

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, February 19, 2025 * 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 1:04 pm and welcomed attendees to the February 19, 2025, NBWW Annual General Membership Meeting. The meeting was held in a hybrid format. Ashley Strelcheck, NBWW Coordinator, performed roll call. A total of 26 voting members (tallying 94 votes) were in attendance, so an NBWW meeting quorum was present (see the voting quorum in the roll call sheet and meeting participants list below).

2. Public Comment – None

3. NBWW Business

a. Approve NBWW August 14, 2024 General Membership Meeting Minutes

Matt Ueltzen, Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD), motioned to approve the August 14, 2024 General Membership Meeting Minutes, seconded by Keeley Evans, Village of Northbrook. The motion passed with a unanimous consensus vote.

b. Financials

i. NBWW Revenues & Expenditures Review

Strelcheck presented the FY24 expenditures and revenues for review (there are no new FY25 revenues and expenditures to present). There were no comments or questions.

ii. NBWW Budget Review

Strelcheck presented the NBWW FY24 and FY25 budget. There were no comments or questions.

iii. Approval of NBWW FY2025 Membership Dues

Strelcheck presented the NBWW FY2025 Membership Dues for approval. There were no comments or questions. Janice Aull, Skokie Consolidated Drainage District (SCDD), motioned to ratify the presented revenues and expenditures, seconded by Matt Ueltzen, LCFPD. The motion passed via a 24-0-2 roll call vote (see roll call vote spreadsheet).

4. Old Business

1. Executive Board Update – Brandon Janes, NBWW Executive Board President

Brandon Janes gave a NBWW Executive Board update to the meeting attendees. The NBWW Executive Board has updated the NBWW Workplan annual Scorecard for 2024, the Annual Newsletter (both available in this meeting invite), continuing to coordinate with the Monitoring Committee and Geosyntec on the on-going NARP development and finalizing the 2018-2023 Water Quality Summary Report.

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

Rob Flood gave a NBWW Monitoring Committee update that North Shore Water Reclamation District (NSWRD) will begin the 2025 NBWW water column chemistry sampling from the twenty-five NBWW sites in the watershed this month to satisfy the workgroup member's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permit requirements. The Monitoring Committee has submitted the Illinois EPA Annual Monitoring Report for the workgroup (for 2024), continuing coordination with Geosyntec on the on-going NBWW NARP development and helped to finalize the 2018-2023 Water Quality Summary Report (posted on the website). Strelcheck reminded everyone that the NBWW lists all NBWW members on the Annual Monitoring Report, so each member just needs to list they are a NBWW member on their MS4 annual report; meeting their in-stream monitoring requirements.

5. New Business - None

6. Guest Speakers

a. *Nutrient Trading Pilot Program*

Bartlett Durand, CEO, Applied Ecological Institute

Bartlett Durand, Applied Ecological Institute, gave a presentation on a Nutrient Trading Pilot Program between the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) and the Northern Moraine Water Reclamation District. Durand gave an overview of the Pay for Practice (PFP) performance-based approach that allows contracting for nutrient reduction outcomes that meet state standards and result from conversation practices. Memorandums of Understanding provide an explicit agreement on how and when watershed investments would be “counted” by a state regulator, how cities can work directly with farmers to fund projects that become part of their compliance work (or that cities can purchase the Nitrogen or Phosphorus reductions from completed projects) and allow cities or towns to get credit for any future project that meets certain conditions.

Q/A:

1. How have Environmental Groups reacted (to this program)?

The environmental groups have signed onto this program and been onboard.

2. For streambank stabilization projects (that’s what seen in this watershed), how would Illinois EPA permit trade off credits?

Durand was guessing the Illinois EPA would track the Wisconsin model to get a sense of how that stream is being eroded and how much phosphorus is coming off the erosion.

3. For wetland banks, can you double-count credits?

No, but the native buffer areas adjacent to and around the wetland mitigation bank can count towards this program (get credit).

- Follow-up: Is there a minimum size? No.

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

Brian Valleskey, Senior Professional; & Yifan He, Professional Engineer; Geosyntec Consultants, Inc.

Brian Valleskey, Senior Professional; & Yifan He, Professional Engineer; Geosyntec Consultants, Inc. gave a brief overview of the NBWW NARP management scenarios and implementation survey. He gave a recap of the baseline scenarios completed for wastewater treatment plant facility reductions only and then the two out of six management scenarios selected by the NBWW Monitoring Committee and Executive Board (MS4 reduction 50% and 100 lb Total Phosphorus reduction). Some of the key takeaways from the new management scenarios are the water quality impact of removing 100lbs of Phosphorus from non-point sources is negligible and targeted phosphorus from a specific (stream) reach may be more effective. Valleskey gave an overview of the NBWW NARP Survey that is currently active for feedback from the North Branch Chicago River watershed stakeholders. Feedback from this survey is critical in developing the NARP implementation portion of the plan. *Please take a few minutes to complete the NBWW NARP Survey:*

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=VkkIcbBx9EeJd8TBe8IFyw4AnPBnj1ROiP93fFrG79IUQVFPVNSWUcyMJE1VDhSRDFZMudJUjdETy4u&route=shorturl>

Q/A:

1. What does 100 lbs. of phosphorus removed look like?

Geosyntec referenced the 2022 North Branch Chicago River Watershed-Based Plan action plan recommendations that estimated how much total phosphorus was removed from each project and that can be used to estimate 100lbs of Phosphorus.

2. When action plan recommendation tables are put together for watershed-based plans the costs and pollutant load reductions are very broadly estimated. Estimates should not be calculated based on those action plan recommendations as in-the-ground projects have shown considerably higher costs for implementation. Can you use some of the in-the-ground project data (costs) to create a more refined ROI?

The goal is to do the analysis right now and the next steps of how to move forward would be at the discretion of the NBWW.

c. *Time Limited Water Quality Standard for Chloride for portions of the Chicago Area Waterway System and Lower Des Plaines River Watersheds*

Hanna Miller, Watershed Project Manager, The Conservation Foundation

Hanna Miller, Watershed Project Manager, The Conservation Foundation presented an overview of the time limited water quality standard for Chloride for portions of the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) and Lower Des Plaines River watersheds. Water quality standard for chloride changed from 1,500 mg/L (winter) and 500 mg/L (summer) to 500 mg/L year round and portions of the CAWS area unable to meet the updated chloride standard. This brought together 48 organizations in a joint submittal for a watershed-based variance in 2018 to the Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB); which approved a time limited water quality standard (TLWQS) for Chlorides in November 2021. The Chloride TLWQS has a set of requirements for each permittee and CAWS and the Lower Des Plaines Watershed Group assist permittees with meeting these requirements and reporting. Along with drafting a template for the required Pollutant Minimization Plans (PMP) for members, the Workgroups are a part of the Salt Smart Collaborative group that provide trainings, calibration sessions, discussions, etc... for its members. The ultimate outcome of the Chloride TLWQS is to improve water quality and support clean and healthy waterways in our communities.

7. Watershed Project Updates & Announcements

a. Open Discussion & Watershed Updates

1. Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (SMC) is updating the 2002 Lake County Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan. As part of this update SMC is hosting [\(4\) Open House Meetings](#) and a [public survey](#) is available to fill out. SMC is asking for the public to fill out this survey by April 30, 2025 to assist SMC in the update process.

b. Next NBWW General Membership Meeting: August 13, 2025, at the Lake Forest Municipal Services Building

8. Adjournment – 3:11 pm

Rob Flood, NSWRD, motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mike Warner, Gewalt Hamilton. The motion passed with unanimous consensus vote.

North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup Meeting Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Anna Braum	Forest Preserve District of Cook County
Ashley Strelcheck	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission; NBWW Coordinator
Ashley Warren	City of Evanston
Ben Metzler	Clark Dietz representing the Village of Green Oaks
Brandon Janes	Village of Deerfield
Brian Valleskey	Geosyntec Consultants Inc.
Chris Johnson	Illinois Sierra Club
Chuck Bodden	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Hanna Miller	The Conservation Foundation
Hayley Frank	Village of Winnetka
Higino Jasso	City of Waukegan
James Anderson	Union One West Fork Drainage District
James Fitzgerald	Lake County Health Department
Janice Aull	Skokie Consolidated Drainage District
Jesus Alquicira	City of Waukegan
Jim Jabcon	Chicago Botanic Garden
Joey Kallal	Clark Dietz representing the Village of Green Oaks
Jonathan Happ	Libertyville Township
Josephine Meincke	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Justin Vick	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Karolina Cho	Gewalt Hamilton; representing the Village of Riverwoods
Kate McDonnell	Village of Wilmette
Keeley Evans	Village of Northbrook
Leonard Dane	Hey and Associates
Manny Gomez	Village of Waukegan
Mark Olszewski	Village of Deerfield
Matt Ueltzen	Lake County Forest Preserve District
Michael Warner	Gewalt Hamilton; representing the Village of Northfield (and the Village of Golf)
Mohammed Haque	Northern Moraine Water Reclamation District
Patty Werner	Skokie Consolidated Drainage District
Rob Flood	North Shore Water Reclamation District
Robyn Flakne	Village of Glenview
Russ Rietveld	Village of Skokie
Sam Barghi	Village of Bannockburn
Sam Hortel	City of Highland Park
Yifan He	Geosyntec Consultants Inc.

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.

