



NLRS Partnership Workshop

November 6, 2020 Online via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Hosted by Todd Gleason, University of Illinois Extension

MORNING SESSION

Welcome Address – *Director Shelly Nickols-Richardson, University of Illinois Extension*

University of Illinois Extension Director Shelly Nickols-Richardson welcomed everyone to the 2020 Illinois NLRS Partnership workshop and reflected on the progress made in the last five years (2015 – 2020) of the strategy.

Nutrient Strategies in Iowa, Minnesota, and Ohio

Matt Lechtenberg, Iowa Dept of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Matt Lechtenberg presented on Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS), which was released in 2013 and is a collaborative, science-based assessment. Matt focused on Iowa's reporting structure, conservation investment, Water Quality Initiative, conservation infrastructure, and expanded capacity to advance wetland creation.

Dave Wall, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Dave Wall presented on Minnesota's nutrient reduction efforts, focusing on tracking progress in the Mississippi headwaters state. Minnesota's Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS) was finalized in 2014 by 14 partner organizations. Since then, Minnesota has boosted state best management funding through its MN Clean Water Fund and has advanced over 30 large-scale programs affecting nutrients, including its Agricultural Water Quality Certification, Forever Green Program, MN Groundwater Protection Rule, Wastewater Permitting Program, and MN Buffer Law.

John Mathews, Ohio EPA

John Mathews presented on Ohio's nutrient reduction efforts. Ohio's Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS) was released in 2013 and this year they launched the Ohio Agricultural Conservation Initiative (OACI). This initiative aims to create a universally recognized farmer certification program, which will help increase adoption of best management practices and recognize farmers who demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement, and a confidential farm practices assessment, which will benchmark best management practices adoption and track progress toward Ohio's goals.

Nutrient Research and Education Council Update – *Julie Armstrong, Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council*

Julie Armstrong presented an update on the Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC), which funds nutrient-related research. Since 2013, over \$26 million has been invested in research projects, resulting in four NREC publications, annual reports, and more than a dozen papers published in professional journals written by NREC-funded researchers. Julie emphasized that there are many opportunities for collaboration on research and outreach projects.

POLICY WORKING GROUP MEETING

NASS Survey Results 2020 – *Mark Schleusener, USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)*

Mark Schleusener presented the results of the latest NASS Survey, which showed that more acres are seeing reduced phosphorus application rates. Respondents cited information from soil tests as the primary reason for these reduced rates.

Additional NLRS Implementation Scenarios Development – *Reid Christianson, University of Illinois*

Dr. Reid Christianson developed six additional implementation scenarios with funding from USEPA to meet both interim and ultimate Illinois NLRS goals, as well as three extended scenarios. These scenarios are not prescriptive but offer hypothetical ways the state can reach its nutrient loss reduction goals. The scenarios were presented to the Agriculture Water Quality Partnership Forum, where members had the opportunity to provide comments. The final scenarios will be included in the 2021 Illinois NLRS Biennial Report and available on the Illinois NLRS webpage.

Working Group Updates

Agriculture Water Quality Partnership Forum – *Kristi Jones, Illinois Department of Agriculture*

The Agriculture Water Quality Partnership Forum (AWQPF) meets to discuss implementation progress in the ag sector of the Illinois NLRS. Kristi Jones recapped the efforts and shared the successes of the Agriculture Water Quality Partnership Forum over the last year, including the partners' embrace of virtual outreach events in 2020. The AWQPF Technical Subgroup will meet in December.

Nutrient Monitoring Council – *Trevor Sample, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency*

The Nutrient Monitoring Council (NMC) meets to coordinate monitoring activities to calculate annual nutrient loads leaving the state. Trevor Sample provided an update on the initiatives over the past year and shared that USGS announced that the Illinois River Basin was chosen as the 3rd Next Generation Water Observing System: <https://t.co/4Qy0DIWSEg?amp=1>.

Urban Stormwater Working Group – *Mary Beth Falsey, DuPage County*

The Urban Stormwater Working Group (USWG) meets to discuss stormwater partner successes and ways to collaborate. Mary Beth Falsey shared that the USWG met monthly to hear guest speakers, share lessons learned, and facilitate partner collaborations.

Performance Benchmark Committee – *Cindy Skrukud, Illinois Sierra Club*

The Performance Benchmark Committee (PBC) meets to identify on-the-ground steps needed to meet the Illinois NLRS goals and provide input on adaptive management strategies from all sectors. Cindy Skrukud shared that this year, the PBC reviewed point source load calculations, progress on implementation scenarios, and the content of the 2021 Biennial Report Adaptive Management chapter.

Communications Subgroup – *Kate Gardiner, University of Illinois Extension/IL-IN Sea Grant*

The Communications Subgroup provides input on efforts to educate people throughout Illinois with a clear, coherent message on the Illinois NLRS and opportunities to participate. Kate Gardiner shared that the Communications Subgroup approved and provided feedback on NLRS Explorer, a digital educational toolkit of Illinois NLRS educational resources. It will be available on the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant website in March 2021.

2021 Biennial Report Data and Production Schedule – *Eliana Brown, University of Illinois Extension/IL-IN Sea Grant*

The 2021 Biennial Report will be released next fall. Eliana Brown shared the report data and production schedule, noting that partners should submit spreadsheets and photos by late January 2021 for inclusion in the report.

Wrap Up – *Trevor Sample, Illinois EPA and Eliana Brown, University of Illinois Extension/IL-IN Sea Grant*

Trevor Sample and Eliana Brown thanked all who participated in this year’s workshop and to everyone who participates in implementation of the nutrient strategy year-round. Illinois wouldn’t be where it is as a state without everyone’s input and efforts. They also thanked Cindy Skrukud, who has been with the strategy from the beginning, and wished her well in her upcoming retirement.

Recordings of the Illinois NLRS Partnership Workshop are available online as a playlist on the [University of Illinois Extension YouTube page](#).