

PEORIA LAKES BASIN ALLIANCE
Wednesday, August 12, 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 3:09 p.m.

Attendees:

The Nature Conservancy:	Jason Beverlin
Heartland Water Resources Council:	Wayne Ingram
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission:	Eric Miller, Ray Lees, Russ Crawford, Roy Bockler, Michael Bruner, Reema Abi-Akar
Illinois Department of Natural Resources:	Dave Glover

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes for 08 July 2020

Miller moved to approve the minutes for 08 July 2020 and Crawford seconded the motion. All approved.

4. Member Reports

a. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Miller reported that earlier this week, they met with Chuck Theiling with the USACE and talked with Jeff King about the Engineering with Nature Program (EWN). EWN is a consortium of parties including TNC and Caterpillar. The group discussed the island design workshop, the Peoria Comprehensive Conservation Plan, and potential funding options. Lees noted that the EWN is based in Washington, D.C.

Lees said that many private entities are coming together to talk about beneficial use of dredged material. He mentioned the use of material near Kingston Mines, and a video about sediment exiting trucks to tell a story. Lees said that Paul Rosenbohm at Better Earth will continue to work with ADM/AARTCO as a business partner regarding beneficial use. Crawford asked what the sediment is being mixed with, and Lees replied with Rosenbohm's mulch, yard waste from the City of Peoria, and upcoming pumpkins from the fall. Crawford asked if there is an option to mix biosolids or carp. Tri-County replied that Brian Johnson with GPSD has been involved with sediment talks, and some mixed material had been given to Steve Vaughn for lab testing. In terms of carp, there is a potential issue

with the Canton processing facility because it also processes catfish, which has some mercury content. This might contaminate the material.

Speaking of carp, Lees said that the OSF head dietitian received a batch of carp to test out. He also said that Ted Pinessus has been promoting food banks in the Chicago area to seek out distribution points. Lees mentioned that the Future Farmers of America with the Peoria County Farm Bureau will have a cookout in a couple of weeks, so he will seek to work with Patrick Kirchhofer to coordinate with other chefs and restaurant personnel regarding that event. Lees said that the IDNR has contracted with a PR firm out of Chicago to help rebrand and rename carp. There was a WMBD story regarding carp within the last month.

b. The Nature Conservancy

Beverlin said that TNC is in the midst of their drawdown; they shut the water off last week. They are maintaining fishing and a secondary boat ramp. There has been research done with drones as well. They continue to work with Whooshh Innovations to develop a fish ladder to separate favorable fish from unfavorable fish—basically root out the carp from the rest. Beverlin said that Emiquon is still on a soft close, which will likely continue until the end of the year. They have completed the construction of a new storage unit. TNC is working with UIUC regarding surveying visitors.

There is an attempt to form a land trust in the tri-county area and beyond. This would maintain parcels of land throughout the region that have been neglected over the years, create a natural inventory, and enable the group to either buy additional land or use funds for stewardship. The main group involved in this is Peoria Wilds. Beverlin says that there is interest from the Chillicothe Park District and the Peoria Park District.

c. Heartland Water Resources Council

Ingram said he has nothing new to add; they are still in the process of closing the office in downtown Peoria.

Bockler said that Heartland is an important part of this group. He asked about the structure of Heartland and Ingram said there is a nominating committee, and appointees stay for 2 years. Ingram said he will share bylaws with the group.

5. New Business

Dave Glover talked about his position in IDNR. He said that IDNR is still operating with no in-person meetings and no overnight travel out of state. He said they have started fieldwork in stream and river sampling, but there are strict guidelines on staff interactions. They are currently on a hiring freeze, and he is covering for two people who have retired. He is unsure about where funding stands involving Peoria Lakes.

Crawford said that once we get to the island design workshop, it's important to have IDNR representatives involved. Glover said he can be ready to be part of this effort more, though it would be necessary to include the Office of Water Resources within IDNR, since he works mostly on the biological side rather than construction.

6. Other

a. Next scheduled meeting: 09 September 2020

This meeting will likely be virtual as well. Crawford asked about the Emiquon meeting that usually takes place each year, and Beverlin said this will likely not happen; perhaps in the winter.

7. Adjournment

Beverlin adjourned the meeting at 4:18 p.m.