

NORTH BRANCH CHICAGO RIVER WATERSHED WORKGROUP GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES



NORTH BRANCH
CHICAGO RIVER
WATERSHED
WORKGROUP

Lake Forest Municipal Services Building Training Room,
800 N Field Drive, Lake Forest, IL 60045
Wednesday, February 14, 2024 * 1:00pm – 3:00pm

NBWW GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

1. Introductions

Brandon Janes, President of the North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup (NBWW), called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm and welcomed attendees to the February 14, 2024, NBWW General Membership Meeting. The meeting was held in a hybrid format. Ashley Strelcheck, NBWW Coordinator for this meeting, performed roll call. A total of 24 voting members (tallying 90 votes) were in attendance, so an NBWW meeting quorum was present (see the voting quorum and meeting participants list below).

Voting Quorum: Anna Braun, Forest Preserve District of Cook County; Peter Nagle, Chicago Botanic Gardens; Byron Kutz, City of Lake Forest; Larry Bridges, Skokie Consolidated Drainage District; Leonard Dane, Fehr Graham Engineering & Environmental; Brian Valleskey, Geosyntec; Alana Bartolai, Lake County - Unincorporated; Ashley Strelcheck, Lake County SMC; Chuck Bodden, NSWRD Clavey Road WRF; Chris Johnson, Illinois Sierra Club; Michael Warner, Gewalt Hamilton and representative for Village of Bannockburn, Village of Northfield & Village of Riverwoods; Brandon Janes, Village of Deerfield; James Tigue, Village of Glencoe; Robyn Flakne, Village of Glenview; Ben Metzler (Clark Dietz), Village of Green Oaks; Wally Dittrich, Village of Lincolnshire; Jack Bielak, Village of Northbrook; Kate McDonnell, Village of Wilmette; and Hayley Frank, Village of Winnetka.

2. Public Comment – None

3. NBWW Business

a. Approve NBWW August 9, 2023 General Membership Meeting Minutes

Larry Bridges, East Skokie Drainage District, motioned to approve the August 9, 2023 General Membership Meeting Minutes, seconded by Michael Warner (Gewalt Hamilton) representative for the Village of Bannockburn. The motion passed with a unanimous consensus vote.

b. Financials

i. Ratify NBWW Revenues & Expenditures

Strelcheck presented the expenditures and revenues for ratification. There were no questions. Matt Ueltzen, Lake County Forest Preserve District, motioned to ratify the presented revenues and expenditures, seconded by Jack Bielak, Village of Northbrook. The motion passed via a 23-0 roll call vote (see roll call vote spreadsheet).

ii. NBWW Budget Review

Strelcheck presented the NBWW budget. There were no comments or questions.

iii. Approval of NBWW FY2024 Membership Dues

Strelcheck presented the NBWW FY2024 Membership Dues for general membership approval. There were no questions. Larry Bridges, East Skokie Drainage District, motioned to approve the presented NBWW FY2024 Membership Dues, seconded by Jack Bielak, Village of Northbrook. The motion passed via a 21-3-0 roll call vote (see roll call vote spreadsheet).

c. Old Business

i. **Executive Board Update – Brandon Janes, NBWW President** – No updates

ii. **Monitoring Committee Update – Rob Flood, NBWW Monitoring & Water Quality Impairment Abatement Committee Chair**

Rob Flood gave a Monitoring Committee Update. NBWW has submitted the Illinois EPA Annual Monitoring Report on behalf of the NBWW permit-holding members. This report satisfies the NBWW permit holding members in-stream monitoring requirements within the North Branch Chicago River watershed. NSWRD will start collecting February 2024 water samples from twenty-five sites in the watershed to satisfy the workgroup member's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permit requirements. NBWW sent out a Request for Proposals in January 2024 seeking a consultant to develop a Water Quality Summary Report with the NBWW data for public distribution (the deadline is February 23rd for proposals).

d. **New Business** – None

4. **Guest Speakers**

a. **Trash in Streams: driving factors for composition, distribution, and transport**

Tim Hoellein, Associate Professor, Loyola University Chicago

Tim Hoellein presented his research on trash in streams and the relations between plastic production and anthropogenic litter (AL). Hoellein provided a summary of the different types of plastics found in his research and the distribution and harmful impacts on the environments from the AL. Organisms within and around the stream are impacted by AL; a general trend that has increased since the mid-1900s. The highest levels of impact for microplastics were found in predator species (found in gut contents). Hoellein also demonstrated the impacts of trash and microplastic movements in a stream before, during, and after floods; he does this with the use of cameras mounted on bridges above a stream and watching the film and distributing research “trash” with GPS to see where those pieces end up in the system. A key takeaway Hoellein shared was that trash that has been removed from the local streams by volunteers and scientists has been comprised of 75-80% plastic. Macroplastic “nurdles” have been seen in the North Branch Chicago River watershed but a larger cluster of nurdles have been found in the Middlefork in the Middlefork Savanna Forest Preserve.

Q: How will your research help solve this big problem?

A: Using the metrics and data collected may help to find sources of the pollutants and move legislation and policies to reduce pollutants of concern from getting into the streams.

Q: Are you finding a lot of tire rubber microplastics (transported in the streams) in your research?

A: Tim would need to check on this, but he does not recall finding a lot of those tire microplastics in this watershed area.

b. **North Shore WRD – Phosphorus Reduction Projects**

Chuck Bodden, Director of Laboratory & Environmental Compliance, North Shore Water Reclamation District

Chuck Bodden gave a presentation on North Shore Water Reclamation District's (NSWRD) three facilities in Gurnee, Waukegan and Clavey Road (Highland Park). Bodden provided a summary of the Illinois Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NIRS) and the goals set for in-stream phosphorus (25% reduction by 2025 and 45% long-term goals) and the 2023 Biennial Report indicating those goals are predicted to fall short. Bodden highlighted that the point source sector is reported to exceed that 25% reduction goal for phosphorus and it is predicted that 10,000,000 pounds of reduction is possible. The Nutrient Assessment Reduction Plan (NARP) has been completed by the DRWW and identified in the key takeaways that POTW total phosphorus reductions beyond 0.5 mg/L have minimal impacts on water quality. Through several phosphorus reduction efforts by NSWRD, Aeration Improvements Projects - Biological Phosphorus Removal (all 3 facilities), Chemical Phosphorus Removal and several other measures, NSWRD was able to meet Illinois NIRS goals. Bodden provided details on the phosphorus reduction studies, programs and removal enhancements to help achieve phosphorus reduction compliance.

Comment: The phosphorus reduction efforts implemented will take time to see the results from data because there is phosphorus saturated in the river systems (in the sediments) and will take time to see the results of these efforts.

c. NBWW Nutrient Assessment & Reduction Plan (NARP) Update

Aaron Vandermus, Staff Engineer, Geosyntec Consultants, Inc.

Aaron Vandermus gave an update on the NBWW NARP development. Vandermus provided a recap of the 2022-2023 water quality data collected and the SWMM model development. Geosyntec is focused on the Watershed SWMM model in 2023; which considers characteristics of the watershed, hydrograph data, flow and runoff and simulates water quality loading to streams. Vandermus gave a summary of the three datasonde locations (upstream, within and downstream of the Skokie Lagoons) data from 2023. Geosyntec has recently been focusing on the in-stream model and considering flow and pollutant loads within the streams through a Water Quality Analysis Simulation Program (WASP). The instream model is being developed and calibrated. The data review summary comparison indicated that downstream outfall may improve water quality at site location SR18 and discharge direct to the lagoons may mix and stagnate with high biological activity in the lagoons. Future development for Geosyntec and the NBWW NARP includes running watershed management scenarios (up to 6) and presenting them to the NBWW.

Q: Has Geosyntec considered the impact of the NSWRD Clavey Road facility discharging downstream vs upstream of the Lagoons?

A: Not yet, but the (upcoming) model will predict how and where discharge may impact water quality.

d. Smart Salt Storage

Eric Lostroscio, Maintenance Supervisor, Lake County Division of Transportation

Eric Lostroscio gave a brief presentation on salt stockpiles and the proper storage of salt. Lostroscio explained the impacts of not storing salt properly; freshwater contamination, loss of material (and money) and clumping salt. There are various techniques for storing salt but some key takeaways include: trying to put salt on a bituminous or concrete pad, fully covering the area, preventing surface water penetration and controlling humidity levels. Some considerations are looking where the nearest manholes are for any potential discharge from the salt pile, not over-storing your salt in a bin black, dome or building (which could lead to overflow outside of the containment and weighing down tarped piles. There were no questions or comments.

5. Watershed Project Updates & Announcements

a. Open Discussion & Watershed Updates (only agenda item 5.a.i)

i. North Branch Chicago River & Lake Michigan Watershed-Based Plan: Community Adoption

Ashley Strelcheck, NBWW Coordinator, Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, requested the watershed communities and townships participate in the North Branch Chicago River & Lake Michigan Watershed-Based Plan community adoption process. Strelcheck provided two resolutions; one for the communities that reside only in the North Branch Chicago River watershed and a joint resolution for communities in the North Branch Chicago River & Lake Michigan watersheds. Lake County Stormwater Management Commission is requesting that communities and township ask their Boards/Committees to approve/adopt the Watershed-Based Plan(s). An email will be sent to those communities following this meeting with more details and links.

b. Next NBWW General Membership Meeting: August 14, 2024, at the Lake Forest Municipal Services Building

6. Adjournment – 3:10 pm

Larry Bridges, East Skokie Drainage District, motioned to adjourn, seconded by Chuck Bodden, NSWRD Clavey Road WRF. The motion passed with unanimous consensus vote.

North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup Meeting Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Aaron Vandermus	Geosyntec
Alana Bartolai	Lake County Health Department
Anna Braum	Forest Preserve District of Cook County
Anna Niedzinski (virtual)	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
Aram Beladi	Village of Northbrook
Ashley Strelcheck	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
Ben Metzler	Clark Dietz representing the Village of Green Oaks
Brandon Janes	Village of Deerfield
Brian Joyce	City of Lake Forest
Brian Valleskey	Geosyntec
Chris Johnson	Illinois Sierra Club
Chuck Bodden	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Jack Bielak	Village of Northbrook
James Tigue	Village of Glencoe
Janice Aull	Aull Nature Preserve
Jim Jabcon	Chicago Botanic Garden
Josephine Meincke	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Justin Vick	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Karolina Cho	Gewalt Hamilton
Karoline Qasem	Fehr Graham Engineering & Environmental
Kate McDonnell	Village of Wilmette
Larry Bridges	Skokie Consolidated Drainage District
Mark Olszewski	Village of Deerfield
Matt Ueltzen	Lake County Forest Preserve District
Michael Warner	Gewalt Hamilton; representing the Village of Bannockburn, Northfield and Riverwoods
Nick Kollias (virtual, no vote)	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Peter Nagle	Chicago Botanic Garden
Rob Flood	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Robyn Flakne	Village of Glenview
Susan Lenz	Lake Forest Open Lands
Wally Dittrich	Village of Lincolnshire

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MS4 Program BMP fulfillment. If attendees want to apply NBWW meetings and education towards their MS4 Program BMP Measurable Goals, keep the certificate, agenda and minutes with sign-in sheets. Acceptance of these materials for MS4 program credit is at the discretion of the Illinois EPA.