



## Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup 2015 Annual Accomplishments

The Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup (DRWW or Workgroup) officially formed in 2015 with the intent of improving water quality through a collaborative, locally led process. Much has been accomplished in the first year, from developing the membership base to working with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) on permitting and grants to initiating monitoring programs. Subcommittee groups and a dedicated website have been developed <http://www.drww.org/>. Below are highlights of these accomplishments.

### **Membership**

The DRWW has built a strong membership base by demonstrating value to members. In 2015, the DRWW gained the support of 18 members, securing \$230,986 of membership dues and \$47,500 of direct grant funding, which is leveraging an additional grant for watershed planning. Membership dues, in-kind services, and grants fund all activities of the Workgroup. Membership entities consist of Municipalities, Lake County, publically owned treatment works (POTWs), consulting firms, and environmental not-for-profits. In the next year, the DRWW will work to increase membership through outreach to additional municipalities, townships, park districts, and non-governmental agencies. Meeting schedules are posted on the website and are open to the public.

### **Grant Funding and Watershed Planning**

The DRWW, by providing matching services through its monitoring efforts, has collaborated with the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (SMC) and received grant funding by the IEPA through section 319 of the Clean Water Act for a \$644,000 Watershed-Based Plan in the Des Plaines River watershed. The resulting plan will create opportunities for future grant funding which may include the implementation of green infrastructure and/or Best Management Practices to improve water quality within the watershed. This effort would not be possible without match dollars being provided through the DRWW dues.

### **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permitting**

The DRWW has worked closely with IEPA to provide feedback on National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits issued by the agency. All POTW's in the watershed have received new permits that include monitoring provisions for an extensive list of parameters. The new permits allow the use of DRWW collected data for their annual reporting requirements. IEPA has also included a provision in POTW permits that encourages participation in the DRWW, at the request of the membership.

The DRWW has also been working closely with IEPA on the new Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit, which includes enhanced monitoring mandates. DRWW has asked IEPA for the same allowance for shared monitoring and participation in the DRWW be included as special conditions. The new MS4 permit is expected to be issued in 2016 with these provisions.

### **Flow Monitoring**

Burns & McDonnell was selected to develop and implement a flow monitoring program for DRWW designated watershed sites. Through this effort, flow will be quantified in all major tributaries and the mainstem to further determine how to prevent or remove pollutants from the watershed.

### **Bioassessment Monitoring**

Midwest Biodiversity Institute (MBI) was selected to develop and implement the bioassessment program which consists of water column chemistry analysis, fish, macroinvertebrates, habitat, and collection of sediment samples for DRWW designated watershed sites. MBI's reputation precedes them as they have developed and implemented similar monitoring programs for other watershed groups. Work has already begun on refining the monitoring plan and a Quality Assurance Program Plan, which provides quality assurance and control of the data produced by the project.

### **Water Chemistry Monitoring**

Suburban Laboratories was selected to provide water sampling and chemical analysis for DRWW designated watershed sites. This dataset will provide the DRWW baseline measurements of the current watershed conditions, as well as prioritization and projections of successful future outcomes for possible watershed partner projects.

**Technical Coordinator**

Geosyntec is the Technical Coordinator for the DRWW, providing technical expertise and consultant oversight of the monitoring program, coordinating the technical needs of committees and the Executive Board, and other technical tasks as needed.

**Administrative Agent**

SMC provides administration, meeting coordination, mapping and website support roles. For additional details on the DRWW visit [www.drww.org](http://www.drww.org). If you'd like to hear more about the DRWW, please contact Mike Warner, at 847-377-7700 or [mwarner@lakecountyil.gov](mailto:mwarner@lakecountyil.gov)

***We have much more to do in the coming years and want to thank the hardworking members that have made the inaugural year of the DRWW a success!***

**DRWW Executive Board**

- President: Peter Kolb, Lake County Public Works
- Vice President: Brian Dorn, North Shore Water Reclamation District
- Treasurer: Michael Talbett, Village of Kildeer
- Secretary: Paul Kendzior, Village of Libertyville
- Monitoring Committee Chair: Joe Robinson, North Shore Water Reclamation District
- Lakes Committee Chair: Mike Adam, Lake County Health Department
- Impairments Committee Chair: Scott Phippen, Village of Lincolnshire

**DRWW Membership**

<p><b><u>Agency Members:</u></b>  Village of Buffalo Grove  Village of Deerfield  Village of Grayslake  Village of Green Oaks  Village of Gurnee  Village of Kildeer  Lake County  Lake County Forest Preserve District</p>	<p><b><u>Agency Members:</u></b>  Village of Lake Zurich  Village of Libertyville  Village of Lincolnshire  Village of Lindenhurst  North Shore Water Reclamation District  Village of Third Lake  Village of Vernon Hills</p>
<p><b><u>Associate Members:</u></b>  Cardno JFNew</p>	<p><b><u>Associate Members:</u></b>  Sierra Club  Lake County Stormwater Management Commission</p>

Thank you to John Heinz, former DRWW Secretary and Rob Horne, former Impairments Committee Chair for their early support.

