

# NORTH BRANCH CHICAGO RIVER WATERSHED WORKGROUP GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES



NORTH BRANCH  
CHICAGO RIVER  
WATERSHED  
WORKGROUP

Lake Forest Municipal Services Building Training Room,  
800 N Field Drive, Lake Forest, IL 60045  
Wednesday, August 9, 2023 \* 1:00pm – 3:00pm

## NBWW GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

### 1. Introductions

Brandon Janes, President of the North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup (NBWW), called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm and welcomed attendees to the August 9, 2023 NBWW General Membership Meeting. The meeting was held in a hybrid format. Ashley Strelcheck, NBWW Coordinator for this meeting, performed roll call. A total of 19 voting members (tallying 76 votes) were in attendance, so an NBWW meeting quorum was present (see the voting quorum and meeting participants list below).

Voting Quorum: Peter Nagle, Chicago Botanic Gardens; Byron Kutz, City of Lake Forest; Larry Bridges, East Skokie Drainage District; Adam Flickinger, Friends of the Chicago River; Brian Valleskey, Geosyntec; Alana Bartolai, Lake County - Unincorporated; Ashley Strelcheck, Lake County SMC; Justin Vick, MWRDGC; Rob Flood, NSWRD Clavey Road WRF; Chris Johnson, Illinois Sierra Club; Michael Warner, Gewalt Hamilton and representative for Village of Bannockburn, Village of Northfield & Village of Riverwoods; Brandon Janes, Village of Deerfield; Robyn Flakne, Village of Glenview; Ben Metzler (Clark Dietz), Village of Green Oaks; Paula Miller, Village of Morton Grove; Jack Bielak, Village of Northbrook.

### 2. Public Comment – None

### 3. NBWW Business

#### a. Approve NBWW February 8, 2023 General Membership Meeting Minutes

Larry Bridges, East Skokie Drainage District, motioned to approve the February 8, 2023 General Membership Meeting Minutes, seconded by Jack Bielak, Village of Northbrook. The motion passed with unanimous consensus vote.

#### b. Financials

##### i. Ratify FY2023 Revenues & Expenditures

Strelcheck presented the expenditures and revenues for ratification. There were no questions. Jack Bielak, Village of Northbrook, motioned to ratify the presented revenues and expenditures, seconded by Robyn Flakne, Village of Glenview. The motion passed via a 16-0-3 roll call vote (see attached roll call vote spreadsheet).

##### ii. NBWW FY2023 Budget Review

Strelcheck presented the FY2023 budget. There were no comments or questions.

#### c. Old Business

##### i. Monitoring Committee Update – Rob Flood, NBWW Monitoring & Water Quality Impairment Abatement Committee Chair

Rob Flood gave a Monitoring Committee Update. NSWRD continues to collect water samples from twenty-five sites along the NBWW to satisfy the workgroup member's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permit requirements. Sampling was completed in February, May, and July, and will also be done in August and September. Geosyntec requested some

additional information to help fill in some monitoring data gaps; NSWRD is providing 2023 sampling within the Skokie Lagoons. Three continuous water quality data sondes have been deployed. Data has been collected for two months now and will likely continue into September 2023.

**d. New Business – None**

**4. Guest Speakers**

**a. NBWW Nutrient Assessment & Reduction Plan (NARP) Update**

**Brian Valleskey, Senior Professional, Geosyntec Consultants, Inc.**

Brian Valleskey gave an update on the NARP SWMM Model. Valleskey explained how the model is informed by various data sources and will be further informed by data that the North Shore Water Reclamation District is collecting and by 2023 climate data. Geosyntec is currently focusing on the NARP watershed model, which considers runoff and simulates water quality loading to streams. Valleskey presented the data calibration and validation process, explaining how Geosyntec was filling in any data gaps. Geosyntec will have a full report on the hydrology model by the end of 2023. Next year, Geosyntec will focus on the in-stream model and consider flow and pollutant loads within the streams.

Q: Does the model take into consideration pollutant load contributions and channel erosion?

A: This model does not. When Geosyntec runs the actual in-stream model, they will check if there are local studies available to inform values in the model. Otherwise, they will use typical values for erosion based on the information they have.

Strelcheck noted that SMC has watershed plan stream inventory data that could be available to Geosyntec. Valleskey added that parts of the stream are faster or slower and behave differently. Geosyntec is using the geometry data that has been provided and then filling in any data gaps.

**b. Natural Solutions Tool Presentation – Greater Chicago Watershed Alliance**

**Adam Flickinger, Planning Director, & Amy Heldman, Planning & GIS Specialist, Friends of the Chicago River**

Adam Flickinger presented the Natural Solutions Tool that the Greater Chicago Watershed Alliance launched in March 2022 in partnership with the Trust for Public Land. Flickinger gave an overview of the development of this data visualization tool and noted that partners can use the information in their grant applications. One of the primary goals of the tool is to recognize stormwater issues in the context of other multi-benefits – social, environmental, economic, diversity, etc. The tool is built upon five modeling objectives: healthy, equitable, biodiverse, protected, and connected. Amy Heldman performed a live demo of the tool ([https://web.tplgis.org/chicago\\_nst/](https://web.tplgis.org/chicago_nst/)). The Greater Chicago Watershed Alliance is aiming to collect public input about the tool for its first update by September 1, 2023.

Q: Is the data that is coming from other sources updated automatically in the tool?

A: The data does not automatically update. The data will be updated annually towards the end of every year with each update.

Q: What are your next steps?

A: There are various federal grant opportunities right now, and the Greater Chicago Watershed Alliance is trying to facilitate coordination and collaboration for those types of grant opportunities instead of competition among local entities for the same funding sources.

**c. Project Highlight: Talbot Avenue Drainage Improvement Project**

**Michael Warner, Water Resources Principal Engineer, Gewalt Hamilton Associates**

Michael Warner presented on the Talbot Avenue Drainage Improvement Project. The project is in unincorporated Lake Bluff, Shields Township, also known as Knollwood. Flooding is an issue in the area. Knollwood was built in

the 1960's and 1970's and largely on hydric soils, with little to no detention. This area has very flat topography, with challenging drainage pathways. This project aims to improve drainage by creating storage and new conveyance infrastructure. The trapezoidal channel design maximizes storage and creates an open drainage pathway, and native vegetation will help filter the water as it passes through the structure. The project has faced several design and construction challenges including space constraints, a hit electric line that was unmarked, the water main location and elevation differing from the as-built documentation, a miscast manhole structure, and several significant storm events. One of the main lessons learned is to field verify as-built documentation. The following is left to finalize: fine grading and planting preparation, native plug installation and seeding, final erosion control, and DECI reporting. Despite the challenges, the end result will be beneficial to the local residents.

Q: Who initiated the project and how was it funded?

A: SMC responded to a walk-in call in 2020 and inspected the site. SMC worked with Lake Bluff Public Works at a downstream outlet to clear woody vegetation, and secured grant funding for this project site. Watershed Management Board (WMB) funding was awarded to this project and soon thereafter Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) funding.

Q: Are there any concerns about the condition of the corrugated pipe?

A: The pipe does have some corrosion and will need to be replaced eventually. However, the pipe will not fail immediately, and there was not enough room in the budget for this project to add replacement of the pipe. Strelcheck added that this project is not the final solution, and that SMC has voiced to Shields Township that a phased approach is needed to address flooding in the area.

Q: Did you look at the tributary drainage needs or did you take the approach of needing to do the best with the space you had?

A: The latter. Space was maxed out as much as possible, and utilities largely dictated the space available.

## **5. Watershed Project Updates & Announcements**

### **a. Open Discussion & Watershed Updates**

- i. Larry Bridges announced that the East Skokie Drainage District will have its last meeting tonight and will be merging with the West Skokie Drainage District. This is his last meeting as the East Skokie Drainage District Chairman. Bridges also shared that ESDD recently finished the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the Lake Forest Streambank Stabilization Project on the Skokie River. Bridges highlighted Patty Werner's excellent work as ESDD's Engineer and the services she has provided to the District.
- ii. Chuck Bodden shared that the North Shore Water Reclamation District is wrapping up their chemical phosphorus removal project. He also announced that the Illinois EPA is conducting a triannual review of the state's water quality standards and had a public meeting last month. The Illinois EPA is reviewing sixteen water quality standards and intends to choose three standards to focus on over the next three years. An online survey is available for the public to complete and provide input on how the sixteen water quality standards should be prioritized.  
Strelcheck added that the Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup (DRWW) Monitoring Committee agreed that the Illinois EPA's original August 7, 2023 deadline for public comment did not provide enough time, and they recommended that all members of the DRWW and NBWW request an extension until the end of the year. The Illinois EPA extended the deadline to September 7, 2023. Strelcheck reached out to the Illinois EPA about the possibility of extending the deadline to the end of the year, and the Illinois EPA does not intend to extend the deadline again. Therefore, Strelcheck recommended that members fill out the survey by the September 7, 2023 deadline.
- iii. Brandon Janes shared that the Village of Deerfield's chemical phosphorus removal project is almost complete.

- iv. Strelcheck announced that the North Branch Chicago River Watershed Based Plan and the Lake Michigan Watershed Based Plan are going to Lake County to be approved through Planning, Building, Zoning & Environmental Committee and then the Lake County board. Once this is complete, the plans will be considered finalized, and she will put out a notice to members.
- v. Strelcheck gave a reminder that the November General Membership meetings have been replaced by Monitoring Committee and Executive Board meetings to focus on budget and membership dues. Members can ask her or Brandon Janes any questions about the membership dues.

**vi. SMC FY2024 Countywide Request for Project Proposals**

Strelcheck announced that SMC currently has a Request for Project Proposals out. One application includes the FY2024 Watershed Management Board (WMB), Watershed Management Assistance Grants (WMAG) & Stormwater Infrastructure Repair Fund (SIRF), which is more geared towards flood mitigation and reduction. The other application is for the Countywide Best Management Practice Implementation Program-Phase II, which is funded through an Illinois EPA Section 319 Grant and focused on water quality improvement. SMC is accepting up to five projects for the Countywide Best Management Practice Implementation Program. In the North Branch Chicago River watershed, Cook County entities can apply. An informational webinar is available online. The application deadline is September 8, 2023. The deadline for scheduling a meeting with Strelcheck about the application is August 25, 2023. It was noted that people can apply for the Illinois EPA Section 319 Grant Program on their own (60% reimbursement/40% in-kind services), but SMC provides a go between option and offers administrative support (50% reimbursement/50% in-kind services).

**vii. 2023 Deicing Workshops & Lake County Calibration Event**

Alana Bartolai, Lake County Health Department, announced that every year Lake County hosts its Deicing Workshops, which involve multiple agencies and partners. The workshops have been virtual since 2021 and will continue to be virtual this year. In addition to the five workshop dates, Lake County is bringing back the in-person calibration demonstration event. Members can reach out to Bartolai or Strelcheck about questions. If anyone is not able to attend the calibration demo, Bartolai and Strelcheck can provide information about workshops that other counties are hosting. The virtual workshops cost \$50 per agency, and the in-person calibration demo is free.

**b. Next NBWW General Membership Meeting: February 14, 2024**

**6. Adjournment – 2:49 pm**

Larry Bridges motioned to adjourn, seconded by Michael Warner. The motion passed with unanimous consensus vote.

**North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup Meeting Attendees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Adam Flickinger	Friends of the Chicago River
Alana Bartolai	Lake County Health Department
Amy Heldman	Friends of the Chicago River
Anna Niedzinski	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
Ashley Strelcheck	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
Ben Metlzer	Clark Dietz representing Village of Green Oaks
Brandon Janes	Village of Deerfield
Brian Valleskey	Geosyntec
Byron Kutz	City of Lake Forest

Chris Johnson	Illinois Sierra Club
Chuck Bodden	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Jack Bielak	Village of Northbrook
Janice Aull	Aull Nature Preserve
Josephine Meincke	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Justin Vick	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Larry Bridges	East Skokie Drainage District
Linda Dahl	League of Women Voters LF/LB
Mark Olszewski	Village of Deerfield
Mary Beth Nawor	Resident
Mary Mathews	Resident
Michael Warner	Gewalt Hamilton
Minelly Cruz Montes	Arcadis
Mitch Beatty	Village of Glenview
Patty Werner	East Skokie Drainage District Resident
Paula Miller	Morton Grove Public Works
Peter Nagle	Chicago Botanic Garden
Rob Flood	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Robyn Flakne	Village of Glenview
Rosemary Heilemann	Illinois Sierra Club
Sharene Gould Dulabaum	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
Susan Lenz	Lake Forest Open Lands

**PDHs are self-reporting.** If attendees want to apply NBWW meetings towards their professional license, keep the certificate, agenda, and minutes with sign-in sheets. Acceptance of these materials for credit is at the discretion of the licensing authority.

**MS4 Program BMP fulfillment.** If attendees want to apply NBWW meetings and education towards their MS4 Program BMP Measurable Goals, keep the certificate, agenda and minutes with sign-in sheets. Acceptance of these materials for MS4 program credit is at the discretion of the Illinois EPA.

## August 09, 2023 General Membership Meeting Roll Call Results

Organization	Voting Member	Number of Votes	Present? (Y)	Total Vote Count	Roll Call REV-EXP	Yay Tallies for REV-EXP		Yay Tallies for
CCFPD - Unincorporated		3		0		0		0
Chicago Botanic Gardens	Peter Nagle	2	Y	2	Y			
Christopher Burke		2		0		0		0
City of Evanston		3		0		0		0
City of Highland Park		5		0		0		0
City of Lake Forest	Byron Kutz	7	Y	7	Y	7		0
City of North Chicago		3		0		0		0
City of Park City		3		0		0		0
City of Waukegan		3		0		0		0
Cook County - Unincorporated		3		0		0		0
Cook County DOTH		3		0		0		0
Deerfield Park District		2		0		0		0
Fehr Graham Engineering		2		0		0		0
East Skokie Drainage District	Larry Bridges	3	Y	3	Y	3		0
Engineering Resource Associates		2		0		0		0
Friends of the Chicago River	Adam Flickinger	2	Y	2	Y	2		0
Geosyntec	Brian Valleskey	2	Y	2	ABSTAIN	0		0
Gewalt Hamilton	Michael Warner	2	Y	2	Y	2		0
Hey & Associates		2		0		0		0
IDOT		3		0		0		0
ILM		2		0		0		0
Lake County - Unincorporated	Alana Bartolai (LCHD)	5	Y	5	Y	5		0
Lake County DOT		3		0		0		0
Lake County SMC	Ashley Strelcheck	2	Y	2	Y	2		0
Lake Forest Open Lands		2		0		0		0
LCFPD - Unincorporated		2		0		0		0
Libertyville Township		3		0		0		0
MWRDGC	Justin Vick	2	Y	2	Y	2		0
NSWRD Clavey Road WRF	Rob Flood	9	Y	9	Y	9		0
Stantec		2		0		0		0
Illinois Sierra Club	Chris Johnson	2	Y	2	Y	2		0
Union One Middle Fork Drainage District		3		0		0		0
Union One West Fork Drainage District		3		0		0		0
Vernon Township		3		0		0		0
Village of Bannockburn	Michael Warner (Gewalt Hamilton)	3	Y	3	ABSTAIN	0		0
Village of Deerfield	Brandon Janes	9	Y	9	Y	9		0
Village of Glencoe		3		0		0		0
Village of Glenview	Robyn Flakne	7	Y	7	Y	7		0
Village of Green Oaks	Ben Metlzer (Clark Dietz)	3	Y	3	Y	3		0
Village of Lincolnshire		3		0		0		0
Village of Morton Grove	Paula Miller	3	Y	3	Y	3		0
Village of Niles		3		0		0		0
Village of Northbrook	Jack Bielak	7	Y	7	Y	7		0
Village of Northfield	Michael Warner (Gewalt Hamilton)	3	Y	3	ABSTAIN	0		0
Village of Riverwoods	Michael Warner (Gewalt Hamilton)	3	Y	3	Y	3		0
Village of Skokie		3		0		0		0
Village of Wilmette		3		0		0		0
Village of Winnetka		3		0		0		0
West Skokie Drainage District		3		0		0		0
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>159</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>51 % of voters</b>	<b>9.69</b>	<b>38.76</b>				