

PEORIA LAKES BASIN ALLIANCE
Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 3:00 pm
456 Fulton Street, Suite 401
Peoria, IL 61602

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m.

Attendees:

The Nature Conservancy:	Jason Beverlin, Doug Blodgett
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission:	Michael Bruner, Reema Abi-Akar, Eric Miller, Ray Lees, Roy Bockler, Russ Crawford
US Army Corps of Engineers:	Chuck Theiling

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Approval of meeting minutes for January 9, 2019

Beverlin moved to approve the January 9, 2019 meeting minutes, and Bockler seconded. Motion carried.

4. American Water Environmental Grant Program

Bruner introduced an up to \$10,000 grant provided by American Water to implement an environmental project. He said that money cannot be used for staff time, but it can be used to purchase materials, book a venue, and a myriad of other uses. The money must pay for education for landowners regarding stormwater management and erosion control. Therefore, TCRPC staff have created a submission for an education workshop for stormwater management and erosion control. Bruner said that since the grant would be funded through American Water, they ask for the education to be directed towards areas that are served by Illinois American Water, the most prominent one being the City of Peoria.

Bockler commented that the grant money should also be used for other communities in the region, including Pekin, which is also served by Illinois American Water. Others agreed, and Bruner commented that staff will look into it and change that language on the grant application. If chosen, TCRPC will have to produce a report after the event to follow up on its success. He mentioned that there will be an in-kind match with TCRPC staff time. Bruner also mentioned that there must be a partnership with at least two organizations; the expected partners would be the City of Peoria, the Peoria County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the PLBA.

Bruner mentioned that there will be presentations or workshop components included from organizations such as the NRCS, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, UIUC Extension office, Bradley, and others.

Beverlin said that this seems more focused on urban areas rather than rural areas. He suggested topics regarding The Nature Conservancy's water retention cells in the Mackinaw. Bruner also noted that the budget is only an estimate. Lees suggested that local community gardens can be contacted to participate or even bring food cultivated there.

Bockler moved to submit the proposal on behalf of the PLBA. Beverlin seconded. The motion passes. The group discussed timing of the event, and Bockler mentioned that during the week may be better than the weekend. Miller noted that for the first PLBA open house, more people attended the first, earlier session during the day than the later session in the late afternoon.

Beverlin suggested that this workshop be filmed to use as a reference for later and for others to view it if they were not able to attend. Lees suggested that WTVP could be part of this filming effort.

5. Peoria Lakes Comprehensive Conservation Plan

a. US Army Corps of Engineers Update

On the phone, Theiling said that the Peoria Lakes Comprehensive Conservation Plan was submitted to the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Rock Island District has signed off and accepted it, and the next step is to go through the recommendations. He said that the bathymetry and sediment survey should be top priorities while working with the Rock Island District to continue Planning Assistance for States funding.

Theiling mentioned that ideally, the Illinois State Water Survey would do the work in regards to conducting the scientific studies on the Peoria Lakes. He said that costs seem to be half of what was expected, which makes cost share more reasonable. He posed the question of the type of cost share, money or labor, and who the partner would be.

Theiling said that he could ask the USACE to create a 2D hydrodynamic model, and collecting data to support the model may be part of the cost. He said that this could be added in another year if this year does not work out.

He said that the City of Peoria would be interested in a new PAS study to build a surface water routing model to assist their greenscaping approach to stormwater mitigation, with a focus on Lower Peoria Lake.

As far as the workshop in September to discuss beneficial use of dredged material, he said that the funding has been secured and that TCRPC has helped build participation. Thieling hopes for a co-sponsorship with Caterpillar. He mentioned that Marshall Plumley is having an island design workshop in the Quad Cities in early May.

b. Illinois Center for Transportation funding submission

Lees explained that there are three steps to the ICT application, or the economic model: 1) put together a research idea statement, 2) fill out the form and submit, and 3) the ICT technical advisory group reviews and evaluates it. Lees said that there may be an RFP out between now and April 1st. Miller said that this proposal is very similar to what was submitted to the USACE in the past. It was restructured slightly to make it more relevant to transportation; the focus is engineered topsoil use in roadway reconstruction.

This grant would be 75% funded by IDOT, and if TCRPC is selected, it will have to come up with the remaining 25% match. In dollars, this means out of a total of \$500,000 requested, TCRPC would have to match \$125,000. But Miller said that because this is transportation-focused, TCRPC may be able to use IDOT state transportation funds.

6. Member Reports

a. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Abi-Akar gave an update regarding water supply planning. An initiative in 2017-2018 through the IDNR examined the water supply and demand in the Middle Illinois Basin, made up of Peoria, Woodford, Stark, Marshall, Putnam, LaSalle, and Livingston counties. Now, the second part of this initiative is beginning, this time culminating in a set of recommendations for the future of the region. The first meeting will be Tuesday, April 30 in Room 420.

Miller mentioned that H Wayne had wanted to do another At Issue taping. Beneficial use would be a possible topic. Lees said that the Beneficial Use workshop will take place at the Caterpillar Visitor's Center on September 4-5. There will be two main issues: stormwater management and use of dredged material. He said that there will be up to 60 attendees; they want to keep it on the smaller side. It will serve as a workshop rather than a conference.

b. The Nature Conservancy

Blodgett said that there are hundreds of thousands of migrating birds at Emiquon. Water levels have come up since August, rivers are high, and the gate is closed—therefore the water that has increased has been due to precipitation. They are pleased with the vegetative response of the drawdown, but they are concerned because some aquatic vegetation has been lost. They plan on pulling it down the same amount as last summer.

Lees asked about where images are posted regarding the wildlife at Emiquon. Beverlin said that the Illinois River Road posted a video and he noted that David Zalaznik said that the video is on the screen at the Peoria Riverfront Museum.

The fish and water interagency committee meeting has been rescheduled to March 27-28 in Muscatine, Iowa. There is a nonfederal cost share sponsor. Blodgett will look to see if there is a synopsis about the cost share issue. Theiling said that other states meet their cost share element by using federal land.

c. Heartland Water Resources Council

No Heartland representatives were present at this meeting to give a report.

7. Other

Lees gave a synopsis regarding the IDNR presentation regarding Asian Carp that took place in the Tri-County office some time ago. He said that he is not aware of any updates about this. Blodgett said that through this incentive program, even if more fish will likely be caught, it will make a dent in the population, but it would be nearly impossible to remove all of them.

A discussion started regarding the processing of Asian Carp, including the fact that people do not like to live next to a processing plant due to the smell. Bockler said that the IDNR should be included in this group. Others suggested Colleen Callahan and Nerissa McLelland. Miller said that if they are present, the PLBA must make sure that the content is relevant enough to them to warrant their participation. Beverlin said that we need to understand what we need as a group, then they can choose the right person to send to a meeting.

a. Next scheduled meeting(s)

- i. April 10, 2019**
- ii. May 8, 2019**
- iii. June 12, 2019**

8. Adjournment

Miller called the meeting to adjournment at 4:20 p.m.