

PEORIA LAKES BASIN ALLIANCE

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 3:00 pm
456 Fulton Street, Suite 401
Peoria, IL 61602
(Virtual meeting)

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Beverlin called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

Attendees:

The Nature Conservancy:	Jason Beverlin
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission:	Eric Miller, Ray Lees, Russ Crawford, Michael Bruner, Reema Abi-Akar
Illinois Department of Natural Resources:	Dave Glover
US Army Corps of Engineers	Anthony Heddleston, Chuck Theiling

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes for 14 October 2020

Miller moved to approve the minutes for 14 October 2020 and Lees seconded the motion. All approved.

4. Member Reports

a. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Asian Carp

Lees gave a report about the Asian carp project. He said that two issues that came out of the Peoria Comprehensive Conservation Plan were invasive species and their impact on the river's ecosystem. The topic of Asian carp harvesting arose, and Ray is working with Sorce Enterprises and other stakeholders on this issue as part of the Midwest Co-Op.

There have been outreach opportunities developed within the region and the state, including with Mike Williams and Larry Ivory, of the Peoria Area Black Chamber of commerce. Lees said there is collaboration with Roy Sorce for workforce development issues and networking. There is also collaboration with Colleen Callahan with the IDNR.

Beneficial Use of Dredged Material

Lees discussed the issue of dredged material and sedimentation. He said that there is a supply chain developed between ADM/ARTCO and Better Earth Composting. Paul Rosenbohm has an end-loader at the sand pile to collect dredged material from the Mackinaw outflow, the material of which belongs to

the Army Corps. Rosenbohm mixes this material with his compost material and is selling it to a wholesaler who consequently bags and sells it to the big box stores.

Island Design Workshop

Miller noted that they are still in contact with the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding a future island design workshop, especially focused on working with the Engineering with Nature group. He said they are considering a March or April timeline for that event, and they are starting to develop a program timeline.

Theiling noted that the island design workshop was a good idea, and it received positive feedback from the EWN group. They are still interested and have funding to do more projects. He said he will speak further with landscape architects as the process develops.

b. The Nature Conservancy

Beverlin showed a picture of their drawdown area at Emiquon. He said that last year, they completed this drawdown there. They couldn't use gravity flow because the water was too low; they used pumps and pumped water out that way. They began the drawdown in June. Water fluctuated considerably; it was down 1,600 acres when they finished it. Beverlin said there are 1.4 billion gallons of water left. There was a noticeable difference in vegetation once the drawdown was completed. There were also very visible changes in the landscape from month to month, and vegetation grew very well. Ultimately, Beverlin said it was a great drawdown for them, and it was a good method to reduce sediment flow into the rest of the area.

Beverlin also noted that they built a new building for storage, they are tearing down another one, and they are working at Spunky Bottoms.

c. Heartland Water Resources Council

No one who represents Heartland attended this meeting.

d. Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Dave Glover did not have anything to share.

e. US Army Corps of Engineers

This was covered in the next section.

5. New Business

a. Peoria Lakes Island Design Discussion

Theiling noted that the Rock Island and St. Paul districts have invited him to help with new beneficial use workshops. They are hoping to have meetings in December, and they are hoping for future funding.

Theiling asked if they received any NESP funding. Heddleston responded that this is currently being worked on. They may need a funding source in the future to keep the government open in late December and/or early March.

Miller asked if the other two islands would qualify for a future stimulus package. Heddleston said that technically the second phase of the upper island was funded in this way during the Obama administration, and technically the only thing that needs to be done is the sustainability review; otherwise it is shovel-ready.

Lees asked if there is a report about the work being done near the McCluggage bridge. Heddleston responded that it is a low-priority project, but he is still pushing people to complete it. He said it is hard to say for sure when that would occur.

Crawford asked what the earliest date for an island design workshop would be. Theiling said it could take a number of weeks or a month to identify people and put an agenda together. He said it would likely will be virtual, though we'd need the authority to do it. Crawford said that we shouldn't build a second island without having an island design workshop. He said that he wants to make sure the placement of the second island is not contrary to the secondary channel.

Heddleston said that there was a public review process for the original two island designs, but there will still need to be another review done. Miller said we need to come to a consensus on this before there is a funding agreement. He said we are currently making this happen with the collaboration between USACE and IDNR. Theiling said that if we had a good second model for the Peoria Lakes, we'd have a much better answer. The 1990s model was the first version of that. Heddleston said that he would be willing to share the hydraulic modelling if people want to see that.

Lees noted that in Spindler Marina, fishermen catch a significant amount of carp, so much so that their boats are riding lower on the river and they hit the river bottom. He said that someone called and complained about this. Lees said if we could get IDNR's dredge in there to dredge specific areas to help those fishermen, it would be ideal.

b. Membership discussion

Crawford suggested that the USACE and IDNR should be members of the PLBA, whether they are voting members or not. Miller also suggested that the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council could also be an option if there are economic development issues discussed.

6. New Business

No new business was discussed.

7. Other

- a. **Next scheduled meeting: 09 December 2020**

8. Adjournment

Crawford moved to adjourn the meeting, and Lees seconded. Meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m.