calumet River, etc.

Holly Hudson: We have been discussing volunteer monitoring data across Illinois, so this could be support for that too.

Jeff Edstrom: We're working closely with Illinois EPA on this and looking at the resources that are available, including contractual issues for data collection if you use state funds. There is also data that aren't paid for by the state that might be helpful on some levels to augment decision making. Holly, you should also be on this advisory committee.

Lisa Krause: We had been developing a pilot training for an introduction to green infrastructure maintenance, which was held on March 10<sup>th</sup>. We worked with a lot of partners, including Heidi Leuszler at Parkland College, OAI, Cardno, the Chicago Region Trees Initiative, and more. We also utilized pre- and post-surveys that day that had 14 participants. Several attendees were job seekers who were able to take advantage of OAI's resources. Two-thirds of the attendees were from Illinois with the remaining third coming from Indiana. We will report on the needs assessment and training event at the upcoming Equitable Green Infrastructure Summit.

Holly Hudson: Could you tell us more about the Equitable Green Infrastructure Summit?

Lisa Krause: I believe Lisa Merrifield is one of the organizers, so she can talk more about that.

Eliana Brown: Can you talk about the training components?

Lisa Krause: The day started with a general introduction to stormwater and urban watersheds, additional information about soils, day on the job training, an engineer from the Metropolitan Wastewater Reclamation District of Greater Chicago spoke, and we offered basically a sampler for the National Green Infrastructure Certification Training (NGICP) program. We are in communication with Heidi on ways to collaborate with NGICP and see if this can be a way to bridge people into that program and be in step with language of that program.

Heidi Leuszler: I talked to the folks at NGICP who were interested in how the workshop went and they were excited to hear it went well. They are interested in how it goes post-social distancing and are interested in making it an official NGICP one-day workshop.

Lisa Krause: I'm so happy to hear that!

Lisa Merrifield: More about this summit, in the past year from NCWRN a team of us from the Midwest have been working on equitable green infrastructure and how they are implementing things like social justice in place of green infrastructure, etc. Instead of cancelling the event outright, we are coming together online as a virtual summit. The summit will be held on April 28<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 3 pm with plenty of breaks. I will send Kate the link to share. Our keynote facilitator is someone out of Cincinnati and she is working at the intersection of water quality, inclusion, social justice, etc. We will talk about our listening sessions, get feedback from participants to know how we go forward to make green inf more accessible to cities and how our organizations can help. We hope to get good feedback and release a whitepaper afterwards. For more information, you can visit: <https://northcentralwater.org/land-use-and-developmental-practices/greeninfrastructure/>.

Heidi Leuszler: I was looking forward to it! Glad you can continue online.

Lisa Merrifield: Me, too. We figured it was better to meet virtually and we can always meet in person next year.

Eliana Brown: One of the upsides of a virtual summit is that folks across the state can attend more easily.

Lisa Merrifield: True, we had 40 people registered originally and now we are up to 60-70 registrants. More participants will give us better information.

Eliana Brown: Would anyone else like to share an update?

Mary Mitros: At DuPage County, we just announced workshops that we cancelled and have now re-announced as virtual. It's up to 100 participants with video and audio and a Sustainable Design Challenge has been moved to a virtual challenge. So we are making videos of the challenges and students are submitting their projects for review. Register at [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUud-igrD8icZE-lmOvzw\\_epyNbqxLZSA](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUud-igrD8icZE-lmOvzw_epyNbqxLZSA) ; "Stormwater: Behind the Scenes" Webinar, Thursday, April 30 at Noon CST, Register at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/uJQtde2vqzksGRMUmJIMuuAGWfRaa69jmg>

Scott Marlow: I can share how our training is adapting to COVID-19. We are now switching to only online classes. In the past, most classes have been held at the iHotel. There are three diff modules and I will be teaching Mod 2 in April. We are doing it all online, so it might be challenging to do some of these courses, since this is new. If you go to the Illinois Center for Transportation website, all the classes are listed there. I'm not sure how many have taken these courses, but they are open to anyone who is interested in how the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) does stormwater.

Eliana Brown: Do the consultants need this certification to work on IDOT projects?

Scott Marlow: It's recommended, as you need to know IDOT policies and standards. The courses can be accessed here: <https://ict.illinois.edu/outreach/erosion-control-workshop/>.

Heidi Leuszler: Parkland was planning to have a May training for the NGICP course, which is no longer happening. I spoke with NGICP about offering a blended curriculum that is ready to launch. Instead of a five day in-person training, there will be a two-day, in-person training in the fall with the rest of the material available online.

Eliana Brown: Any other updates?

Holly Hudson: CMAP was just starting to work out agreements with municipalities for the local technical assistance program. They might be doing comprehensive plan or stormwater plan updates. Depending on the municipality or neighborhood group, their capacity is changing as they need to redirect focus to other projects. CMAP is keeping our website up to date and planning is going ahead as staff are learning new technology.

### **Subgroup Updates**

Education Subgroup: Illinois Extension has been offering webinars, some of which are related to stormwater, climate, and gardening. With that in mind, Eliana is putting together a webpage of stormwater resources on the Extension site. Are there any resources to add? What would be helpful? The Resource Repository is still housed on the IAFSM website. Illinois Extension site would include more homeowner-focused resources. Are there any thought on how Extension could be helpful on this? Eliana will set it up and share it with the group for feedback.

Tracking Subgroup: Eliana Brown and Reid Christianson have collaborated with Illinois EPA on a stormwater and green infrastructure calculator, which would help track their Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant, should it come back online. That work was started before the shelter-in-place order, so it hasn't gone any further.

Reid Christianson: The nice thing about that spreadsheet tool is that it is not locked down to the Chesapeake Bay only, it can be modified to fit our needs, including adding various BMPs that we had included on our "wish list."

Cindy Skrukud: How does this tool relate to the spreadsheet tools that Illinois EPA has used in the past for calculating 319 projects?

Reid Christianson: Usually the 319 projects were calculated using STEPL or national EPA tools, which have a few limitations, and what we were working on is a bit more comprehensive and fairer for calculations. There is utility in thinking about the other tools for consistency, if that's what's needed.

Lisa Krause: Is this the EPA calculator? <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/national-stormwater-calculator>. I did a training with them in late February/early March. There were some great case studies for its use in the Great Lakes, with limitations noted.

Reid Christianson: While I have never used the online version, I used the predecessor that you used off your desktop.

### **Next Steps**

Eliana Brown: I was wondering if we would like to have more frequent meetings. This morning, I was on a call where Allison Neubauer gave a nice presentation on the Lawn to Lake program. We could have the

opportunity for this group to present updates. I would love to hear an update about the Preserves at Oak Meadows.

Jeff Edstrom: I think that's a great idea.

Heidi Leuszler: I concur.

Eliana Brown: We can put out a Doodle Poll, but are there some general good times? Should this be a standing monthly meeting?

Holly Hudson: If it was a regularly hosted meeting, it could be held monthly or every other month.

Reid Christianson: It also depends on how long the shelter-in-place order lasts, too.

Eliana Brown: When the order is lifted, it would make sense for us to have a face-to-face meeting, but it may be a little while before we're able to do that. Maybe we'll all get used to doing Zoom meetings, too. One thought I had was to take the analysis on the MS4s that Lisa Merrifield did and look at more active coordinators. We have had informative presentations from Mary Beth Falsey and Mary Mitros on DuPage County's efforts, and we could see what other active MS4s around the state are doing.

Eliana Brown: Any other thoughts? Okay, we'll send out a Doodle Poll. Thank you all for being on today.