

# DES PLAINES RIVER WATERSHED WORKGROUP

*May 2024 Newsletter*



DES PLAINES RIVER  
WATERSHED  
WORKGROUP

# ANNUAL MONITORING UPDATES

The Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup (DRWW) 2023 Annual Monitoring Report was submitted to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) in March 2024 to meet the DRWW Member Agencies Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTW) requirement for the NPDES Permit Special Condition related to monitoring of receiving streams and to meet the monitoring component for its Agency Members Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Permits.

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT MONITORING DRWW

DRWW contracted with the Lake County Health Department (LCHD) to perform water quality monitoring for 2024. LCHD is collecting water samples at 73 locations for water chemistry throughout the Des Plaines River Watershed. This includes the mainstem of the Des Plaines and all its tributaries. This monitoring is part of the comprehensive monitoring program developed by DRWW, whose goals are:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive program that includes chemical, physical and biological components to identify the quality of the stream and river ecosystems as well as stressors associated with non-attainment of water quality standards and designated use
2. Assist NPDES permittees in meeting monitoring permit requirements including monitoring requirements for upstream and downstream of POTWs and MS4s

Samples are collected five times throughout the year in February, May, July, August and September, and analyzed at the LCHD Environmental Health Laboratory. Parameters being monitored every sampling period include Total Suspended Solids, Ammonia, Total Nitrates, Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen, Total Phosphorus, and Dissolved Reactive Phosphorus. Additionally, in February and August, Chloride, Conductivity, pH, Sulfate, Water Temperature, Total Hardness and E.coli are monitored. During the May, July, August and September sampling sestonic chlorophyll-a is collected. For more information contact the Monitoring Committee Chair.

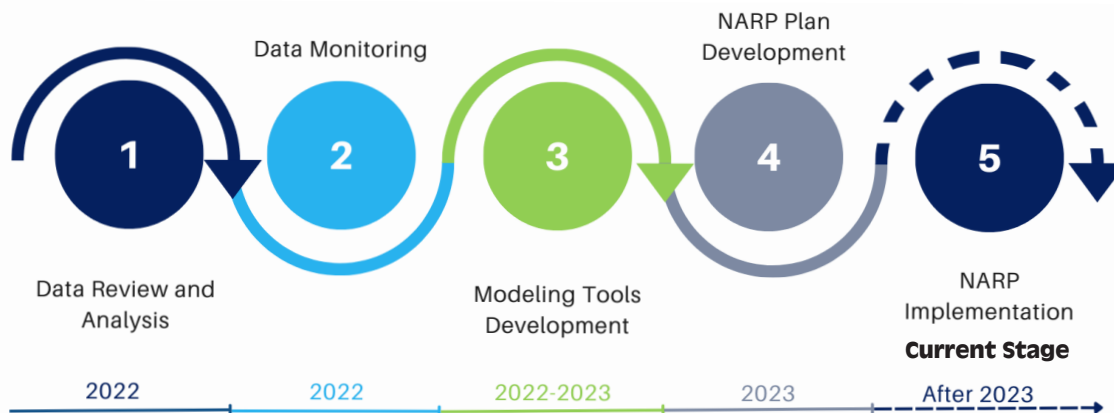


DRWW Site #13-18 on the Mainstem Des Plaines River



DRWW Site #14-3 North Branch Bull Creek

# NUTRIENT ASSESSMENT AND REDUCTION PLAN UPDATE

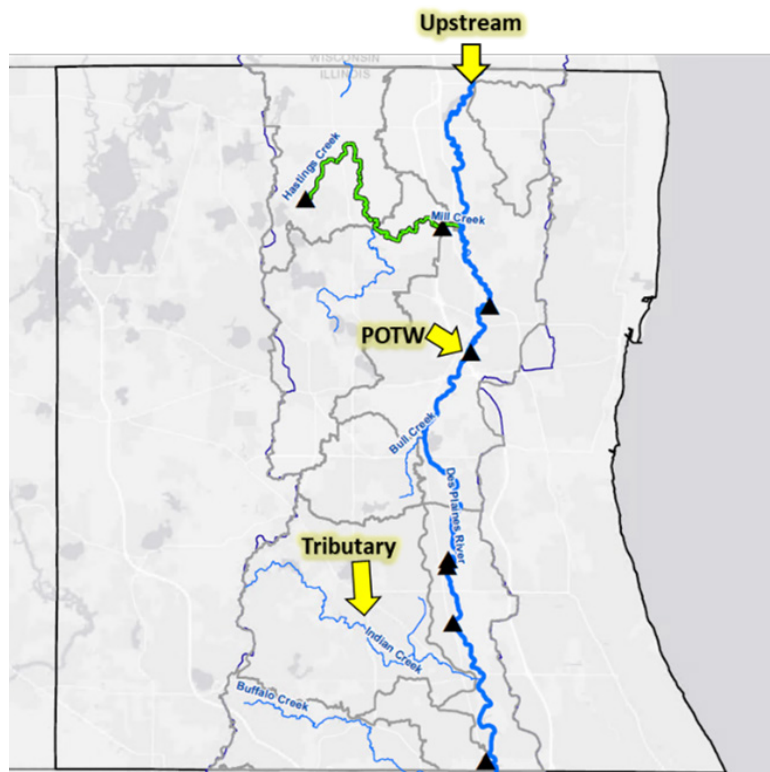


The DRWW completed and submitted the Nutrient Assessment & Reduction Plan (NARP) to the Illinois EPA on December 29, 2023. The NARP, required by a special condition in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, identifies phosphorus input reductions by point and non-point source discharges in addition to other measures necessary to remove phosphorus related impairments in the watershed. The plan development includes four phases: 1. Conduct Data Analysis (Complete); 2. Develop Modeling Tools (Complete); 3. Evaluate Management Scenarios (Complete); 4. Implementation planning and Schedule (Current Stage). This plan was developed and funded by the DRWW Membership.

As the DRWW waits for a response and potential approval from the Illinois EPA on this submission, the DRWW has started to discuss the NARP Implementation Plan and schedule. The DRWW has received comments on the submitted NARP report, which the DRWW is currently reviewing. The DRWW and its members look forward to continuing discussions with the Illinois EPA during this next phase. The Implementation Plan includes recommended actions, including shorter-term actions that can be implemented prior to 2033 and longer-term priorities for implementation after 2033. An implementation schedule is being developed with realistic milestones to allow the DRWW and other watershed stakeholders to pursue and utilize funds and resources more effectively.

The following are key findings from NARP data and modeling analysis.

- Upstream Total Phosphorus (TP) and algae load reduction from Wisconsin is required to address phosphorus-related impairments under high flow conditions
- Tributary TP reductions reduce sestonic algae (algae suspended in water) but have minimal impact on Dissolved Oxygen in mainstem Des Plaines River
- POTW TP reduction beyond 0.5 mg/L have minimal impact on water quality
- A combination of upstream, tributary, and POTW load reductions is required to address phosphorus-related impairments in the mainstem Des Plaines
- Improving upstream dissolved oxygen addresses impairments in the upper reaches of the Des Plaines River
- To see DRWW's NARP and access other reports submitted to the Illinois EPA, visit their website



# 2024 DEICING WORKSHOP

To register and find more information: [saltsmart.org/workshops/](https://saltsmart.org/workshops/)

The Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup (DRWW) continues to sponsor and support the Northeastern Illinois regional deicing workshop. The deicing workshops focus training efforts on ways to keep public and private sector professionals up-to-date on best management practices for winter maintenance that safely reduces road salt use. DRWW has partnered with multiple agencies to host the Northeast Illinois Deicing Workshops for winter maintenance providers.

The DRWW encourages members to look for ways to reduce road salt use while ensuring safe travel free of ice and snow on transportation surfaces. Some tips to reduce road salt usage include:

- Remove snow and ice as quickly as possible after a storm and before using road salt.
- Do not use road salt when pavement temperatures are less than 15° F.
- Evenly spread road salt so granules are approximately 2-3 inches apart.
- Do not pile road salt or apply it to dry pavement or vegetation.
- Sweep up undissolved road salt after all ice and snow has been removed.



Operators Calibrating a Salt Spreader



Smart salt practices don't stop at the end of winter. Proper salt storage is the best way to keep salt out of the local waterways and save money by eliminating loss of material. Some tips in storing your salt include:

- Put your salt pile on an impervious surface like a bituminous or concrete pad.
- Fully cover the salt storage area. When using a tarp make sure it is weighted and fastened securely.
- Control humidity levels and prevent surface water penetration to your salt stockpile.

## SAVE THE DATE

This year, Lake County is hosting the inaugural Lake County Truck Calibration event on Wednesday, October 23 from 7 a.m. - 2 p.m., with a rain date of Wednesday, October 30. This event will allow public sector professionals the opportunity to work one-on-one with Force America to calibrate their trucks for proper winter maintenance. They can also work with staff on how to calibrate the rest of their fleet. Contact [Alana Bartolai](#) if you're interested in attending this event. More information will be coming soon!

### DRWW Executive Board Members

**President:** Paul Kendzior, Village of Libertyville

**Vice President:** Chuck Bodden, North Shore Water Reclamation District (NSWRD)

**Secretary:** Joel Sensenig, Lake County Public Works

**Lake Committee Chair:** Alana Bartolai, Lake County Health Department

**Treasurer:** Michael Talbett, Village of Kildeer

**Member at Large:** Gary Glowacki, Lake County Forest Preserves District

**Water Quality Improvements Committee Chair:** Steve Waters, NSWRD