

**Illinois River Coordinating Council
Minutes of the Friday, September 12, 2003 Meeting
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza at 350 North Orleans, Chicago**

Call to Order: Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Harmony Dean, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, called the roll.

Roll Call:

Citizen Members

Laurene von Klan (Friends of the Chicago River), Daphne Mitchell, Richard Worthen, Nancy Erickson for Dr. Wendell Shauman (Illinois Farm Bureau)

State Agency Members

Brendan Moore for Director Jack Lavin (Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity), Mike Conlin for Director Joel Brunsvold (Illinois Department of Natural Resources), Marcia Willhite for Director Renee Cipriano (Illinois Environmental Protection Agency), Michael Hine for Secretary Tim Martin (Illinois Department of Transportation), Steve Chard for Director Charles Hartke (Illinois Department of Agriculture).

Ex-Officio Members

Christine Urban for Tim Henry (US EPA Region V), Angel Martin for Robert Holmes (U.S. Geological Survey), Mike Spence for Captain Terrence Carter (U.S. Coast Guard), William Gradle (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, William Graff (USDA Farm Service Agency), John Rogner (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), William Kruidenier for Dean Robert Easter (University of Illinois – College of ACES).

Members Absent

Michael Reuter, Brad McMillan, Lee Bunting, Colonel William Bayles, Philip Bernstein, Ross Adams, Doug Wilson

Approval of Minutes of the June 9, 2003 Meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Conlin, seconded by Willhite and unanimously approved.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn opened his remarks by welcoming everyone and acknowledging a participation of the wide array of individuals, groups, organizations and governmental bodies. He said the present Council was probably the most diverse Council ever devised in the State of Illinois and represents a unique opportunity to work together on the important mission to protect and restore the Illinois River and all its tributaries, including the Chicago River. He mentioned the Council's philosophy to have quarterly meetings conducted near the water: the first IRCC meeting this year was in Springfield on the Sangamon River, the second was at Starved Rock by the Illinois River, and this meeting on the Chicago River, and the next meeting would take place in Peoria by the Illinois River again.

Lt. Gov. Quinn acknowledged several new appointments to the Council made by the Governor and expressed that the new members would certainly add to the Council's efforts. To recognize the new members, he asked Mr. Richard Worthen to introduce himself.

Richard Worthen

Mr. Worthen stated that he is from Alton and mentioned that his last job was as the Stormwater Coordinator for Madison County. He has a long history of working on water issues throughout the state. In particular, he was involved in passing legislation for county storm water management. He also stated he had a life-long interest and involvement in environmental

matters and that, as a new Council member, he was ready to offer his help and share some ideas with the rest of the Council.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Dick Worthen for his introduction and introduced another new Council member: Daphne Mitchell from the LaSalle County. He added that this was the first time a council member represented that area of the state. Mitchell and he had previously worked together on the Plum Island development issue brought to the attention of the IRCC during the meeting in June.

Lt. Gov. Quinn then gave a brief synopsis of the issue, stating that Plum Island was a small island in the Illinois River, located right below Starved Rock, and that it has always been known as a winter habitat for Bald Eagles. Plum Island is a very scenic place - a state treasure - but, unfortunately, a group of private developers wanted to put up log cabins, condos and build a marina. He said that after hearing from the advocates of Plum Island about the issue during the last IRCC meeting, he was happy to support their efforts to protect the pristine island from unwanted development. As Lt. Governor, he created a website to support these efforts. The website, www.saveoureagles.org, was unveiled on July 1, 2003, and has had a tremendous response all over the state and even countrywide. Lt. Gov. Quinn said by visiting the website, people demonstrated that they agreed with the cause: to save Plum Island and to save the eagles. He also noted that there is a cross section of people in Illinois who are interested not only in this particular issue, but also in many other issues of the IRCC.

Lt. Gov. Quinn decreed that the ultimate goal is for the State to purchase Plum Island and to make it a public property now and forever so our grandchildren and their grandchildren could enjoy the eagles flying there in the winter. Illinois is a home for more eagles in winter than any other State in the continental United States (other than Alaska). He added that eagle watching is a great hobby and tourist attraction for developing local eco-tourism industry, and that he has been working with IDNR and a number of other agencies on the purchase of Plum Island. Lt. Governor Quinn is optimistic that in the coming year, this would be accomplished. Plum Island shouldn't be in anybody's hands but people of Illinois. Next, Lt. Gov. Quinn asked Don Goerne, Friends of Plum Island, to discuss the issue.

Don Goerne

Mr. Goerne said there was a recent article in the (Chicago) Tribune stating that the developer has sold 34 out of 50 lots, and they would be finishing up the surveying work this month and will apply to the Village of North Utica for annexation by the end of October. Goerne said that if that were the case, they would be able to make their presence known at that point and give Utica a chance to vote on this. He also mentioned a mass mailing recently sent to the Village of Utica. A part-time village clerk told them that the Village had received nearly two thousand protest letters against the annexation of Plum Island.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn acknowledged that he also received a letter from the Clerk of Utica saying: "Please stop sending the letters." He pointed out some potential Plum Island issues: whether the developer had a right to advertise the land; the US Army Corps of Engineers' easement rights; the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' permit requirements, and federal obligations with respect to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He added that he is going to be aggressive in working together with IDNR and the Governor's Office to make sure the law is followed.

Lt. Gov. Quinn told the Council it was important to pay attention to all the areas of nature. He noted a newspaper column written about Plum Island referring to the island as a "wilderness pocket." Alaska has wilderness as far as the eye can see, but unfortunately, Illinois does not.

Illinois, however, does have various pockets of pristine areas that should remain. He stated that this was a part of the mission with Plum Island: to preserve the wilderness pocket.

Next, Lt. Gov. Quinn asked John Marlin to give an update on the “Mud-to-Parks” initiative. He also noted that John has been working on sediment issues for many years and had made a presentation at previous IRCC meetings about moving Peoria Lake sediment to the former USX site in Chicago, a brownfield at the site of an old steel mill, for use as a city park. He mentioned the progress on the project since the IRCC meeting in June: the IEPA approved the use of sediment being moved, the U.S. Army Corps approved a dredging permit for Peoria Lakes, the City of Chicago Department of Environment did a risk assessment of the sediment and found no health risks associated with using the sediment as topsoil for a public park, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity approved a grant for the project, and the collaboration with Congressman Ray LaHood, a founding legislator and a good friend of the IRCC, Mayor Daley, the Chicago Department of Planning, the Chicago Department of Environment, the Chicago Park District, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources – many local, state and federal entities working together.

Dr. John Marlin

Dr. Marlin said that since 1971, when he was involved with an Upper Mississippi Basin Study of the Illinois-Mississippi River Sedimentation and long-term planning process, he has been trying to figure out what to do with the millions of cubic yards of top soil and sand that are washed down the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. As a result, 30 years later and working with many federal and state agencies, they now have a reasonably good idea how to use it.

He noted that first and foremost, this material is in the lower Illinois River, where there is no heavy industry, and as such, is basically topsoil. While there is a minimal level of contaminants in the material, care must be taken. The material is soil, but the question is how can we get it out of the river to re-use it. It has to be lifted out of the river as gently as possible and delivered to a site without adding any water. The typical type of dredging is hydraulic. The material is so thick that you can cut it with a knife. If you cut it in blocks, it makes bricks.

He talked about places to use the material. In the Peoria area, local farmers, in most cases, have more topsoil than they can handle, so there is no demand for topsoil in large quantities except for the landscaping soil and highway projects. As a former member of the Pollution Control Board, he was aware of the numerous brownfield sites across the State. About three years ago, he spoke with the U.S. EPA about using sediment as a top dressing on sites such as USX-steel site.

For the “Mud-to-Parks” pilot project, the Chicago Park District is receiving approx.100 acres along the lakefront from US Steel in exchange for infrastructure improvements. Leading up to this project, based on the results of several experiments and demos, Dr. Marlin believed that the sediment from the Peoria Lakes can be economically competitive with topsoil in urban areas, in particular, because the only place delivering clean top soil is the suburbs, which has to be borrowed or appropriated from someone’s future home site or other development. It has to be trucked via local interstates through neighborhoods, which means more trucks and higher costs.

Last fall, half a barge load of sediment was moved to the Paxton 1 landfill, where it was placed in cooperation with the IEPA. They have been watching this material for over a year now. It has developed an excellent soil structure; soil insects have penetrated the entire depth. There are several types of plantings, and they are all doing well, especially the grasses, which means that the material is good dirt.

With the “Mud-to-Parks” initiative, Dr. Marlin said Lt. Governor Quinn worked with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to release a grant to the city of Chicago, which allows the movement of between 24 and 100 barge loads of sediment depending on the

city's timetable. Hopefully, within next two to three weeks, they will begin moving 24 barge loads of sediment from Peoria Lake to the lakefront park will place it approx. 15 inches thick. There is an unlimited amount of sediment in Peoria Lake for this purpose, and there are several thousand acres in the Chicago metropolitan areas adjacent to the waterway that can use soil, and, additionally, there are strip mines all over the State, deep coalmines that are collapsing, and need in the East St. Louis metropolitan area for their brownfields.

He added that he is working on six different subprojects. For the last two years, he has been studying several truckloads of Peoria Lake sediment placed on the University of Illinois sand farm. He noted the soil there is extremely sandy; crops can't be grown without irrigation on a two to three time per week basis. They placed six inches of sediment into the sandy soil to see what would happen. Dr. Marlin then showed the IRCC two ears of corn, one, grown in sediment plus sand soil, clearly larger and more plentiful than the other, grown in simple sand soil.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Governor Quinn thanked Dr. Marlin for his presentation and expressed his hope that the project would be already underway on a day of the meeting in Peoria (October 7-9, 2003). However, some details have yet to be worked out. While all of the issues related to potential contamination were addressed by the IEPA and the Chicago Department of Environment, some of the funding issues still needed to be sorted. He indicated that he would really like to start this project this fall as a pilot project, and if it works well, there is plenty of mud on the bottom of the Illinois River.

Lt. Gov. Quinn noted that the river has become too shallow, which is not good for fishing, boating or other recreational activities. He expressed his hope that this project of the Council and the state would demonstrate how high quality river sediment could be used to reclaim brownfields and bring them to life as public parks. This project would become a model, not only for other parts in Illinois, but also for other states. He considered this project as a great environmental step forward. The project is a step-by-step process and acknowledged that substantial progress was made since the last IRCC meeting. The Lt. Governor then thanked the U.S. Army Corps and IEPA for their excellent cooperation on this project; he also noted the great working relationship with the City of Chicago.

Lt. Gov. Quinn also noted that during the last IRCC meeting, there was a discussion on forming an Invasive Species Task Force. He brought this to the attention of Governor Blagojevich right after the IRCC meeting, however, due to the overall trend to reduce a number of commissions and boards in Illinois, the suggestion from the Governor was to work with the already existing Illinois Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force. He said the Council should coordinate its invasive species activities with the above-mentioned Task Force.

Mike Conlin – Illinois Department of Natural Resources (for Director Brunsvold)

Mr. Conlin stated that five years ago, IDNR's Fisheries Division set up a planning group to address the issue of aquatic invasive species and develop a comprehensive statewide plan. He said that this group included representatives from the Illinois Natural History Survey, State Water Survey, the Nature Preserves Commission - Natural Heritage Division, IDNR Office of Water Resources, and the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant.

The group completed the plan, which was accepted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This year is the 4th year they have received grants to implement the plan. He said they needed more money than they could get from these grants to fully implement the course despite some recent progress. In the interim, there is a lack of any kind of a comprehensive plan against invasive species, in particular, terrestrial types. He said that there is work currently occurring across the state relating to plants, terrestrial mammals and birds, but there is a need for a state-approved comprehensive plan.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn reiterated the Governor's position was that since an Aquatic Territorial Nuisance Species Task Force already exists, the Lt. Governor should utilize the IRCC to plug into the Task Force created by IDNR and a number of other agencies.

Mike Conlin

Mr. Conlin informed the IRCC that the next meeting would take place in two weeks. He also said the Task Force had self-expanded to include the Aquatic and Terrestrial Task Force representing a wide variety of disciplines. As Chair of the Task Force, and on behalf of David Thomas, Mr. Conlin acknowledged that the group appreciated the assistance and participation of the Lt. Governor and the Council. He noted that there is a Rapid Response team in existence, which focuses on stopping the movement of Asian Carp. The Rapid Response team has been meeting for the last three or four months. He ended his comments by handing out Asian Carp information sheets and cards.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn asked that this information be disseminated by Harmony Dean prior to asking the IRCC to work together with the special Task Force. He also expressed his belief that working together would be the best solution. Next, Lt. Gov. Quinn asked Daphne Mitchell, a new citizen member of the Council, to speak.

Daphne Mitchell

Ms. Mitchell said that she was from LaSalle County and a founding member of "Residents Against a Polluted Environment." She is a nurse and serves as Director of the Operating Room at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago. She lives in Ottawa, is interested in Illinois River preservation, and is a member of both the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn noted an important bill coming before the Illinois General Assembly in the November veto session. (The General Assembly's six final days of the current session are November 4, 5, 6, 18, 19 and 20.) The bill would protect Illinois wetlands; it was passed by the Illinois House on the second-to-last day of the regular session, and is now in the Senate. The Lt. Governor introduced Rep. Karen May, the sponsor of the bill, to address the Council regarding the bill.

Representative Karen May

Representative May noted that the wetlands protection bill would not have passed the Illinois House without the Governor and Lt. Governor's assistance. The Governor's office made phone calls as did the Lt. Governor and the Lt. Governor put his staff to work tracking the legislation. The bill has been three years in the making and she feels they are more than halfway toward getting the bill passed.

May provided history on her involvement with the wetlands legislation, beginning in January 2001, with the Swank decision that left Illinois wetlands unprotected. She took office about the same time and was given a "nudge" into looking into the issue by Rebecca Grill who was chair of the Environmental Commission in Highland Park at the time.

May indicated that 152,000 acres of isolated wetlands have been left unprotected in Illinois and 90% of these acres have already been filled in or dredged by farming, house building, etc. Thus, there is a diminishing resource, which is important for filtering water, protecting against flooding, recreation and replenishing aquifers. She said there are different reasons for protecting wetlands in different parts of the state. In the northern suburbs, there are cost issues associated with flooding. On the western edge of the Chicago area, there is a concern for replenishing aquifers. Downstate wetland protection may be associated with recreation.

The first year of May's involvement, she attempted to codify what was already in place with stormwater management counties and drafted a bill allowing them to use their stormwater management authority on an emergency basis to protect wetlands. The bill was opposed by realtors and homebuilders, who introduced their own bill to strip authority from the stormwater management counties. Because of this, some of the counties felt they would be in worse shape if the bill went to the House floor, so she backed off and didn't call the bill.

May held hearings that summer to draft a statewide standard, which was difficult given the differences in needs between urbanized upstate and agricultural downstate. Working with environmental groups, she tried to negotiate with the opponent groups (now about 12 business organizations). She drafted a bill, HB 6013, and the opponent groups indicated they did not want to negotiate, but would introduce their own bill. Her bill failed. She said it felt a bit like "David and Goliath" with twelve of the most powerful business interests in the state fighting against a freshman legislator and environmental groups—the Illinois Environmental Council, the Open Lands Project, the Sierra Club and The Nature Conservancy.

She said that after the bill's defeat, they began to assemble a coalition. In addition to environmental groups, they drew on help from college students doing research and organizing for a campaign. Speaker Madigan appointed retired judge Michael Getty to serve as a negotiator and "intense" negotiations ensued for three or four months. They were able to concur with agreed language on important issues such as buffering and tiering (a condition of the business community—saving only the most pristine wetlands), and gave concessions to the agricultural community on the larger wetlands downstate. Despite this level of agreement, the groups were unable to decide on three major issues: (1) the preemption of local authority, (2) which agency would oversee the new law, and (3) whether fees would be in the bill.

May and the environmental coalition felt that IDNR would be the natural agency to oversee the new act since the IEPA does not currently have wetlands specialists on staff and IDNR already administers the Interstate Wetlands Act (applies to highway construction). But, she believed legislators would be able to decide all three issues.

The economic advantages of saving wetlands, working with the Illinois Environmental Council, Sierra Club, and Open Lands are huge.

- ✍ Eco-tourism, according to Rep. May, is a \$60 billion industry nationally.
- ?? In Illinois, "watchable wildlife" is a \$1.6 billion industry, and is responsible for 20,000 jobs, \$712 million in retail sales, and \$40 million in (state and local) sales taxes.
- ?? Flood damage in Illinois costs \$40 million per year.
- ?? A wetlands protection act in Massachusetts saved \$17 million annually.
- ?? One acre of wetlands can store 1.5 million gallons of floodwater.

She then noted that conservation efforts actually save money for homebuilders and developers. Infrastructure costs can be lowered by one-third, and builders report faster sales and higher resale values when wetlands are present. DuPage County has spent more than \$100 million on flood control through wetlands and outpaced the entire metropolitan area in home starts, despite having the strongest wetlands protection ordinance.

Concurrent with efforts to inform legislators, she worked roll calls on three committees to see where she could obtain the necessary votes for passage. It was decided that the bill would go to the Committee on Local Government, of which she was a member, now in her second term, and the bill was her top priority. A grassroots effort across the state was started to enlist support of the bill, along with e-mail trees from people from stormwater management and good conservationists from throughout the state, letting people know to call their state representatives.

In addition, an editorial in the Chicago Tribune stated that the opponents' bill would preempt stronger existing protections in Lake, Kane and DuPage Counties, as well as measures under consideration in Cook and McHenry Counties. The Tribune editorial also suggested the proposed bill's requirements could easily be met by most builders.

The Committee on Local Government passed the bill with a groundswell of support, and May described the situation on the floor on the day before the end of the session in May. She said the revenue bills had all been passed and Speaker Madigan moved to the resolutions, typically the last order of business. So she went to the Speaker and asked that the bill be called for a vote, and at 11:30pm, before adjournment, the Speaker called the bill. May spoke on behalf of the bill and Rep. Bill Black spoke against. A vote was called and "we had five votes to spare."

May said it was a great victory, a bipartisan effort, but that it was mostly a Chicago and collar county issue. The expected support from downstate did not materialize. The bill now moves to the Senate carried Senator Terry Link. She ended her comments by saying they hope to run the bill during the fall veto session.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Representative May and said the bill's passage by the House demonstrated how one committed person really can make a difference. He next introduced Senator Terry Link from Lake County, "our champion of wetlands in the Senate." Lt. Gov. Quinn pledged to work with the Senator and mentioned the effectiveness of e-mail networks in organizing support for issues of public interest.

Senator Terry Link

Senator Link thanked Lt. Gov. Quinn for his strong initiative on bills like the wetlands bill, saying "we always need the help from up above." He indicated that there is progress on the bill in the Senate. He met with a number of groups and has several co-sponsors. He said it is one of the few bills for which he has Republicans from DuPage County and Democrats from Cook on the same side. While he believes he already has the 30 votes necessary for passage in the Senate (from Cook and the Collar Counties), they are working on some small amendments to the bill. These amendments will be prepared but may not have to be used. He recently called Senator Vince DeMuzio, Chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, for support and the Senator assured him he would help move the bill if Senator Link had the necessary votes.

Link has talked to opponents of the bill and he himself strictly opposes preemption of the existing protections, which is what he believes the opponents are pushing. He told the homebuilders they needed to "think outside the box" if they wanted to suggest any amendments for the bill. He believes that there has been misrepresentation of the bill's requirements among homebuilders and that it will not have any impact on the homebuilding industry in Illinois. He then acknowledged the hard work of Representative May in the House and encouraged the IRCC meeting attendees to "keep those letters coming—to my colleagues!"

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Senator Link, praised him as an excellent organizer and a leader of this effort, and said the wetlands bill is probably the number one environmental bill in the veto session. Next, Lt. Gov. Quinn introduced Representative Ricca Slone from Peoria.

Rep. Ricca Slone

Representative Slone encouraged attendees, the organizations they represent, and all voters to contact their state senators in support of the wetlands protection bill. She said that the first time the House bill was called they thought they had the required votes for passage, but did not, and that there will be pressure on both sides to pass or defeat the bill in the Senate. She added that she is proud of the work being done by the IRCC, and particularly of the work done by Lt. Gov. Quinn and his staff since taking over.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Rep. Slone for her hard work and reminded her the Council would see her in Peoria soon. He then introduced Dr. John Magnuson to speak about climate change, global warming and protecting the ecosystem.

Dr. John Magnuson

Dr. Magnuson, Professor Emeritus of Zoology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, discussed climate change's potential impacts on Illinois with a particular emphasis on water. He is one of the authors of the Union of Concerned Scientists report, "Confronting Climate Change in the Great Lakes," released in April. Magnuson discussed how Illinois could be 5–12°F (3–7°C) warmer in the summer by the end of the 21st century and how Illinois climate could resemble that of east Texas.

Climate Projection: In general, over this century the region's climate will grow considerably warmer and probably drier, especially in summer. Although *average* annual precipitation may not change much, changes in seasonal precipitation patterns will be more distinct: winter and spring precipitation is expected to increase while summer rain could decrease by as much as 50 percent. Stream flow will reflect these changes in rainfall, and lake levels are expected to drop overall. Heavy downpours will likely become more frequent in the future. Some of these changes have already been detected in regional precipitation trends.

Evidence of climate change includes rising temperatures are rising, especially in winter, more frequent extreme rainfall events (24-hr and 7-day), shorter winters, earlier springs, and shorter duration of ice cover, especially on smaller lakes. More severe rain events require over-designing stormwater capacity; many of today's systems are already inadequate.

Potential Impacts: Likely impacts to Illinois rivers and lakes include: cold-water fish may decline dramatically, while cool- & warm-water species move north; aquatic ecosystem disruptions will be compounded by invasions of non-native species; summer lake stratification will increase and cause higher risk of dead-zones and fish kills; more intense flooding and lower summer water levels increase the challenges for wetlands and species; lower flood-absorbing capacity; and fewer safe breeding sites for amphibians, shorebirds and waterfowl.

Preparing for Water Supply and Quality Changes: Continued and increasing human impact on water will coincide with the changes in rainfall, runoff, lake levels, and soil moisture. Water managers must increase their flexibility and adaptive capacity to respond to the shifting precipitation patterns, increasing climate variability, and changing water availability. They must ensure that:

- ?? Ground and surface water supplies, as well as aquatic habitats and the species living in them, are protected;
- ?? Effective water-conservation strategies for use during summer months and in water-intensive agricultural and industrial operations are implemented;
- ?? Sewer and septic systems are upgraded, and non-point pollution from roads, farmland, etc. are better controlled;
- ?? Water management and conservation efforts increase supply reliability for high quality water-dependent industries;
- ?? Water diversions are addressed proactively with climate change in mind, so as to reduce conflicts within and beyond the region; and
- ?? Heat-trapping gases are reduced as quickly and aggressively as possible, so the worst impacts of a changing climate can be avoided.

The full report is available from UCS at www.ucsusa.org/greatlakes.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Dr. Magnuson for sharing his presentation and asked the IRCC to support the wetlands bill being discussed by Rep. May and Sen. Link since it is important to

have wetlands that help in dealing with the flooding issues. Lt. Gov. Quinn noted that he witnessed two big floods of the Illinois River: 1973 and 1993, while he served as State Treasurer. He said that those really bad floods brought serious damage to Illinois and Mississippi river towns, and that climate issues had to be closely monitored so we could be ready better handle such weather-related events.

Working Group Presentations

Strategic Planning/Adaptive Management Working Group: presented by Karen Hobbs

Ms. Hobbs stated that the Strategic Planning group reviewed each of the 34 recommendations made by the Integrated Management Plan of 1997. They realized a lot of progress had been made on many of these recommendations and it would be highly desirable to have more information on the activity and the status of each of these recommendations. Ms. Hobbs confirmed that by the next meeting in October the group would have a more succinct and more concrete recommendation to the Council on how to move forward.

Community Action Working Group: presented by Jo Skoglund

Ms. Skoglund stated the group viewed their assignment to find a project that the IRCC could actually implement like a program or an event. They began by analyzing the ongoing outreach activities by various groups involved in the Illinois River Watershed. She noted that Friends of the Illinois River annually hosts the Illinois River Sweep and Friends of the Chicago River annually hold their Chicago River Rescue day, but as a group, they came to the conclusion there were a lot of organizations throughout the Illinois River watershed and throughout the State doing some type of awareness campaign or clean-ups. She also mentioned there are many river-related educational resources available as well put out by different organizations. There are many events and programs, but no network and no coordination of efforts.

Ms. Skoglund pointed out that everyone has good intentions and are doing great things, but as a river community, we do not really know who is doing what and when. Therefore the Community Action working group would like the IRCC to host one day (spring or fall – TBD) the “*Its’ Our River*” campaign. She said that it could be anybody’s river, anybody’s effort, and anybody’s awareness program, and the intention of this campaign would be to educate, recreate and celebrate. She said that this campaign would encourage eco- tourism and target one day of the year to urge people to go out and not only clean the river, but also enjoy the river while paddling, fishing, boating, bird-watching, taking photographs, walking, hiking, or biking. She also suggested that some people might do this for the first time; they would learn to appreciate the river. As they learn to appreciate, they would then take care of it.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn said that it was a very good idea, and there is a need for some kind of the watershed summit – a linkage between all the rivers in Illinois. Lt. Gov. Quinn also noticed that this was a part of the electronic democracy idea, when people - linked through email and the Internet – could communicate. He acknowledged that much of the success in the Plum Island effort should be attributed to the electronic communication vehicle, the website.

State Issues Working Group

Marcia Willhite - IEPA

Ms. Willhite said that the State Issues Working Group during the June 9 meeting identified issues for the IRCC to consider as priorities for potential funding and as the focus areas for potential activities. She began by defining the scope of the issue on water quality with four areas outlined in the Clean Water Act (she referred to the color maps distributed to the IRCC members and attendees):

- ?? Supports aquatic life
- ?? Supports recreational use

- ?? Supports public drinking water supply
- ?? Supports safe fishing - catching fish that are safe to eat

Willhite mentioned problem areas which still exist in the basin, and additional areas need a better assessment for some of these uses. There are federal, state and local agencies programs in place to deal specifically with reducing of sediment and nutrients – two major sources of water quality impairment throughout the State and in the Illinois River basin. These types of programs were funded through under section 319 of the Clean Water Act and serve as a funding source for projects dealing with non-point source pollution, such as the Clean Lakes Program, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Also, she mentioned the Environmental Quality Incentives program, funded under the Farm Bill. In addition, the State Revolving Fund, typically used for infrastructure, could be used for water quality projects.

Program coverage is not an issue; funding for some projects that implemented practices that improve water quality could be an issue. She expressed her belief that some of these types of projects could be very successful, so it was important to focus on the watershed planning groups to identify the potential projects that would enhance water quality (example – sedimentation project resulted in significant load reduction).

Willhite concluded there have always been more projects for enhancing water quality than available funding; however, funding might be available for the implementation of practices, but for a very important part – planning within a watershed. Similar to that for a technical support: very useful in a specific watershed practices might be in place, but the landowners or the producers or the watershed groups need some technical assistance for designing these practices appropriately to be used in their watershed.

Debbie Bruce - IDNR

Ms. Bruce stated the State Issues Working Group identified data collection, data analysis and getting the data out as one of the critical priority areas. There is a lack of a consistent funding mechanism for collecting the data and making sure that it is in a usable fashion. IDNR has a tremendous amount of data on the watersheds, but the data contains gaps for the years not covered by grants. She noted that the data was collected at different levels, which makes it difficult to use. The Integrated Management Plan was used as a framework to coordinate all ongoing efforts in the Illinois River watershed and the Illinois River Decision Support System was a useful tool created by the Illinois State Water Survey. This tool requires a consistent funding mechanism for internal coordination to keep data being updated.

The IRDSS helps decision-makers look on different types of the data set when they have a problem they could focus better on restoration efforts. Currently, it is possible to search by geographic location, and there is a lot of good data, but it is still difficult to make a sound decision since the data sets have gaps, and they were collected at a different level (an example: some backwater lakes have not had sedimentation surveys done since 1976). She also said that even though there were a lot of programs and a lot of demand, the limited resources have to be targeted in the most effective manner, so they need to try to get funding sources to make sure that the good data help make the adequate decisions. Also, the dedicated funding for monitoring is important for evaluation of obtained results. She concluded by giving several recommendations:

- ?? Task the SAC with identifying critical information needs (example: the need to collect more water quality data be used for regulatory reasons - for planning TMDL).
- ?? Set up a sub-group to identify funding sources for IRDSS data management to assist with analysis and dissemination of data.
- ?? Identify consistent funding source for the ISWS Stream and Watershed Crew to conduct the necessary watershed assessments.

- ?? Identify potential consistent funding to expand the ISWS hydrology/hydraulics and sediment transport modeling.

Bruce said coordinating data for the Decision Support System would cost \$60,000 to \$100,000 annually for one or two people working with the data sets, but for collection of the hydrology data, they would be needed some additional resources.

She also gave an overview of the state program, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) program, which is based on the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and includes conservation easements and conservation practices added to the CRP intended to restore the flood plain acres in the Illinois River basin. The program has been a tremendous state-federal partnership. To date, there are 110,000 acres enrolled on the federal side of the program, and about 60,000 acres on the state side. The agreement with USDA was just recently renewed and CREP has additional 100,000 acres, which translates into 20,000 per year with the State appropriation (\$4.8 million for easements had already been obtained for this fiscal year). Enrollment in the program is temporarily closed because of some small budget procedural difficulties that were being resolved and that they were getting some dollars released. They are currently servicing people on the waiting list since 2001, and they have been honoring their contracts first. She informed all the contracts would be covered, and enrollment in the program would be reopen after January 1, 2004.

Richard Acker – Focus: Conservation

Mr. Acker stated the great need for conservation and restoration: more than 500 rare and high quality natural areas in Illinois remain unprotected. Even for areas that have been protected, many are in a severely degraded state. From 1992 to 1997, Illinois lost over 160,000 acres of prime farmland to development – the 5th highest rate in the country. More than 95% of Illinois counties do not have updated, comprehensive inventories of historic sites, and also lack historic preservation ordinance.

Next, Acker outlined the geographic scope of the issue by saying that problems, such as strong development pressure, were prevalent throughout the state, but were especially pronounced in the Illinois River basin where 90% of the population of Illinois lives. He identified several conservational programs: CRP/CREP, PACE, OLTF, OSLAD, NAAF, DNR Surveys, Federal Historic Tax Credit Program.

CRP/CREP

CRP/CREP is a very innovative land retirement program that is very successful but woefully under-funded. Not only does this program allow for habitat restoration and permanent easements, it allows the State to target easements to areas to reduce erosion into streams as well as improve water quality. He outlined the goals of the program:

- ? Reduce Nutrients by 10%
- ? Reduce Sedimentation in Illinois River 20%
- ? Increase Populations of Waterfowl, Shorebirds, and Nongame Grassland Birds by 15%
- ? Increase Native Fish and Mussel Stocks in the Lower Reaches by 10%

The last Open Enrollment ended in November 2001 when the Federal Acreage cap was reached and state dollars expended, but the new MOA in December 2002 provides for 100,000 additional acres through December 31, 2007. The program anticipated re-opening in February or March 2004. Acker discussed financial resources indicating:

- ? The State has appropriated \$46.7M to date for match for 132,000 acres
- ? USDA has committed \$262M
- ? The next 100,000 acres will cost an estimated \$250M
- ? \$48M State/\$202M Federal (every State dollar leverages four federal dollars).

Acker defined other program needs as following:

OLTF – Open Lands Trust Fund:

In the current budget, funding was slashed from \$40 million annually to only \$5 million. This amount is entirely insufficient to meet the needs for natural land protection in Illinois.

OSLAD / NAAF:

Although the State recently restored funding allocation to these programs from the real estate transfer tax, there remains a risk that these programs will again be targets for cuts in the future.

DNR Surveys:

There is a need to ensure sufficient funding for the Illinois State Water Survey's Stream & Watershed Restoration Crew. In addition, it is important to return full funding to the C2000 program in IDNR and the Department of Agriculture.

Acker also gave a brief overview of incentives and funding for local governmental conservation and planning efforts:

PACE:

Kane County has a very successful program, with a large backlog of applicants; other counties could benefit from similar programs. Moreover, if we had state program, could access federal matching dollars under federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (Local Legacy PA 93-03280, a brand new law, which becomes effective Jan. 1, 2004. The Local Legacy approach is premised on three core principles: (1) the importance of incentives for county-municipal partnerships to increase cooperation at the local level, (2) the wisdom of a resource preservation plan that looks holistically at agricultural, natural, and cultural / historic resources together rather than separately, and (3) the utility of a three-step process for protecting these resources, *i.e.*, inventory the resources, develop a plan to protect them, and implement the plan. This new voluntary law provides the framework for local communities, with the assistance of the State, to identify the most important resources and develop a plan to save those resources.

Given the State's current budget difficulties, there is no funding for the program planned for the current fiscal year. Nonetheless, implementation can begin as local governments may set up local steering committees to begin to inventory their resources. Hopefully, funding in the form of grants will be available in the Local Legacy program in future years. In addition, it might be wise to seek out pilot projects in a small number of counties to demonstrate how the program could work.

Federal Issues Working Group: presented by Ed McCullough

Mr. McCullough mentioned the following issues:

(a) Invasive species: the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act (NAISA) is in Committee hearings. With respect to the problem of invasive species, one of the group members, Mike Spence from the U.S. Coast Guard, informed the group about ballast exchange practices employed by foreign vessels coming into U.S. waters. Currently, there are problems with ships coming from Third World countries: they do not have adequate help needed to get rid of invasive species contained in their ballast tanks.

(b) Oil Pollution Act of 1990: enacted in reaction to the well spills, the U.S. as a leader importer of petroleum required all oil transporting ships to have double hulls as a safety feature.

(c) Inadequacy of mapping of flood plains: the Federal Emergency Management Administration is underfunded, and, as a result, inadequate maps have a significant effect on rivers management.

(d) Terrorism/homeland security

Comments by Council Members

Laurene von Klan, Friends of the Chicago River

Ms. von Klan was pleased to work closely with Lt. Gov. Quinn to host the first annual Chicago River Summit on September 27, 2003. More and more groups were becoming interested and involved in river-related activities: community groups, residents along banks, paddling groups, and stewardship groups. The mix of Chicago River stakeholders has changed and the Chicago River has never had a forum since Voices of the Stream in 1992. She noted the 1st Annual Chicago River Summit is a great opportunity to pull everyone together in order and will give everyone involved a chance to meet each other while serving as a good educational opportunity. Panelists will focus on issues facing the Chicago River today: river reconnection/dam removal, water quality-related issues (particularly, bacterial pollution and disinfection), economic development opportunities, and recreation and access. She hoped that this would be the first of many regularly scheduled annual events in watersheds around the state.

She was delighted to have Lt. Gov. Quinn and his staff at the Chicago River Rescue Day on May 10, 2003 and emphasized the wide variety of participants, including the MWRD, state representatives, and Cook County Board Commissioners, who showed support for the river is increasing dramatically.

Angel Martin – U.S. Geological Survey (for Robert Holmes)

Mr. Marin noted that it is important to focus on long-term data monitoring programs, specifically to collect trends on water polarity and discharge.

Christine Urban (US EPA – Watersheds and Wetlands Program for Tim Henry)

Ms. Urban noted a recent water quality credits trading conference, which was well attended, and drew a great deal of public interest. As a result, the US EPA is looking for places to demonstrate water quality credits trading programs. However, she noted that this new model in water quality management has to be studied first and implemented only if feasible.

Michael Spence - U.S. Coast Guard (for Captain Terrence W. Carter)

Mr. Spence noted that he recently moved to Illinois for his job with the USGS and is currently working on river infrastructure – trying to identify factors that may impact infrastructure along the river under a broad mandate where infrastructure is defined as any structure on, under, near or adjacent to waters of the U.S. (it used to be navigable waters only, but the definition has changed).

William Kruidenier – University of Illinois – College of ACES (for Dean Robert Easter)

Mr. Kruidenier has been working with the National Research and Education Center and funded 12 internships this year through a federal grant. Areas of research include wetland species - changes over years, and river communities - history and future opportunities, looking specifically at marketing opportunities. Census maps of watersheds were designed by a student both by county and by block. If asked about a specific watershed, he could get all census data within 48 hours.

Brendan Moore - DCEO (for Jack Lavin)

Mr. Moore stated that DCEO was responsible for assessing commerce in the state and improving the economic climate. The department received a grant to assist with transportation of sediment. Although it seems like an environmental issue, it also has a huge impact on commerce. DCEO wants to continue to assist in environmental issues that extend to commerce and economic opportunity in the state.

Mike Conlin - IDNR (for Joel Brunsvold)

Mr. Conlin referred to the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and noted the current authorization for Illinois River 2020 expires on September 30, 2004 and the need to amend Section 519 to extend it to the year 2015. Section 519 must include the Peoria Riverfront project to allow construction to begin at least two years earlier than it would under the regular quote process since Section 519 expedites critical restoration projects.

While the IRCC had discussed this in June, committee leadership in Washington has changed and discussion needs to focus on support in Washington D.C. including who needs to be contacted, putting together a packet of information and determining increased quota preparations for FY2005.

Steve Chard - IDOA (for Chuck Hartke)

Mr. Chard reviewed the Farm Conservation 2000 initiatives focusing on a nutrient management planning concept concerned with excessive loading of nutrients by the farming community while working with farmers to develop nutrient management plans. Farmers will work in conjunction and follow recommendations of the Illinois Grounding Handbook to ensure that they are putting the appropriate amount of nutrients on the ground as they conduct their farming activities and the Illinois Department of Agriculture will cover this at the Governor's Conference in October.

Richard Worthen

Mr. Worthen commented that both government and citizens are still legally adding pollution to our river. The IEPA has been approving permits allowing more pollution and needs to be addressed. He thought that, in part, there are no standards and no treatments for nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen that are put into the river. He thought that there must be some economic benefit: if not dumped into river, these nutrients could be reused or recycled. However, he noted that the IEPA has been critically short of funds for years. The new NPDES bill required that fees should go to the funding of the NPDES program in Illinois, a program in existence for 30 years. In the meantime, the NPDES permit program needs to be self-supporting and not financed by taxpayers. Currently, the permits are not being reviewed properly. He said that the IEPA serves a bookkeeping function only which needs to be expanded.

Worthen noted another issue: a representative from Ohio State University gave an evaluation of individual mechanical sewage treatment systems in Will County (several thousand were evaluated) – and systems don't work. He quoted a study of four criteria, 60% of systems in Will County failed once and 50% failed twice proving that the issue needs to be addressed. This is further complicated by the fact that the issue is not under the IEPA jurisdiction but under the Illinois Department of Public Health. Worthen stated that the Private Sewage Act and success of individual mechanical systems needed to be looked at because mechanical systems located along the river do nothing but dump untreated or semi-treated materials into the river. He pointed out that it is necessary to look at both big and small systems to ensure no more dumping into the river.

Marcia Willhite – IEPA (for Renee Cipriano)

Ms. Willhite said that, first, she would like to follow up on the credit trading issue and that the IEPA would develop a series of workshops in order to increase interest among stakeholders in trading water quality credits. She noted that not every contaminant could be considered for credit trading but that some nutrients are a good starting point.

Regarding on-site surface discharging systems, Willhite stated a collaborative approach is required. She noted the Illinois Department of Public Health along with the local health departments have been authorizing installations of mechanical sewage discharging systems that may not be effective in treating of domestic sewage and could cause problems. She noted that the IEPA and IDPH are interested in reforming the existing situation. New legislation has

been proposed to limit the installation of small-scale discharging systems as well as large-scale installations that now require permits. A number of systems have been increasing, which creates a need for developing more efficient administrative processes, maintenance and follow-up procedures.

Tom Austin USDA

Mr. Austin mentioned a newly completed CREP signoff that accepted another 2 million acres into the program. He did note that if CREP were to reopen again, they needed to determine which agency would provide technical service on those contracts. There is a need to add technical funding of \$100 per acre to develop the plans that go along with the CREP contracts. Once contracts are being processed, plans need to be in place.

Daphne Mitchell

Ms. Mitchell commented about the rapid loss of farmland along the Route 55 and 80 in LaSalle County, the second largest county in Illinois, but with no zoning. The ongoing development is in the middle of farm acreage. She shared with the IRCC an observation, in last 30 years, the water quality has significantly improved and many residents are now engaged in such recreational activities as fishing, hiking, swimming etc. but there is so much more to do.

Michael Hine - IDOT (for Tim Martin)

Mr. Hine noted that IDOT was highly aware of importance of wetlands and has been developing partnerships with both IDNR and The Nature Conservancy where roads impact wetlands. He said the main objective was to develop wetland protection through funding.

Hine mentioned a federal authorization bill intended to improve the recreational activities under an Enhancements Program. Over 2,500 miles of trails in Illinois were funded under the last Enhancement Program. Presently, the funding source is under attack at the federal level, but the Illinois Congressional delegation is stressing the importance of this funding to Illinois. Last year, \$30 million in funding was approved. He did not expect a resolution by end of September, however he was still optimistic.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn offered up for a vote for the IRCC to send a letter to the Illinois Congressional delegation regarding the issue. He noted that this program is a good opportunity to bring people close to the river. The vote was unanimous.

Nancy Erickson - Illinois Farm Bureau (for Wendell Shauman)

Ms. Erickson expressed her appreciation for the opportunity for the Farm Bureau to be a part of the Council and noted that she supported the legislation that initiated the IRCC several years ago. The diversity of the IRCC results in a wide variety of groups presenting issues, shows strength, and will result in positive outcomes and more comprehensive programs. The Illinois Farm Bureau continues to support voluntary incentive-based programs, such as CREP; she noted that these programs were vital for agriculture. Also, Erickson pointed out that funding is required not only for the programs, but also for the technical support of these programs. Next, she invited those present to attend the conservation tour offered during the first day of the Governor's Conference in Peoria.

Dr. Nani Bhowmik – Science Advisory Committee

Dr. Bhowmik acknowledged what a great pleasure it was to speak on behalf of the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) in existence for three years. He introduced himself as Chairman, and noted other SAC members present. The SAC has worked on a number of issues discussed during the meeting: some presentations covered the topics referred to in the March 27 IRCC meeting minutes. In this context, he suggested reviewing recommendations made by the SAC to the Council members previously; a total of five recommendations were presented, one was closely related to an issue mentioned earlier: data collection.

Bhowmik said the SAC has many outstanding scientists among its members, many of whom have worked on the Illinois River for their entire lives. Previously, members of the Illinois River Technical Committee expressed interest in working with SAC. Having expertise in a variety of fields, the SAC was readily available to work with the IRCC on various issues. Finally, he invited those present to attend the SAC meeting in Champaign on September 18.

Public Comments

Marc Miller, Prairie Rivers Network

Mr. Miller of Prairie Rivers Network, the statewide river conservation organization and National Wildlife Federation state affiliate, thanked the Lt. Governor for his support of Plum Island and the wetlands legislation. Miller commented on the previous statements on the NPDES fee legislation and funding for water trails.

The NPDES fee legislation was originally intended to address water quality issues. IEPA's "Water Program Needs Survey" identified the need for \$27 million in funding to address Clean Water Act mandates. The legislation would generate \$23 million and would address this need. However, \$18 million generated from the fees were moved over to the general revenue fund, leaving the clean water program with \$7 million. This shortfall should be addressed in the next budget cycle.

On access to rivers for recreation, Miller pointed out an opportunity to create additional access points could easily be done by IDOT. When rebuilding or building new bridges, the agency could retain a public easement and create a canoe access with parking lot, wherever appropriate. This could help increase river recreation and promote our state's rivers and communities as a tourist destination.

Melissa Eaton, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Ms. Eaton said that the Peoria Lakes Basin Alliance - composed of Heartland Water Resource Council, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Tri-County Riverfront Action Forum, and The Nature Conservancy- wanted to invite the IRCC members to a reception on October 8, 2003, from 7:00-8:30 pm. at the Gateway Building in Peoria in conjunction with the Governor's Conference on the Management of the Illinois River, October 7-9. She asked to members to RSVP calling (309) 673-9796 x 232.

Other Business

Saturday, September 20, 2003 – Illinois River Sweep organized by Friends of the Illinois River.

Saturday, September 27, 2003 – 1st Annual Chicago River Summit – Holiday Inn at Wolf Point (350 N. Orleans St., Chicago)

Tuesday, October 7, 2003 – IRCC Quarterly Meeting, Holiday Inn City Centre (Peoria) in conjunction with the 2003 Governor's Conference on the Management of the Illinois River System, October 7-9, 2003. (www.heartlandwaterresources.org) Reception begins at 5:00pm and the IRCC meeting convenes at 6:30pm.

Adjournment

The Lt. Governor adjourned meeting at 4:37 p.m.