

PEORIA LAKES BASIN ALLIANCE
Wednesday, January 9, 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 3:00 p.m.

Attendees

The Nature Conservancy:	Jason Beverlin
Heartland Water Resources Council:	Tom Tincher, Wayne Ingram
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission:	Michael Bruner, Reema Abi-Akar, Eric Miller, Roy Bockler

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Approval of meeting minutes for December 12, 2018

Bockler commented that it was unclear about what had been decided as far as who the next chairperson will be. It was clarified that Heartland will take on the responsibility for the coming year. Bockler moved to approve the December 12, 2018 meeting minutes, and Ingram seconded. Motion carried.

4. Peoria Lakes Comprehensive Conservation Plan

a. Next steps update

Bruner said that Tri-County is speaking with Chuck at the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and coordinating with Laura Keefer of the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS). Ingram noted that he would like to be part of that process. Beverlin said that the hydrological study is imperative, and that the public would be interested in learning how the USACE and the ISWS conduct the study.

Bockler complimented the Peoria Lakes Comprehensive Conservation Plan (PLCCP), and he suggested that it should be distributed to all the mayors in the area. Miller noted that staff should forward the completed PLCCP to H Wayne Wilson. Ingram mentioned that the group could consider presenting to local entities, and Miller brought up the communications plan. Beverlin noted that Emiquon will have a science symposium on Wednesday, May 8 and there will be 10 minutes or so planned to bring up the PLCCP. Miller mentioned Rotary Club that meets every Friday.

Beverlin noted that the hydrological study will tell what is currently happening in and around the Lakes, data that will be used for future planning. Ingram specified that this study could identify the most ideal specific locations for Best Management Practices (BMPs). In terms of cost, Miller noted that there will still be a 50% cost share, and staff

have reached out to state organizations to discuss funding. Bruner is working on an online storymap.

Beverlin noted that the document should be shared with local legislators. Bockler said that the document should be shared with state-level and federal-level officials.

5. Heartland Water Resources Council Presentation and Discussion

Tincher said that the group should move forward concurrently with the PLCCP as well as the Heartland plan because they are related. Tincher would like his projects to be part of the PLBA agenda. He presented his plan that focuses on nature-based tourism and development with a network along the Illinois River. Tincher highlighted that the conservation area is currently underdeveloped.

Miller commented that he would not be comfortable moving forward without speaking more to the Commissioners first. Miller also asked for clarification as to the level of PLBA participation that Tincher is asking for – would this mean more staff time, new policies, or something else? Tincher said that he will formalize a short memo about what he would like to get out of this. Miller also said that it is key to involve local mayors, which could include Tincher reaching out for letters of support. Miller continued, saying that since Tincher’s plan is mainly focused on economic development, it is not the PLBA’s job to focus on this topic. Beverlin reiterated this same point with regards to The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) involvement.

Beverlin asked Tincher if he would like to set up a public engagement planning exercise. He responded positively. Tincher said that he could develop a working paper about the planning process. Miller said that Heartland must be careful about planning for other municipalities without actively including them, since these decisions would have to go through village boards, city councils, economic development agencies, and other possible committees as well as receive public feedback. Beverlin agreed that there should be some public input and agreed that TNC would be willing to continue coming to further planning meetings.

Beverlin also noted that the next steps would be to involve the economic development councils in the region. In fact, Miller noted that Heartland should actively reach out to them to talk to them about the project.

6. Member reports

a. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Miller reported that Tri-County has been working with Chuck to hold a beneficial use symposium on Wednesday, September 4 at the Caterpillar Visitor’s Center. Toledo, Ohio has some beneficial use areas and Tri-County is in the process of contacting them. There will be a technology transfer with different states including Minnesota as well; it could be a day and a half long. The point is to show that this beneficial use concept has worked in other areas and strategize about Peoria.

Miller mentioned that Tri-County was not selected for the USACE beneficial use pilot project. Illinois Beach and Wisconsin were two areas that were selected. Tri-County still has a proposal in the Illinois Center for Technology regarding beneficial use. Chuck also suggested connecting with the US Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL) in Champaign.

b. The Nature Conservancy

Beverlin reported that Emiquon is now allowing boaters to access the full Thompson Lake. TNC is also getting ready for a science symposium on May 8th — reports are now due, and they are working on going through them. Beverlin said that they are working on a staffing plan at Emiquon since one person has left. They also found a spoonbill (paddlefish) in their waters that they did not stock themselves.

c. Heartland Water Resources Council

7. Other

Next scheduled meetings are listed as February 13, March 13, and April 10.

8. Adjournment

Ingram moved to adjourn and Beverlin seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.