

# STATE WATER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING

January 8, 2024

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Web-Ex Meeting Minutes

## **Task Force Members Present:**

IDNR – OWR: Loren Wobig, Wes Cattoor, Megan McKinney, Rick Pohlman, Tara Jagadeesh, Wei Han, Ania Bayers, Steve Altman, Meg Kelly,  
ISWS: Laura Keefer, Trent Ford, Glenn Heistand, Walt Kelly, David Kristovich  
IEPA: Jeff Edstrom, Nidhan Singh, Christine Davis  
IDPH: Brian Cox  
IDOT: Brian McCoy  
IWRC: Yu-Feng Forrest Lin  
IDNR – ORC: Mike McClelland, Brian Metzke, Seth Love  
IDOA: Jeffrey Thompson, Brian Rennecker  
Agencies not in attendance: IDNR–OMM, DCEO, IPCB, IEMA

## **Non-Members Present:**

USGS: Jon Lageman

## **Welcome:**

Loren opened the meeting at 1:32 pm. He wished everyone a happy year one anniversary as that is how long this plan had been out. The one-year anniversary is typically paper and while paper is delicate, it can last a lifetime if we're careful. The main topics today is legislative updates and then implementation milestones and updates.

## **Minutes:**

Approval of minutes. No comments or edits. Steve Altman motioned; Brian McCoy seconded. All approved, none opposed.

Overview: Wes brought up the current status and we have 7 of 13 sections reporting in. 35 recommendations started. A total of 3 completed recommendations. Wes also said he would like to throw it out to the group about what we present to the website/public. Should we be documenting the progress on an annual basis? Perhaps something in a pdf or ongoing table? David mentioned he was seeing in the chat that several people had suggested a "one pager". Wes said he thinks a one pager could be a good idea and especially for keeping the legislative friends in the loop. Brian McCoy says he's seen reports on websites, simple, that just show some numbers, some percentages, a dashboard. Wes will come up with something similar to a one pager and circulate it through the Task Force and then get feedback and unofficial approval from everyone saying that this is the right track. Loren suggested getting something together before the spring session so those legislators who have expressed strong interest in the Plan can see where we are. Wes asked if anyone had any concerns sharing this. He is a

strong proponent of “full transparency”. David said he’s on board with sharing it but maybe in a thinned down version. Brian suggested perhaps not putting it on the website because he's worried that the public may hold us to some of these deadlines or what they perceive as deadlines and the public may hold us to those figures. Those may move around, especially if its regarding funding. We have no control when and if funding appears but that’s why we could put “estimated” and “restrictions” so the public could see where the hang ups are. Wes stated his support for transparency by sharing this information. It was agreed to put the list linked on the website but not include the full list on the annual update.

**SWP Recommendations Status:** Note: Wes will be reaching out to topic heads about progress on topics for putting in the annual summary.

1. *Water Quality*- Jeff says they are starting to see a lot of success on getting more funding for grants and they are sifting through those. Harmful Algae blooms does have a dashboard and they’re looking at the responses for ways for the public to notify the State. There has been more work on PFA’s, and the results will be on the calendar in 2024. As for PFAs on fish contaminant, he does not have the outcomes on that study. They are trying to get certification on drinking water. Loren asked Jeff about getting him some of that information for Gov and Premier’s and GLC.

2. *Climate Section*- David says there has not been major changes as of today. Mostly in these categories they are looking for support/funding. IWIC will be touched upon in Loren’s section.

3. *Integrated Water Management*- Loren says this is more a legislative update. He has continued to have very positive discussions with leaders of agencies and Senator Elman in Naperville, and she may be the sponsor of a bill that would codify the SWPTF. He’s hoping with her help more funding could be found and support given. She also wants to support a water loss awareness resolution. This could be greatly beneficial from a Lake Michigan water allocation perspective. They are expanding that program and Luz Payan will be doing a great deal of outreach in regard to that program. There is also an early nationwide effort to improve the way we do business with the Corps on their project agreements. There have been testimonies given before Congress that have been received well and progress is being made on project partnership agreements. The Water Information Center is still being discussed but needs to be fleshed out more before it is introduced as a bill. We want to have things such an org chart and position descriptions that would help justify a budget for that. Should we reach out to a consulting service to try and get something put together or just work it more on this side? Glenn spoke up and said they have had several conversations at State Water Survey about this very thing and he agrees there needs to be more “flesh added to the bones” or a draft business plan before going much further.

4. *Long Term Funding*- Nidhan is still continuing efforts in underserved communities, and they are looking at offering technical and financial support. They are looking to offer it to more communities, and now with more supplemental funding coming in, they are in a position to offer more to the communities. IEPA does not currently have the authority to require existing public water supplies to utilize asset management plans, but conversations continue for future. The conversations are still ongoing with statewide evaluations on technology since it is a large collaboration between agencies. Jeff E. says we should have a standalone meeting that could help narrow down this status, it seems too broad currently. Perhaps that is something the formalized Task Force can focus on. Wes saw that Loren had made some comments earlier regarding stormwater funding and how it might apply to the topic

“establish new waters.” Loren said yes there has been some progress there and that should be updated a bit more.

5. *Water Sustainability*- Walt began with announcing that USGS provided funding on an IL River project to install some water meters in Mason County. Wei said they had a meeting with ISWS, and they indicated some stakeholder concerns publishing water supply through a beta version website. They will further improve and correct later via public input. With regards to regional water supply, Heartland Conservancy has signed a grant agreement for the Kaskaskia water supply pending IDNR execution.

6. *Lake Michigan*- Loren introduced Meg Kelly from Chicago. Tara, who is also in the Coastal Program, says Meg has joined us and there will be lots of planning in the coming months. They also released at the end of last year the Coastal Grants Opportunity and are making some awards to local organizations. There will not be funding any restoration work this time. They are currently putting together a NOAA grant and 2 proposals were invited back for further development. Illinois Beach SP was chosen to be picked. Big grant opportunity in work force development. They are building a coastal resource hub and data.

7. *Flood Damage Mitigation*- Terra was unable to be here, but asked Wes to make known IL has adopted Statewide Building codes starting 1/1/25.

8. *Aquatic and Riparian Habitat*- Brian Metzke says that last year they were able to meet with some administrators and program staff and develop some concrete funding needs. There have also been conversations at EPA, and they hope to acquire some funding for the resources they need to get going.

9. *Water Use Laws and Regulations*- Steve says water reuse passed out of committee but not out of the House. Sponsors are planning to reintroduce it in the next session. Water diversion outside of IL has stalled. Wei says we did receive a request from Mahomet Water Aquifer and their proposal was denied. They were invited to submit a revised proposal. Loren jumped in and said that there is some proposed legislation coming from outside the State, namely UMRBA involving diversions out of the Mississippi watershed and the Ohio River watershed.

10. *Navigation*- Brian McCoy said they've done education and outreach to the public and updated IDOTs Marine Transportation website and added some links to some studies and consolidated webpages. They are still lacking significant infrastructure and construction funding.

11. *Erosion and Sedimentation*- Brian Rennecker takes over for Michael Woods who has since moved on. Brian says he and Michael have a meeting tomorrow and he looks forward to having more of an update next meeting.

12. *Data Management*- Laura says they are making good progress on tasks and budgets to develop a streamgaging network. Evaluation needs to be done first.

13. *Recreation*— Seth has no current updates. Mike McClelland has taken over this as topic leader and the committee is in the process of handing things over.

**Closing:** Wes wanted to know if there were any other legislative updates that anyone else would like to share? Any new business? No new business. Wes reminded the group that Task Force subcommittees can be formed to make progress on implementing specific recommendations to allow input from several agencies at once. Loren says April 8<sup>th</sup> is the next solar eclipse and wants to make sure people will be

available. A few people had conflicts, so the decision was made to push the meeting a week to April 15<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was ended at 1:15 PM.

**Schedule:**

Future Meetings: **Moved to April 15, 2024 - virtual**

**July 8, 2024- 1:30 PM- virtual**

**October 15, 2024- 1:30 PM Hybrid (to be rescheduled - state holiday)**