DES PLAINES RIVER WATERSHED WORKGROUP

Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements Committee Agenda
May 21, 2026
12:30-1:30 p.m.
Lake County Division of Transportation, 600 W. Winchester Rd., Libertyville IL 60048

Discussion and Possible Approval of the Following:

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment
4. Approval of Meeting Minutes
   a. *03/16/26 Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes
5. Old Business
   a. DRWW 2026 Monitoring Update
   b. USGS Next Generation Water Observation Station (NGWOS) at Russell Road Proposal Update
6. New Business
   a. *Discussion of 2026 Draft Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report DRWW Public Comments
   b. Demonstration of Draft DRWW Monitoring Location Analysis Web Tool
7. Member Comments
8. Next Meeting(s)
   a. Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements Committee Meeting June 18, 2026 at 12:30pm, Lake County Division of Transportation (600 W. Winchester Road, Libertyville, Conference Room A)
9. Adjournment

***** = DRWW Action Item***

Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements Committee Agenda
March 19, 2026
12:30-1:30 p.m.
Lake County Division of Transportation, 600 W. Winchester Rd., Libertyville IL 60048

Discussion and Possible Approval of the Following:

1. **Call to Order**

   Steve Waters, Monitoring Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:31pm.

2. **Roll Call**

   Anna Niedzinski, DRWW Coordinator, performed roll call. Members present: Alternate Chair **Steve Waters**, North Shore Water Reclamation District (NSWRD); **Alana Bartolai**, Lake County Health Department (LCHD); **Brian Kuebker**, Village of Libertyville; **Nick Huber**, Lake County Forest Preserve District; **Christine Morris**, Lake County Public Works; **Chris Johnson**, Sierra Club; and **Don Wilson**; EPS, Inc. (arrived during IPS presentation). A quorum was present.

   Others present: Colin Peake, United States Geological Survey (USGS); Kate McNicholas, USGS; Rishab Mahajan, Geosyntec; Ashley Strelcheck, Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (SMC); Chuck Bodden, NSWRD; and Stephen McCracken, the DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup (DRSCW) attended in person. Chris Yoder, Midwest Biological Institute (MBI), and Ed Rankin, MBI attended virtually.

3. **Public Comment**

   There was no public comment.

4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

   a. ***01/15/26 Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes**

      Motion by Bartolai, seconded by Huber to approve the 1/15/26 Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

5. **Old Business**

   a. **DRWW 2026 Monitoring Update**

      Bartolai provided an update on the February sampling event. Ten (10) sites were frozen and unable to be samples. The data is still being analyzed, and a review of the data will be provided next month. LCHD is working with SMC to create a visual dashboard to better present future monitoring data.

6. **New Business**

   a. **DRWW 2025 Annual Report Update**

***** = DRWW Action Item***

i. Waters provided an update to the committee on the 2025 Annual Report. The body of the report has been updated to describe the monitoring plan, NARP Implementation actions the DRWW has performed, and accomplishments for the previous year. A copy will be sent out to committee members for review and comment. The Annual Report is Due March 31, 2026.

b. USGS Next Generation Water Observation Station (NGWOS) at Russell Road Proposal

i. Colin Peake with USGS provided the committee with background on the Russell Road proposal. Peake has worked for USGS for 14 years and is the project chief of the gages which involves managing the operations and maintenance (O&M). There has been a delay in providing a proposal due to the federal hiring freezing since last year, as there were concerns in taking on additional work. Phosphorus testing is a more involved testing method and will require more of a build out to accommodate testing which is not optical based. The USGS is hoping to have a proposal for DRWW by end of April, in addition to a cost-sharing opportunity to cover most of the equipment and infrastructure cost and have DRWW and cover the annual O&M. Monitoring of the site will be year round, and nitrate and sediment testing may be included. The NGWOS program is going to sunset in 2030 so there may be limitations in monitoring after 2030.

Questions

1. How much is O&M? It will cost approximately $150.000 per year. Phosphorus testing is an expensive parameter to test.
2. When do we learn about the cost share? The cost share break-downs will be included in the proposal.
3. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has expressed interest. When should we notify them of this opportunity? Soon, there are increased cost-share opportunities when there are more stakeholders involved in the process.
4. Is the proposal going to cover continuous chlorophyll/algae measurements? Not right now, but the group can add chlorophyll testing.
5. What is [USGS's] experience with the chlorophyll measurements? The sensors work, but they are not good for distinct measurements but are good for longer term discreet measurements.
6. What would be the timeline for the build? Summer would be when infrastructure is built with a go live date by October 1, 2026.
7. Does the sensor measure total phosphorus? The analyzers measures Ortho-phosphorus, but there is a total phosphorus sensor that has been trialed. Both sensors will be put in. Also after 5 years the data would be put in USGS models.
8. Would that be WRPTS model? We used that model but [USGS] has their own.
9. Will [DRWW] be sharing the data with Wisconsin? Yes the data will be shared, if they would be sharing the cost.
10. Will the data be made public? Eventually, yes as it is a federal requirement.

c. Discussion of the Integrated Prioritization System (IPS) Model

i. Overview of the IPS Model

Stephen McCracken, DRSCW, presented on the IPS tool which analyses water chemistry and biological data, and provides a restorability score and impairments which can be addressed. The main drivers of why this model exists is the regulatory requirement of addressing impacts to aquatic life. And due to the wide range of impairments and the limited funds to restore all riverine sections the tool provides a prioritized list of impairments to invest in which will have the biggest impact to aquatic life. DRSCW is working with MBI to clean-up the data is, and then a contract with them for training for using the model, which would allow members and consultants to pull data for their own use.

ii. Regional IPS Model Training Options

McCracken announced that DRSCW is determined to have a training performed soon, and that it would probably be online. Which would provide users an understanding on how to use the modeling tool.

Questions

1. How much support have you received from IEPA and environmental groups? The DRSCW has received good feedback from USEPA and IEPA. Some environmental groups, have a set water quality number in mind and believe that it will fix the current impairments. The tool has shown that water quality standards can be violated and still have full biological attainment. Impervious surfaces and dams are a main cause of impairments in many waterways.
2. How does dam removal improve water quality? Dams trap sediment, block fish passage, and decrease DO. When a dam is removed fish are able to get to upstream reaches. Also it is more cost effective since phosphorus removal technology at a treatment plant costs millions to install with $8 million to maintain the equipment. IT costs $8 million to remove a dam, and there are no future maintenance costs.
3. How current is the data in the data set? Data has not put in since 2020, but the dashboard has not been updated. MBI is working on the BI and the data will be updated before the training. Data that would be included is DRWW's last report from 2022.

d. *Recommendation to Approve DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup Request for copy of the DRWW Nutrient Assessment Reduction Plan (NARP) Model

McCracken stated to the committee that the DRSCW is looking for access to the data that was used for the NARP model, so that they can combine the data with theirs to run a regional watershed scenario.

Questions

1. Will the model be treating the Upper Des Plaines River like an upstream boundary? Yes, the DRSCW will develop the model and will return to the DRWW to show the results of the model.
2. Is the DRSCW looking for instream model? Yes, but [McCracken] will double check with DRSCW's modeler. It would be good to see if the models link up and come to the same conclusion.

Bartolai motioned to recommend to approve DRSCW's request for copy of the DRWW NARP Model for Executive Board approval, seconded by Morris. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

e. *Recommendation to Sponsor the Lake-McHenry MS4 Workshop for $250

Niedzinski presented the request from Lake County SMC and McHenry County for a $250 sponsorship for a green infrastructure workshop to the DRWW Monitoring Committee for recommendation to the Executive Board for approval. There were no questions. Johnson motioned to recommend to sponsor the Lake McHenry Effective Green Infrastructure MS4 Workshop for Executive Board approval, seconded by Huber. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

7. Member Comments

There were no member comments.

8. Next Meeting(s)

a. Monitoring/Water Quality Improvements Committee Meeting April 16, 2026 at 12:30pm, Lake County Division of Transportation (600 W. Winchester Road, Libertyville, Conference Room A)

9. Adjournment

Motion by Morris, seconded by Bartolai to adjourn. Motion passed with unanimous vote. Waters adjourned the meeting at 1:42pm.