

Illinois River Coordinating Council
April 6, 2005 Meeting Minutes
Illinois State Library

Call to Order:

Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Roll Call:

Marc Miller, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, called the roll:

Citizen Members

Lee Bunting, Richard Worthen, Claudia Emken (for Michael Reuter), Brad McMillan, Daphne Mitchell, Dr. Wendell Shauman, and Cynthia Fox (for Laurene von Klan)

State Agency Members

Mike Beaty (Agriculture), Warren Ribley (DCEO), Mike Conlin (DNR), Tom Brooks (IDOT), and Amy Walkenbach (IEPA)

Ex-Officio Members

Ross Adams (US FWS), Teresa Kincaid (for Colonel Duane Gapinski, US ACE), Roy Deda (US ACE), William Kruidenier (for Dean Robert Easter, Dean of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, U of I), Steve Mozley (for William Gradle, USDA – NRCS), Robert Holmes (USGS), and Doug Wilson (USDA – Rural Development)

Members Absent

Tim Henry (USEPA), William Graff (USDA- FSA), John Rogner (USFWS) and Captain Terrance Carter (US Coast Guard).

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Quinn asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2004 Meeting held at the Starved Rock State Park. Richard Worth moved to accept and Lee Bunting seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by the Council.

Opening Remarks:

Chairman Quinn thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated that this is the first time the IRCC has returned to the Capital City since he took over as Chairman of the Council. Quinn acknowledged that the General Assembly is considering many issues. He stressed the importance of the Illinois Conservation Initiative and asked that citizens contact their legislators in support of this program.

Member Comment Period:

Mike Conlin – IDNR gave an update on the Asian carp barrier. He said the permanent barrier is under construction and should be completed by June 2005. The total cost of the project is \$9.9 million. The State of Illinois has spent \$1.9 million on the project. They are still waiting on Federal money for the operation and maintenance of the barrier, which will cost about \$500,000 a year. There are concerns that the carp may be able to bypass the barrier by flooding of the Des Plaines River or the ballast water of barges. Mike also addressed the idea of a fish protein plant. This plant would harvest Asian carp in order to make a protein supplement.

Roy Deda – U.S. ACE said that the Corps appreciates the State's support in dealing with Asian carp.

Teresa Kincaid – U.S. ACE spoke about the NAFTA study. She mentioned that \$13 M is planned for the use on navigation and ecosystem efforts. These efforts include 5 projects on the Illinois River.

Debbie Bruce – IDNR spoke about the Illinois Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). This program was created by USFWS to help landowners protect and restore habitats that benefit species at risk. IDNR received a grant from USFWS to develop the program by June 30, 2007. Ms. Bruce recommended that the Council send a letter to the IDNR stating its approval of the LIP.

Daphne Mitchell made the motion to approve sending a letter and Brad McMillan seconded the motion. The Council approved the sending of a letter.

Ms. Bruce spoke briefly about CREP. She emphasized that the money from the program goes to private landowners.

Brad McMillan – Office of Congressman Ray LaHood stated that the federal money for the program is ready and available; we just need to get state funding.

Vickie Clark – Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (PACVB) said that the decision for Scenic Byway designation will be made in September 2005. She mentioned that the PACVB has several other programs going on to promote nature tourism. These programs include the Great Lakes to Great Rivers program and the 7 Nature Loops of Experience.

Topic: Report from Economic Development Task Force

Doug Wilson – USDA, Rural Development spoke on behalf of the Economic Development Task Force of the IRCC. Mr. Wilson mentioned that the 8 member task force reviewed the Economic Development portion of the Integrated Management Plan. The Task Force updated recommendations 21-26 of the IMP and sent a report of their findings and updates to the Council.

Dr. Wendell Shauman complimented Mr. Wilson and the other members of the Task Force on a job well done.

Mike Conlin mentioned that he felt that recommendation 22 (Create a one-stop-shop for the coordination of all local, state, and federal water permits) had already been completed.

Claudia Emken said that she thought that work had been done towards recommendation 22.

Chairman Quinn asked for a motion to approve the Economic Development Task Force's recommendations and updates and to add the appropriate information into the IMP. Dr. Wendell Shauman moved to accept the updates and Claudia Emken seconded the motion. The Council approved the updates.

Richard Worthen (citing recommendation 24 as an example) mentioned that natural resources have a value beyond market value. He thinks the Council should recognize and promote this idea.

Claudia Emken suggested that other task forces be put together to review other sections of the IMP.

Chairman Quinn said that the next meeting could include discussion of appointing task forces for further updates to the IMP.

Topic: Construction Site Inspection

Shannon Allen – Macon County Soil and Water Conservation District discussed construction site inspection by Soil and Water Conservation Districts. He presented a pilot project that was started in June of 2004 between the IEPA and 6 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The project helps protect urban construction sites from erosion and runoff. Urban construction site erosion can cause significant impacts on the environment in Illinois. Construction sites typically erode between 20 and 200 times more than an agricultural field, until cover is established. IEPA was having problems investigating all required construction sites due to lack of staff. The Districts have stepped in and offered the IEPA assistance. The Districts, all of which are Certified Professionals in Erosion and Sediment Control an international professional credential, provide up to two inspections on each site in their county. Since, the inspections started,

erosion from construction sites in these pilot project counties has decreased dramatically and most contractors are pleased to work with the Districts.

Topic: Sediment Trading Program

Alley Ringhausen – Great Rivers Land Trust gave a presentation on a Sediment Trading Program. Great Rivers Land Trust has protected over twenty one hundred acres of property, developed wetlands, reduced erosion, planned parks, restored streams and partnered with numerous organizations on a wide variety of projects. Recent efforts include the Piasa Creek Watershed Project in Jersey, Madison and Macoupin Counties. The Piasa Creek Watershed Project is a 10-year cooperative effort between Great Rivers Land Trust and Illinois American Water Company aimed at reducing sedimentation in the watershed at a sustainable rate of 6,600 tons per year. The program is implementing traditional and innovative methods of erosion reduction as well as employing an educational component and land acquisition.

Topic: Upper Sangamon River Target Watershed Grant

Dr. David White – Agricultural Watershed Institute (AWI) stated that the Upper Sangamon River Watershed Project proposal developed by the Agricultural Watershed Institute was nominated by the Governor and selected by USEPA as one of 14 projects nationwide for the 2004 round of Targeted Watershed grants. The 3-year, \$1.29 million grant will be used to demonstrate and assess agricultural Best Management Practices addressing the use of crop nutrients, specifically nitrogen and phosphorus. The effort represents a partnership involving AWI, Soil and Water Conservation Districts of counties in the watershed, the University of Illinois, and, hopefully, many cooperating farmers, who are currently being recruited. The project assesses the use of volunteer approaches to reduce nutrient losses and improve water quality locally, regionally and in the Gulf of Mexico.

Topic: Update on Emiquon

Doug Blodgett – The Nature Conservancy spoke briefly on the Emiquon project. The site is a 14,000-acre conservation and restoration project in the Illinois River floodplain. The project has suffered a setback with water level control, but they remain optimistic about management.

Topic: Conservation 2000 and Local Legacy Program

Tammy Watson - IDNR spoke about the accomplishments that have been achieved through Conservation 2000 (C2000). C2000 has helped develop 41 ecosystem partnerships that cover about 85% of the state. These partnerships represent the concerns of about 1500 constituent groups and 98% of Illinois Citizens.

Tom Heavisides – IDNR talked to the Council about the Local Legacy Program (Public Act 93-0328). Local Legacy was passed in 2003, without dedicated funding, to inventory "legacy" resources (natural, cultural, and agricultural), develop resource protection plans, and implement their respective plans. Pilots Legacy Planning is occurring in McHenry County, the Peoria tri-county region and the Metro East area. Three agencies, IDNR, IHPA and IDOA, are partnering for this effort, with IDNR taking the lead.

Topic:Nature-Based Tourism Symposium

Dr. Richard Sparks – National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) mentioned that NGRREC and Lewis and Clark College will be hosting a public symposium on nature-based tourism. The symposium, "A Confluence of Interests: Nature and Tourism in River Cities and Rural Areas," will be April 22, 2005. Ted Eubanks of Fermata Inc. will be the featured speaker.

Topic: Illinois River Watershed Hydrological Observatory Proposal

Dr. Praveen Kumar - University of Illinois, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering gave a presentation on the Illinois River Watershed Hydrological Observatory proposal. The goal of this project is to establish the Illinois River Basin as a Hydrologic Observatory for the study of critical water related issues associated with atmosphere, land, and water bodies in intensively managed landscapes. The proposal will be sent to the National Science Foundation by the summer of 2005. If accepted, it will bring millions of dollars into the Illinois River Basin.

Marc Miller passed out a proposed letter of support for the Hydrological Observatory proposal. William Kruidenier made a motion to accept the letter and Richard Worthen seconded the motion. The letter was approved by the Council, pending Chairman Quinn's acceptance.

Marc Miller mentioned that the Science Advisory Committee would like approval to send a letter of support for the Hydrological Observatory. Mike Conlin made a motion to approve the request and Claudia Emken seconded the motion. The Council approved the request.

Public Comment Period:

Marilyn Parker - Macon County Soil and Water Conservation District (MCSWCD) said that the MCSWCD would send a letter of support for the Hydrological Observatory. She also advocated the use of prairie plants in urban gardens. The MCSWCD has prairie plants for sale.

John Einhaus spoke about problems associated with an ATV park located near Marseilles. The park is located on Kickapoo creek about one mile upstream from the Illinois River. Mr. Einhaus addressed environmental concerns such as erosion and water quality issues.

Mark Carr – Memco Barge said he was interested in the Asian carp barrier but expressed concerns on how a No Ballast Water Act would affect the industry.

Jack Shepler proposed that the dam at the south end of Pekin Lake be replaced.

Dick Ladzinski asked questions regarding how far the Asian carp have traveled up the Illinois River and the policies of dam removal at IDNR.

Mike Conlin said that the carp are up to the Starved Rock Dam in heavy numbers. He also said that dam removal depends on the dam and the location.

The next Illinois River Coordinating Council Meeting will be held August 18, 2005 at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey.

Meeting Adjournment:

Chairman Quinn adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.