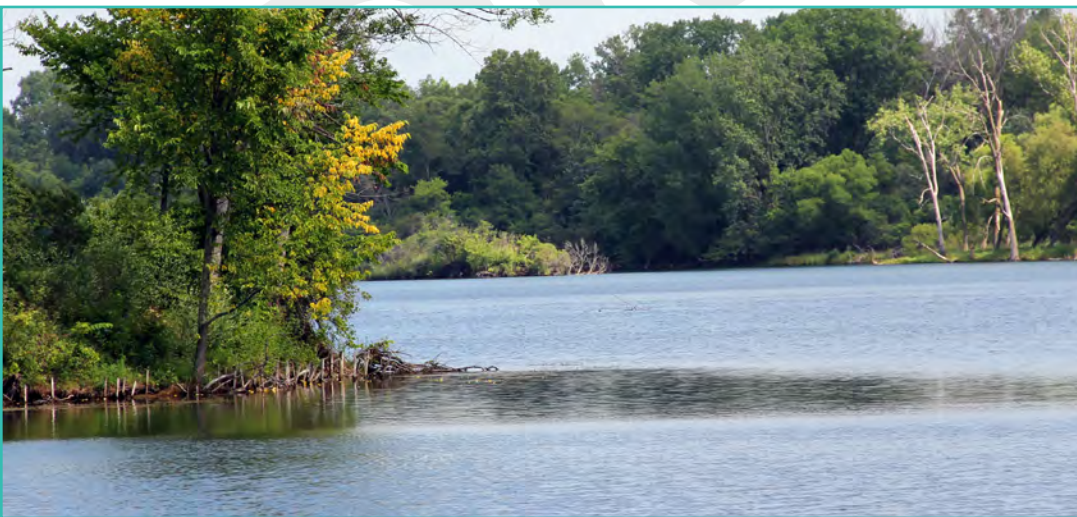


DRAFT WORKPLAN 2017-2021



Des Plaines
River
Watershed
Workgroup

DRWW: A BRIEF HISTORY

Lakes and streams within the Des Plaines River watershed have been identified by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) as impaired for phosphorus, fecal coliform, chloride and other pollutants. The pollutants are a result of point and nonpoint source pollution, entering lakes, rivers, and streams through pipes and by sheet flow, after flowing across the landscape, or atmospheric deposition. These rivers and streams do not meet IEPA's designated uses of aquatic life, primary contact recreation, and fish consumption. IEPA's goal is to improve water quality so that waterbodies can be removed from the impaired list.

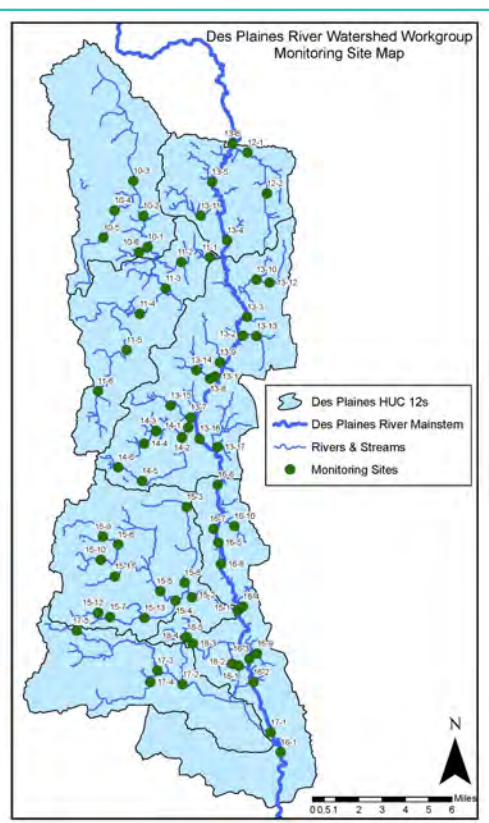
In lieu of imposing costly upgrades to publically owned treatment works' (POTWs) and more stringent permit limits to communities' National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, IEPA supports the formation of a local workgroup, to take these issues of water quality impairment on at a local level. This model is being successfully implemented in areas across the state (the DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup, for example).

In response, POTWs and communities within the Des Plaines River watershed in Lake County formed a workgroup in 2014: a voluntary, dues paying, membership organization that is monitoring water quality and strategizing to improve water quality based on scientific data, making decisions at the local level.

Membership consists of POTWs, municipal separate storm sewer permittees (MS4s), environmental groups, and concerned citizens. The Workgroup, the Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup (DRWW), meets regularly, is governed by a set of bylaws and an elected executive board, and provides many benefits to the general membership including:

- Water quality data collection and reporting.
- Water quality improvement initiatives.
- Local decision making.
- Cost savings.
- NPDES permit compliance: shared monitoring effort, education and outreach materials.
- Continuing education credits to maintain professional certifications.

Annual dues are being used to implement a comprehensive, watershed wide monitoring program, which will be the basis for water quality improvement initiatives, and to cover technical and administrative support. The annual dues will also be used as match for completing the watershed planning effort within the Des Plaines River watershed, which is being funded in part by a Section 319 grant.



THE DES PLAINES RIVER WATERSHED

The Des Plaines River watershed covers over 130,000 acres or just over 200 square miles in Lake County, Illinois. The Des Plaines River starts just west of Kenosha, Wisconsin and flows south through Racine and Kenosha Counties in Wisconsin, and then through Lake, Cook, and Will Counties in Illinois. The river then joins the Sanitary and Ship Canal in Lockport, flows west through Joliet, before converging with the Kankakee River to form the Illinois River. The Illinois River then flows into the Mississippi River, which flows south to the Gulf of Mexico.

In Lake County, there are nine subwatersheds that make up the larger Des Plaines River watershed: North Mill Creek, Mill Creek, Newport Drainage Ditch, Bull Creek, Indian Creek, Buffalo Creek, Aptakisic Creek, Upper Des Plaines main stem and Lower Des Plaines main stem. The Des Plaines River watershed includes 33 Lake County municipalities, 12 townships, and two drainage districts. There are eight publically owned treatment facilities that discharge approximately 80 million gallons a day of treated wastewater to the Des Plaines River within Lake County. The majority of the main stem of the river is bordered by forest preserve and open space.

THE DRWW FORMED IN 2014. IT HAS ALREADY COMPLETED COMPREHENSIVE BASELINE MONITORING AT 69 SITES FOR WATER CHEMISTRY, SEDIMENT CHEMISTRY AND BIOLOGY (FISH, MACROINVERTEBRATES AND HABITAT). FLOW MONITORING BEGAN IN LATE 2016 AT 15 LOCATIONS IN ADDITION TO 6 EXISTING USGS LOCATIONS.

OUR MEMBERS (2017)

DRWW Agency Members:

City of Lake Forest
Village of Buffalo Grove
Village of Deerfield
Village of Grayslake
Village of Green Oaks
Village of Gurnee
Village of Kildeer
Lake County
Lake County Public Works
Lake County Forest Preserve District
North Shore Water Reclamation District
Village of Lake Zurich
Village of Libertyville
Village of Lincolnshire
Village of Lindenhurst
Village of Riverwoods
Village of Round Lake Beach
Village of Vernon Hills

DRWW Associate Members:

Applied Technologies, Inc.
Christopher Burke Engineering
Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
Sierra Club
Wetlands Research, Inc.

STRATEGY 1 – MONITORING AND WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT

OBJECTIVE 1:

Continue to assess water quality status and trends in the watershed and enhance these efforts as impairments and pollution sources are identified and resources allow.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS

The DRWW Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements and Lakes Committees will:

- Annually review the monitoring program to assess site locations, data parameters and budget.
- Consult with outside experts to ensure the most efficient use of resources in data collection, and that appropriate parameters are being monitored to achieve the goals of the DRWW.
- Make data available for watershed planning and to DRWW members.
- Use monitoring results to identify and prioritize impaired waters.
- Analyze monitoring results to pinpoint the sources of pollution.
- Use the monitoring results to evaluate effectiveness of watershed projects and initiatives.

*POLLUTION FROM
THE DES PLAINES
WATERSHED
CONTRIBUTES TO THE
NORTHERN GULF OF
MEXICO HYPOXIA
(DEAD ZONE).*



OBJECTIVE 2:

Assess the feasibility of creating a watershed-wide database of monitoring data.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS

The DRWW Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements and Lakes Committees will:

- Determine data needs of members.
- Identify other databases and evaluate the ease of interfacing with them, cost to create and maintain them, frequency that members query the database.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Create a working relationship with Illinois EPA, US EPA, and other agencies with regulatory oversight within the Watershed to discuss NPDES permit requirements (POTW and MS4) and explore the feasibility of alternative means to achieve water quality goals, such as the implementation of projects to improve water quality and feasibility of a water quality trading program.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS

The Technical Coordinator and Members will:

- Meet one-on-one with Regulators
 - Discuss the Workgroup's goals, implementation plan, and resource needs.
 - Keep them informed of Workgroup progress.
 - Stay abreast of regulatory program nuances and new requirements
 - Explore options regarding alternative methods to achieve water quality goals.
 - Explore economically beneficial permit allowances for POTWs.
- Attend other workgroup meetings or trainings, as time permits, to stay informed about what other groups are doing and discuss proposed regulatory changes.
- Create an annual report to satisfy the NPDES permit reporting requirements of its members.
- Create a single Nutrient Implementation Plan (NIP) that can be used by member Permittees for submittal to IL EPA for approval of renewal applications. The NIP must identify phosphorus input reductions by point source discharges, non-point source discharges, and other measures necessary to remove dissolved oxygen and offensive condition impairments in the Des Plaines River watershed.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Encourage and support MS4's to include innovative water quality services, projects, BMPs and Green Infrastructure.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS:

The Technical Coordinator with Membership support will:

- Identify MS4s who are leaders in this field.
- Organize annual tour of projects, BMPs, green infrastructure.
- Provide support and attendance at Municipal meetings as requested, for technical support
- Identify MS4 permit requirements that the DRWW can provide supplemental services to address.



WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A WATERSHED IS AN AREA OF LAND THAT DRAINS INTO A WATER BODY SUCH AS A STREAM, RIVER, OR LAKE. WATERSHED BOUNDARIES ARE DEFINED BY RIDGES OR HIGH ELEVATION POINTS. RAIN THAT FALLS ANYWHERE IN THE WATERSHED WILL ULTIMATELY FLOW, BY THE FORCE OF GRAVITY, INTO THE WATER BODY.

STRATEGY 3 – WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

OBJECTIVE 1:

Cooperate with Lake County Stormwater Commission and participate in developing the Action Plan and the Implementation and Education and Outreach Strategies for the Des Plaines River Watershed-based Plan.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS

The Technical Coordinator and Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements and Lakes Committees will:

- Provide monitoring data and the monitoring report to help identify Water Quality Improvement Projects and recommendations for the Watershed Action Plan.
- Attend and participate in Watershed Planning meetings in 2017-2018.
- Identify other Watershed Projects or Initiatives (rain garden initiatives, etc.) that will collectively improve water quality.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Identify funding sources and support for Watershed Projects.

5-YEAR ACTION STEP

- Develop a list of high priority watershed improvement projects from the Watershed Action Plan for implementation.
- Investigate and identify all possible sources of funding, including grants, in-kind services and local sponsor contributions to implement watershed improvement projects.
- Inquire how other groups are funding watershed projects.
- Assist in identifying and coordinating multi-jurisdictional water quality implementation projects.
- Prepare a strategy to accumulate and sustain enough resources to meet the project budget, including operation and maintenance.
- Enlist watershed experts to review proposals for projects and offer advice to applicants, helping them to develop better, more competitive proposals.
- Develop educational/outreach materials or other support services for the project.

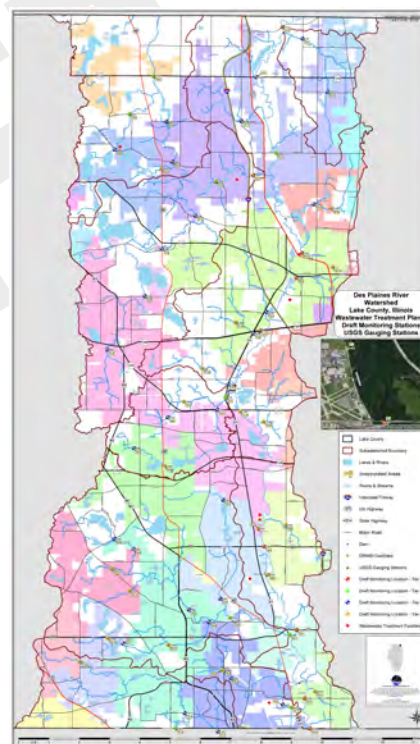
OBJECTIVE 3:

Implement Water Quality Improvement Projects and long-term maintenance.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS

The Technical Coordinator will assist the local sponsor to:

- Identify potential grants and funding sources on behalf of sponsor.
- Coordinate with project partners and prepare any necessary agreements.
- Preparation of design plans and specifications, if necessary, to implement the project.
- Prepare Requests for Proposals and put the project out for bid.
- Select a contractor.
- Provide oversight of contractors' work, as time permits.



A WATERSHED PLAN IS IN PROGRESS AND SHOULD BE COMPLETE BY EARLY 2018. THE DRWW'S MONITORING DATA WILL BE USED TO ACCURATELY IDENTIFY IMPAIRMENTS. THE WATERSHED PLAN WILL PROPOSE WATERSHED PROJECTS TO ADDRESS THE IDENTIFIED IMPAIRMENTS.

STRATEGY 4 – LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1:

Grow our members into game changer leaders through education, training, watershed experiences and role modeling.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS

The DRWW Leadership and Technical Coordinator will:

- Allow every member to express and employ their talents, ideas, experiences, skills and expertise.
- Sponsor quarterly guest speaker series to educate about pressing watershed issues and to identify collaborative opportunities to address them.
- Collaborate with existing groups to sponsor a variety of watershed awareness events (i.e. clean ups, canoe trips, Earth Day, etc.) with an education component.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Recognize members, businesses, groups, community leaders, elected officials, and other individuals that significantly contribute to the DRWW's mission and goals.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS:

The DRWW Executive Board will:

- Nominate individuals or organizations who are making a substantial contribution.
- Agree on when and how recognition will be conferred.

OBJECTIVE 3:

Develop an education and information program that identifies benefits the Workgroup provides to the public (stakeholders) in the watershed for recruitment of members and public education.

5-YEAR ACTION STEPS

The Technical Coordinator with assistance from the DRWW Committees will:

- Maintain an informative and useful web site.
- Publish an e-newsletter to members quarterly that includes work progress updates and timely information on watershed programs.
- Host events and speaking engagements with public officials in order to update them on crucial watershed issues and identify partnership opportunities.
- Reach out to additional public sector stakeholders – townships, park districts, drainage districts, school districts, etc. – to inform them of the Workgroup's activities and invite them to become DRWW members.
- Reach out to private sector stakeholders – business community, consultants, homeowner and lake associations, large property owners, not for profits – to inform them of the Workgroup's activities and invite them to partner with us.

OBJECTIVE 4:

DRWW annual operations

ANNUAL ACTION STEPS

The Technical Coordinator and Executive Board will:

- Develop, adopt and disseminate an annual:
 - Work plan for the DRWW.
 - Budget for the DRWW.
 - Report on DRWW accomplishments.
- Review member dues annually and send out notices for dues payment.
- Review DRWW by-laws.
- Organize and facilitate 4 quarterly general member meetings each year.



OUR VISION



Waterbodies in the Des Plaines River Watershed will meet or exceed water quality standards and designated uses within the watershed in Lake County. The Workgroup consists of local leaders who are striving to become “game changers” for water quality improvement, providing a national model of water quality leadership and resulting in significantly improved water quality in the Des Plaines River Watershed.

OUR THANKS

To our executive board: Brian Dorn, Michael Talbett, Paul Kendzior, Joe Robinson, Mike Adam, Peter Kolb.

Our Monitoring Committee: Joe Robinson, Mike Adam, Jim Bland, Al Giertych, Austin McFarlane, Jim Anderson and Steve Vella

Our Lakes Committee: Mike Adam, Alana Bartolai, Jim Bland, Rob Flood, Sharon Osterby, Gerry Urbanozo, Tom Morthorst and Nick Huber.

Our Administrative Agent: Lake County Stormwater Management Commission. Mike Warner, Patty Werner, Jeff Laramy, Neal Schindelar, Wendy Morey, Darcy McNeill, Beth Adler, and Haley Meents.

THE MISSION OF THE WORKGROUP IS TO BRING TOGETHER A DIVERSE COALITION OF STAKEHOLDERS TO WORK TOGETHER TO DETERMINE AND RESOLVE PRIORITY STRESSORS AFFECTING WATER QUALITY AND STREAM RESOURCE QUALITY IN WATERBODIES IN THE DES PLAINES RIVER WATERSHED, RESULTING IN PERMIT LIMITS AND DESIGNATED USES BEING MET.