



NBWW JOINT EXECUTIVE BOARD & MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

1. Call Meeting to Order

Brandon Janes, North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup (NBWW) President, called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

2. Roll call

- a. Executive Board roll call: Executive Board members present were **Brandon Janes** (President), Village of Deerfield; **Keeley Evans**, Village of Northbrook; **Steve Waters**, North Shore Water Reclamation District (NSWRD) Alternate; **Matt Ueltzen**, Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD); and **Rob Flood**, NSWRD and Monitoring Committee Chair. A roll call was performed, and an NBWW Executive Board quorum was present.
- b. Monitoring Committee roll call: **Rob Flood**, NSWRD and Monitoring Committee Chair; **Janice Aull**, Skokie Consolidated Drainage District (SCDD); **Mike Warner**, Gewalt Hamilton; **Cecylia Wszolek**, Village of Lincolnshire; **Chris Johnson**, Illinois Sierra Club; and **James Fitzgerald**, Lake County Health Department (LCHD) Alternate were present at the meeting. A roll call was performed, and an NBWW Monitoring Committee quorum was present.

A full list of meeting attendees is at the bottom of the meeting minutes.

3. Public Comment – None

4. Approve July 9, 2025, NBWW Joint Executive Board and Monitoring Committee meeting minutes

Evans motioned to accept the July 9, 2025, Monitoring Committee meeting minutes, seconded by Ueltzen. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

5. Financials

- a. Ratify NBWW Revenues-Expenditures:
Ashley Strelcheck, NBWW Meeting Coordinator, presented the expenditures and revenues to the NBWW Executive Board for ratification. There were no questions. Ueltzen motioned to ratify the revenues and expenditures, seconded by Evans. The motion passed via a roll call vote; Janes – aye, Evans – aye, Ueltzen – aye, Waters – aye, Flood – aye (5-0).
- b. NBWW Budget review:
Strelcheck presented the NBWW budget for 2026, 2027 and 2028. Starting in 2026, all membership dues will drop to 'base dues' (i.e. dues prior to the NARP). Strelcheck explained the costs for bioassessment monitoring with the Midwest Biodiversity Institute (MBI). Microbial source tracking with Grand Valley State University (GVSU) was kept as a 2026 budget item at \$10,000. Finally, Strelcheck suggested the workgroup reserve money for a potential contractual response to NARP comments and the members requested \$20,000 for that budget line item.

QUESTIONS:



Where could costs be reduced to pay for the potential contractual response to NARP comments?

The group could delay MBI bioassessment costs to 2027. Strelcheck would adjust the budget for the October NBWW meeting to reflect this expense.

Why is there a difference between MBI costs for Year 1 and Year 2?

Year 1 only involves monitoring and sampling, while Year 2 only involves data analysis.

6. Old Business

a. Water chemistry monitoring update

Rob Flood, Monitoring Committee Chair, gave an update to the Board and Committee on water quality sampling, microbial source tracking efforts, and chloride reduction efforts. The Skokie Consolidated Drainage District (SCDD) is implementing a stream stabilization project with instream pool and riffles in 2026. The NSWRD agreed to deploy data sondes to collect Dissolved Oxygen (DO) for the NBWW upstream and downstream of the project both before and after the completion of the project. Monitoring will be done from September to October, and then repeated at the conclusion of the stabilization work. Both NSWRD and the SCDD hope to see improvements in DO levels. Annual monitoring for 25 sample sites throughout the watershed were completed for February, May, July, and August.

The August results showed several high E. coli readings; however, there were also low water levels which result in low flow and low DO readings that could contribute to these high E. coli levels. The May and July microbial source tracking samples from the monitoring sites with historically high E. coli levels were sent to Grand Valley State University (GVSU) for microbial source tracking. Between these two sampling months, only one minor hit of gull DNA was found, and no hits of dog DNA were found. Within the May sampling, two sites had E. coli levels above 300 µL. NBWW monitoring site SR05 had a result of 325 µL, so additional tests were run. 4,000 gene copies were identified in Skokie River 05, which is considered moderate and likely of human origin. NBWW monitoring site WF25 had a result of 428 µL, so additional tests were run. 21,444 gene copies were identified, which is considered high and is likely of human origin. In the July sampling, NBWW monitoring site SR05 had a high E. coli reading and a high amount of gene copies. NBWW monitoring site WF20 had a high E. coli reading, but low human DNA reading. GVSU could not identify a cause at this time. NBWW is going to follow-up with GVSU to discuss some options/recommendations for potentially expanding upon the analyzed markers (i.e. a different animal contributing to E. coli levels) for the August and September E.coli samples that will be submitted.

Strelcheck shared that tributary communities near NBWW monitoring sites with high chloride levels have been contacted via email with the approved NBWW Chloride letter.

QUESTIONS:

What is NBWW's jurisdiction for this sampling project when it comes to addressing communities impacted by the microbial source tracking results?

NBWW can share the results with the communities within this watershed and near these sampling points once testing is completed. However, NBWW is not a regulatory entity in the watershed.

If no dog DNA markers were found within these samples, could NBWW change the genetic markers of choice for the next round of testing?

Yes, NBWW can ask GVSU what recommendations they would suggest given the results from May and July.



Has correlation versus causation of high E. coli levels been considered during this project?

No, not yet. However, this can be brought to the attention of GVSU.

Would there be a difference in results of wet weather versus dry weather sampling?

Historically, there are high E. coli levels in wet weather samples. However, if high E. coli levels are seen in both wet and dry weather samples (as NSWRD/GVSU have seen in this year's drought weather) there could be a persisting leak/issue from broken infrastructure.

b. NBWW Nutrient Assessment Reduction Plan (NARP) Update

Brian Valleskey, Geosyntec Consultants, provided an update on the NARP. Chapters 1-3 are currently in technical and grammatical editing. Chapters 1-3 will be sent out to NBWW members for review within the next two weeks. Strelcheck explained that Chapters 1-3 will be sent to the NBWW Executive Board and Monitoring Committee for internal review and the members will have 2 weeks to review the document and provide feedback. Strelcheck also shared she received a request to share the Draft NARP with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). NBWW members were comfortable with sharing the draft with MWRD because they are NBWW members, so long as the draft remains an internal document.

QUESTIONS:

When will Chapter 4 be available to NBWW members?

Chapter 4 is still in peer review for about 2 weeks, and then there will be another 2 weeks for revisions done by Geosyntec staff.

Is the NARP Implementation Table also available for review?

The table will be ready for review at either the October or November NBWW meeting.

c. Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) NBWW membership withdrawal follow-up

Strelcheck shared the email exit interview questions from the FPCC following their request to withdraw from the NBWW. The FPDCC pointed to high due costs, and limited staff availability as their main reasons for withdrawing. However, they are not against rejoining the workgroup in the future.

QUESTIONS:

Does the forest preserve have an MS4 permit?

No.

Does FPCC own the Skokie Lagoons, and would they be attached to the TMDL associated with the Lagoons?

Yes, FPCC does own the Skokie Lagoons. However, the TMDL points to loads from outside loads discharging into the lagoons' waters as the cause for high phosphorus (not the owners of the waters).

7. New Business

a. NBWW list of non-members



Strelcheck presented a list of NBWW non-members for Board and Committee member review. Contacts from this list will eventually receive a letter inviting them to join the NBWW. Strelcheck requested that current members share any additional non-member contact information they have.

QUESTIONS:

Are non-members in charge of their own NARP and monitoring?

A NARP is only required for publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) as part of their NPDES permits. All NPDES permittees are required to monitor water quality, regardless of their membership to a watershed workgroup.

Does the NBWW know if any nonmembers are claiming to be members?

No. However, we can attach NBWW's newsletter to the membership invite as encouragement.

Do the presented non-member base dues cover monitoring? Yes.

Who is the authority for enforcing monitoring under the NPDES permit?

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA).

- b. Website Request: Approval needed for adding [Drug Watch PFAS Health Effects guide](#) on NBWW website [Resources webpage](#)

Strelcheck presented a website regarding the health effects of PFAS exposure that was shared with her as the NBWW coordinator. Members were asked to consider adding this website to the NBWW website Resources webpage and denied the request. Members expressed concerns for posting resources from bodies outside of the NBWW.

- c. 2026 NBWW Schedule – Board and Committee member input

Strelcheck presented the 2026 NBWW schedule for review. Members were asked if there were any Cook County locations to use for meetings, and if there were any known conference conflicts. Additionally, members decided to adjust the times of future meetings to accommodate the needs of the Executive Board and Monitoring Committee.

8. Member Remarks

- a. [Winter Best Practices Workshops](#) & [Calibration Events](#)

Strelcheck shared the Salt Smart Collaborative is hosting Winter Best Practices Workshops in both virtual and in-person formats. Additionally, the Salt Smart Collaborative is partnering with Lake County Stormwater Commission to host Calibration Events for salt trucks in Lake (November 4), Cook (November 5), and DuPage county (November 6). Registration is now open for all workshops and events.

QUESTIONS:

Are non-members invited? Yes.

Can the registration data for the calibration events be shared with the NBWW members? Yes.

- b. [Watershed Management Board \(WMB\) Funding Opportunity](#)



NBWW Joint Executive Board & Monitoring Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Village of Deerfield, Village Hall
850 Waukegan Rd, Deerfield, IL 60015

Strelcheck shared the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission is accepting request for proposals for Watershed Management Board (WMB) funded projects for Fiscal Year 2026. The submission deadline for proposals is 2:00pm CST on September 30, 2025 via the [SMC INFLOW portal](#).

c. [Stormwater Leadership Summit](#)

Strelcheck shared there will be a Stormwater Leadership Summit at the Chicago Botanic Garden on September 25, 2025 from 9am to 3:30pm. Lake County Stormwater Management Commission staff will be in attendance.

d. IWEA MS4 Workshop (In-Person @ Libertyville CPF) on October 10

Strelcheck shared that the Illinois Water Environment Association (IWEA) will be hosting an MS4 Workshop at the Lake County Central Permit Facility in Libertyville on October 10, 2025. More details to come.

9. Next Meeting:

- a. NBWW Joint Executive Board & Monitoring Committee meeting: October 8, 2025, Deerfield, Village Hall, 850 Waukegan Rd, Deerfield, IL 60015 (Council Chambers Board Room)

10. Adjournment – 2:33pm

- 11. Ueltzen motioned to adjourn, seconded by Evans. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

NBWW Executive Board and Monitoring Committee Meeting Attendees

| NAME | ORGANIZATION |
|-------------------|---|
| Ashley Strelcheck | Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, NBWW Coordinator |
| Brandon Janes | Village of Deerfield, NBWW President |
| Brian Valleskey | Geosyntec Consultants Inc. |
| Cecylia Wszolek | Village of Lincolnshire |
| Chris Johnson | Illinois Sierra Club |
| Chuck Bodden | North Shore Water Reclamation District |
| James Fitzgerald | Lake County Health Department |
| Janice Aull | Skokie Consolidated Drainage District |
| Keeley Evans | Village of Northbrook |
| Matt Ueltzen | Lake County Forest Preserve District |
| Mike Warner | Gewalt Hamilton |
| Rob Flood | North Shore Water Reclamation District, NBWW Monitoring Committee Chair |
| Sarah Skolozynski | Lake County Stormwater Management Commission |
| Steve Waters | North Shore Water Reclamation District |