



Technical Advisory Committee Virtual Meeting

February 25, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Present: Peter Wallers, EEI/MWCOG; Jeff Freeman, EEI; Joe Munder, City of Aurora; Gary Clark, Retired IDNR/ISWS; Jerry Elliott, Sugar Grove Water Authority; Scott Kuykendall, McHenry County; Matt Asselmeier, Kendall County; Natalie Karney, Retired Village of South Barrington; Dan Hadley, ISWS; Jodie Wollnik, Kane County Water Resources; Phil Cotter, Village of East Dundee; Amy Gahala, USGS; Ryan Wilson, Village of Elburn; Kevin Fescke, Village of Barrington; Dean Farr, Izak Walton League; Kelsey Pudlock, CMAP; Nora Beck, CMAP; Wei Han, IDNR; Cary McElhinney, USEPA; Jeff Babich, Sugar Grove Water Authority; Margaret Schneemann, IISG; Brad Merkel, Village of Sugar Grove; Devin Mannix, ISWS; Mike Pubentz, City of Elgin; Cecilia Cullen, ISWS; Dan Nagel, Sugar Grove Water Authority; Terra McParland, IDNR; Angie Smith, EEI

Peter Wallers called the meeting to order at 10:01 A.M.

Agenda Changes and Announcements: Nothing at this time.

Approval of January Meeting Minutes: Joe Munder (City of Aurora) moved to approve the minutes. Jerry Elliott (Sugar Grove Water Authority) seconded.

A revision to the meeting minutes to be made on 2nd page bottom paragraph – Scott’s comments: referring to misrepresentation of the aquifers. Should be both shallow and deep aquifers. Reference to Wonder Lake: subdivision going to build 5,000 new homes, not 500 homes.

Joe Munder (City of Aurora) accepted the minutes with these changes; Jerry Elliott (Sugar Grove Water Authority) motioned with revisions as noted. Revised minutes approved.

Presentation: “NWPA Water Supply Sustainability Plan: Updates stakeholder feedback and the remaining timeline”: Kelsey Pudlock (CMAP) presented this information to the group.

She provided information on the remaining project timeline for beginning the adoption process at the February and March Executive Committee meetings. The Executive Committee will be meeting in February to discuss the Plan and feedback received. The March meeting will be for the Executive Committee to consider Plan adoption.

She reviewed the Plan feedback that had been received to date and the key revisions that were made to the Plan specific to each Chapter. In addition, she announced that there is an Executive Summary that will now be included in the Plan.

Pete Wallers (EEI/MWCOG) inquired when the final Plan would be issued for the TAC to look at? Kelsey Pudlock (CMAP) replied in about 3 weeks either by the end of the week of March 17th or early in the week March 24th.



Pete Wallers (EEI/MWCOG) reminded Kelsey that we will need to make a recommendation at the March TAC meeting so that the Executive Committee can adopt the plan at their special March meeting. He also commented that Kelsey and the team have done a very good job of incorporating the feedback received into the Plan. He noted the need for improvement at the State level for data that is available and updated.

Presentation: “Securing Illinois’ groundwater future: A review of the 1983 Water Use Act and high-capacity well review process”: Nora Beck (CMAP) presented this topic to the group.

She provided the group with the reasoning behind this project: withdrawals are exceeding the amounts we can sustainably withdraw at the Count level, and we know other areas are at risk. Also, water demand is decreasing across the Chicago region, but increases are expected in some locations with stressed groundwater sources.

They explored groundwater governance by partnering with Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (IISG) with funding from the Illinois Department of National Resources. Their exploratory work allowed them to investigate options to inform conversation about how to coordinate efforts to ensure all communities in the region have a sustainable supply of water. They performed a literature review, characterized existing systems and explored new structures.

With the assistance of a Technical Advisory group, they were able to determine that technical provisions are fairly advanced, reflecting the good work of ISWS, however, legal provisions are lacking for drilling permits being focused on water quality only, there is no mechanism to address quantity problems except retroactively via the courts. No mechanisms to limit the amount of withdrawal or prevent well construction except for water quality issues.

In the 2022 State Water Plan, the initiative to review the 1983 Water Use Act and determine if modifications are needed is included. The review of the Act focused on the high capacity well review process with their partner: Freshwater out of Minnesota, funded by the Joyce Foundation.

She reviewed the 1983 Water Use Act with the group and explained that they held about 16 interviews, and it was only for the northeastern portion of Illinois.

It made sense to look at other States to see how they are approaching this work. It also included TX. Both WI and MN have advanced legislation on this topic. Both States have broader management goals, use groundwater management areas, they have water use reporting and annual fees, based on user type or withdrawal amounts. Both are setting water conservation and efficiency goals based on end user.

Applying findings to Illinois: groundwater management objectives should include long-term supply; resource the high-capacity well review process which would harness synergies and improve available information, improve administrative funding and capacity, connect well review process to decision making, align review criteria with



groundwater management goals by setting a more transparent process; improve the water use reporting process.

Dean Farr (Izak Walton League): original document was prepared 40+ years ago; shared stories about Anna Moeller (Elgin), how do we fund this work, perhaps a summer study program would be a good way. Nora Beck (CMAP): an important point on funding that's why it was important to look at other States to see how they have approached this.

Wei Han (IDNR) asked if WI or MN have similar problems with groundwater issues – deep aquifer deterioration or water quality? Do we know what prompted them to do this? Nora Beck (CMAP) replied that in MN it seems like they were experiencing draw down in the Twin Cities so that prompted some action. In WI their review process is different based on state level so they are taking a more targeted approach. Both are in the Great Lakes Compact as well. As we continue to move this forward it would be good to have a discussion with them to see how they were able to pass their legislation. Pete Wallers (EEI/MWCOG) asked if they had established the same threshold as IL; it is a good Act, but without funding it's hard. Nora Beck (CMAP) believes that they have. Scott Kuykendall (McHenry County) asked if WI or MN have anything comparable to establishing a Water Authority? Nora Beck (CMAP) it was not included, but will add it to the list for future inquiry.

Nora Beck (CMAP) introduced the following discussion questions to the group.

Who is most impacted by the lack of a funded high-capacity well review process?

Scott Kuykendall (McHenry County) replied that the Soil and Water Conservation Districts were overtasked for this, and they could play a good role if they had funding and adequate resources. It placed too high of a burden on them.

Pete Wallers (EEI/MWCOG) stated he would like to hear from Gary Clark (retired IDNR) on this as he believes that it was originally targeted for irrigation wells in Iroquois County. Gary Clark (retired IDNR) confirmed why the Act was established. The Act was drafted and at that time ISWS State Task Force we're looking at how to regulate groundwater when and where it was needed. There was a program for a local water management district, where the State would work with the Surveys and develop a regulatory plan. Regional / local control is probably a good idea. There is a lot of the State that don't have the same aquifer issues as Northeastern Illinois does. Most of the domestic wells did not meet any of the requirements and they were not set deep enough. Develop legislation that was entered into general assembly, but it received some backlash. Had a budget of \$250K per year which is like 1990 dollars. George Ryan got \$50K and gave it to the IDPH to give to the local health departments and formed a committee of County Board, public health departments and two citizens and never heard anything more. It was a very political issue back then. One other thing to note about the Water Use Act of 1983 the State Farm Bureau drafted it. They felt that if the ISWS could file an impact analysis it would make a lot of the issues go away. Northeastern IL was exempt in the beginning, but was added later on due to drought issues. Nora Beck (CMAP) stated it sounds like the Water Use Act was developed to handle different



issues than what we are experiencing now. Gary Clark (Retired IDNR) replied that it's the same issues and that's why you need the Regional models from ISWS in order to show the decline in the aquifers. When people understand what the impact is going to be on their wells and their region, people will change their minds on how to deal with the issues. Dean Farr (Izak Walton League) appreciated the history of it and the politics back then. Chicago looks to Lake Michigan since they have plenty of water. I have talked to a couple of legislators and when we run out of water in McHenry County we're coming to get their Lake Michigan water, but we can't all put the straw in the same source. Gary Clark (Retired IDNR) stated that Lake Michigan is extremely limited due to the Great Lakes Compact. The US Supreme Court has the ultimate ruling of the water that is available to take out of Lake Michigan.

Pete Waller (EEI/MWCOG) stated that if there is a new development coming in, someone has to approve it. What we saw in Joliet was if you dropped a new well it would have significant impact on municipal wells. From time to time when we have been involved in this question we have contracted with ISWS for the analysis. The second part is when you have an existing facility that wants to expand, and they may just have the ability to drill the new well. Nora Beck (CMAP) asked if there are any examples of this? Pete Waller (EEI/MWCOG) stated that a lot of the design professionals in IL are very cognizant of the well interference criteria and typically perform due diligence when siting a new well. Jeff Freeman (EEI) commented that this discussion brings up a very important topic – is it the bigger picture of looking at the sustainability of the aquifer in the Region vs. one mile separation of wells. Devin Mannix (ISWS) expressed a couple of comments related to this point. He had talked to some of the permit review staff in WI in December. They have quite a backlog of well approvals. In MN they have a very strict process for approval, if there is any desaturation it is not allowed. Scott Kuykendall (McHenry County) if you're looking for a case study, he mentioned that he used to live in Warrenville. When Naperville switched to Lake Michigan water, they kept one of their high-capacity wells. Warrenville put in a well close to their well in Naperville and they were not happy about it. Dan Hadley (ISWS) commented that he is not aware of any municipal well interference. There has been interference with domestic wells to municipal wells, particularly in Joliet. All of those wells had to have their pumps lowered and then Joliet had to pay for City water to those homeowners. There was a case in Bloomington Normal when they drilled their well in the Mohamet Aquifer which caused some private wells to go dry.

Margaret Schneemann (IISG) commented on the fact that no economics were considered in MN. Pete Waller (EEI/MWCOG) if you applied a strict interpretations there would be no new wells being drilled if that was applied in NE IL, obviously this is not practical. Devin Mannix (ISWS) stated that MN and WI are new in the position of issuing "no" for well permits. MN found that they had over permitted in one area and now they are trying to figure out how to reel that back in for a sustainable pathway. Nora Beck (CMAP) stated even though there could be faults for their process, they are at least having conversation about it. Devin Mannix (ISWS) mentioned that MN and WI appreciate how IL has this stakeholder discussion going on first.

Report: <https://cmap.illinois.gov/news-updates/securing-illinois-groundwater-future/>



Sensible Salting Committee (SSC) (Update): Scott Kuykendall (McHenry County) nothing to report.

CMAP (Update): Nora Beck (CMAP) wanted to note that through some other work that they are working related to climate change, it includes a water and wastewater sector. NWPA has provided some valuable insights to reduce green house gas emissions. Currently paused on the plan because of changes at the Federal level.

IISG (Update): Margaret Schneemann (IISG) nothing to report.

ISAWWA (Update): Jeff Freeman (EEI) mentioned there is a Water Utility Council meeting this week, WATERCON is in April. For those giving presentations they are due Fri., 2/28/25.

ISWS (Update): Devin Mannix (ISWS) there will be updates to the shallow groundwater analysis for the NWPA region. Daniel Abrams has been working on the Illinois River Basin, working on additional modeling capabilities and he would like to give a presentation at an upcoming NWPA meeting. Dan Hadley is no longer his Section head as they have been working on restructuring. They will now be more focused on the research goals of the Section. Dan Hadley plans to report the restructuring update at the next TAC meeting.

Dan Hadley (ISWS) reported on a new BACOG project: updating the report that was published in 2020. Plans to review the last five years of well data and it will be published at the end of April. Will keep the group updated and/or give a presentation when finished. He will be giving an update at the next TAC meeting on the Kane County project.

IDNR (Update): Wei Han (IDNR) reported just finalized agreement with ISWS.

USGS (Update): Amy Gahala (USGS) stated that they were invited to an upcoming open house on March 8th in Boone County which is showcasing their upcoming AEM (3-dimensional mapping work), Jude Thomas will be attending. Additional information can be found here:

<https://emails.illinois.edu/newsletter/05/1656453005.html> ISWS is not involved in this study at this time, only USGS. Scott Kuykendall (McHenry County) commented that they are hoping that this project will generate interest to take this to the next level.

SGTWA (Update): Jerry Elliott (Sugar Grove Water Authority) reported that Blackberry Creek is at 10,500 GPM vs median level of 22,000 GPM. The wells monitored are all down about 4 feet, which is normal for this time of the year. Well 101 – December 2 through January 22, it ran 30 of those days, which is approximately 30MG of water taken from the shallow aquifer.

Pending legislation:

Pete Wallers (EEI/MWCOG) commented on SB0224 which clarifies that fire hydrants when installed with the water main, will be included in the IEPA permit. There are some revisions that IDPH is asking for.



Other Business:

The next meeting will be held online on March 25, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 AM.

Submitted by Angie Smith, EEI