

DRAFT

Illinois River Coordinating Council Minutes of the Tuesday, October 7, 2003 Meeting Holiday Inn City Centre, Peoria

Call to Order: Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Harmony Dean, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, called the roll.

Roll Call:

Citizen Member

Richard Worthen, Dr. Wendell Shauman (Illinois Farm Bureau), Brad McMillan (Office of Congressman Ray LaHood), Michael Reuter (The Nature Conservancy of Illinois)

State Agency Members

Debbie Bruce 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), Mike Beaty for Director Charles Hartke (Illinois Department of Agriculture).

Ex-Officio Members

Christine Urban for Tim Henry (US EPA Region V), Robert Holmes (U.S. Geological Survey), William Gradle (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Lisa Scott for William Graff (USDA Farm Service Agency), Gary Rolfe for Dean Robert Easter (University of Illinois – College of ACES), Gary Loss for Colonel Duane P. Gapinski (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), Ross Adams (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Members Absent

Laurene von Klan (Friends of the Chicago River), Lee Bunting (Illinois Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts), Daphne Mitchell, Director Jack Lavin (Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity), John Rogner (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Captain Terrence Carter (U.S. Coast Guard), Doug Wilson (USDA – Rural Development).

Approval of Minutes of the September 12, 2003 Meeting: Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Rep. Karen May and Ricca Slone, and also Sen. Terry Link for participating in the previous meeting and speaking on the topics of the Illinois River and wetlands protection, and made a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Willhite and unanimously approved.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn began his remarks by mentioning the “Mud-to-Parks” Initiative and expressed his hope that the commencement of dredging in Peoria Lake will occur soon. He explained the goal of this program: the excessive amount of sediment that has accumulated through years in the Illinois River in Peoria area would be removed wherever possible and transported by barges to Chicago for the purpose of remediation of a former industrial site. This will allow a former slag field located on the banks of Lake Michigan to be converted into a lakefront park. The quality of the sediment was by IEPA and found acceptable for topsoil use at the site. Lt. Gov. Quinn noted John Marlin, Illinois Waste Management Research Center, began working on the concept of sediment transportation 31 years ago. He expressed hope that the first barges loaded with dredged sediment will be in the water next month since funding for the project has been obtained by DCEO, and all necessary testing of the material has been completed.

This project will create a precedent that can work on the upper as well as lower parts of the Illinois River wherever brownfields exist. It would be a great achievement if the project could be done this year. Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked everyone involved in the project for his/her hard work.

Specifically, Lt. Gov. Quinn noted Harmony Dean's hard work in coordinating this project. The "Mud-to-Parks" project is an action item on the IRCC agenda, and he would like the Council to be known for and focus its efforts on this and other "action" type projects.

Another project was brought to the IRCC's attention in June: the development of Plum Island located right below Starved Rock, which is the most visited state park in Illinois (attended by more than 2 million visitors annually). Plum Island is a small island in the Illinois River that is home to bald eagles in the winter. Lt. Gov. Quinn referred to an upcoming presentation on eco-tourism and noted watching nature and participating in the nature-related activities is a great way to encourage tourism in Illinois. From December to February, thousands of people visit Starved Rock to watch the eagles flying over the Illinois River and Plum Island. During cold winter months, Illinois has the largest eagle population of all other states in the continental U.S. He noted it is quite an honor for Illinois and thanked all who have been working to protect the eagle population in Illinois. Plum Island is under an attack from a group of developers, so-called "predators with bulldozers" seeking to develop the island and build about 50 condos and a marina. However, the U.S. Army Corps, IDNR and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency all have a stake in preserving the wilderness and pristine nature of Plum Island. Since the June IRCC meeting and the successful on-line petition www.saveoureagles.org, thousands of Illinois citizens have registered their opinion: save Plum Island, save the eagles.

The goal is for Plum Island to belong to the people of Illinois, their children and grandchildren – to all generations to come, so eagles are welcome at Plum Island and our State. Saving Plum Island is another important effort where we are making progress and expressed his hope that at the next IRCC meeting Plum Island will be in public hands. To support his point, Lt. Gov. Quinn referred to a copy of a letter he received from the U.S. Army Corps addressed to the developers of Plum Island stating non-negotiable easement rights cover the entire area of Plum Island - it belongs to the United States of America. If citizens from all over the State want to be involved in an environmental cause that means something, whether it's protecting our great waterfront and dredging the river when sediment becomes a serious problem; whether it is protecting the eagles habitat that is near the river; or improving water quality throughout the State while implementing pilot projects funded by the potential \$35 million Clean Water Trust Fund, we need to get them involved and invested in these great environmental opportunities.

Lt. Gov. Quinn called on attendees to come up with innovative ideas that can become pilot projects and good models and will result in improving the water quality throughout the State. The IRCC has to be dedicated to this type of work on the Illinois River and all watersheds, and the Clean Water Initiative was designed to give citizens an opportunity to see what we could do when we work together.

Next, Lt. Gov. Quinn acknowledged the extremely fine work of the hundreds of volunteers across Illinois who participated in Illinois River Sweep 2003; a citizen volunteer effort coordinated by an outstanding group - Friends of the Illinois River. On September 20, thousands of volunteers came to the river to help clean it up in their own way. Lt. Gov. Quinn mentioned he participated in the Lemont River Sweep and it was quite inspiring to see hundreds of volunteers cleaning the Illinois River at that location. From the U.S. Coast Guard, several representatives from various state and federal agencies, the local mayor – everybody was participating in the event not for profit, but for causes they truly believe in. He thanked the Friends of the Illinois River, and all participants of the Illinois River Sweep.

To conclude his remarks, Lt. Gov. Quinn assured all that he would work hard to address environmental issues during both the spring legislative session and the fall veto session. The Isolated Wetlands Bill (HB422) discussed in great detail at the September IRCC meeting, would be voted on in the Senate and he would like to see it passed into a law. Lt. Gov. Quinn referred to wetlands as "kidneys of our rivers" that purify and clean the water, and mentioned that Rep. Karen May was the bill sponsor in the House and Sen. Terry Link is the sponsor in the Senate.

It will be a hard fight to pass this bill, and Lt. Gov. Quinn asked attendees to e-mail their senators and support that bill.

Illinois River Coordinating Council Distinguished Service Award

Claudia Emken – Emken appreciated recognition by the IRCC and felt it was an honor to serve as an IRCC citizen member. She joined the Nature Conservancy in 1997 as Director of Government Relations, and the first bill she worked on - together with Rep. Ricca Slone - was the bill that established the Illinois River Coordinating Council. It is very satisfying to her to see how far it had gone. She asked Lt. Gov. Quinn to continue to lend his interest and support to the IRCC and to provide leadership and guidance for the IRCC.

Dr. David Pfeifer – Pfeifer had the privilege of being on the Illinois River Strategy team, the predecessor of the IRCC for 10 years. He views the IRCC as a model at how government should work: citizens, grassroots organizations, state agencies and federal agencies – all working cooperatively and collaboratively to create synergy in order to do good work. He expects to see more and more good work from the IRCC.

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked two more outgoing members for their outstanding commitment to the IRCC, Bud Davis and Mary Alice Erickson, and announced the next presentation by Michael Reuter of The Nature Conservancy's Frank Bellrose Illinois River Valley Conservation Award.

Michael Reuter

Reuter thanked Lt. Gov. Quinn for the opportunity to present this award as recognition of volunteerism and grassroots leadership in the Illinois River Valley. The award is given by The Nature Conservancy every year or two since 1995 to recognize the outstanding leaderships in the Illinois River Valley, in particular, grassroots leadership sustained over a long period of time (favors to recognize individuals as opposed to organizations). He noted the adherence to the guiding principles of the IRCC and adherence to the mission and the values of The Nature Conservancy are two major principles among several criteria used for the award. Next, he turned the microphone to Doug Blodgett, the Illinois River Project Director for The Nature Conservancy.

Doug Blodgett

Blodgett thanked Lt. Gov. Quinn, members of the IRCC, and attendees for the time to make this presentation of a true friend of the Illinois River. Mr. Blodgett noted that since the Clean Water Act, significant strides have been made in restoring and protecting the Illinois River, and while there was certainly more to do, it was encouraging to see the dedication, enthusiasm and resulting programs on the Illinois River as evidenced by the agenda for the Governor's Conference on Management of the Illinois River.

However, as with a majority of our natural resources, the long-term future of the Illinois River is not only dependent on our conservation efforts today, but also equally as important, upon our ability to prepare and inspire tomorrow's scientists, stewards and decision-makers. Robert Williams, "Dr. Bob," has been instrumental in providing tens of thousands of youth opportunities to connect with the river as they learn about its history, culture, art and science. Such activities helped create informed and dedicated constituents who are able to develop and employ future technologies and provide the momentum necessary for restoring and conserving this remarkable natural resource - the Illinois River. Blodgett indicated through both his direct and indirect interactions with students and teachers, developing and implementing programs such as the Rivers Project in thousands of schools in 48 states and 10 countries, and significant special events such as the Clean Water Celebration, now in its 14th year here in Peoria with a cumulative total of over 30,000 participants, Dr. Bob has helped students develop an appreciation for nature in general and our aquatic resources in particular, enhancing their lives

and instilling in them a genuine sense of responsibility for protecting their river and their natural resources.

If one is fortunate to observe Dr. Bob at work or better yet to work with him, it is his enthusiasm, “can-do” attitude and dedication, flowing like water from Dr. Bob through colleagues, teachers and students, which ensures success in whatever the task might be - from getting a water sample from a steep-banked stream to organizing a multi-state conference for junior high and high school students. Early in his career, a young Dr. Bob was looking for a cause, and as individuals and organizations concerned about the future of the Illinois River, we all benefit from the cause he found and embraced. Working with teachers and students to protect what he emphasizes to them as “Our Rivers” - the Illinois River and countless other rivers and streams benefit from his efforts, from the seeds he had helped plant and cultivate in the minds of tomorrow’s citizens and leaders.

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy and other river lovers, The Conservancy’s Frank Bellrose Illinois River Valley Conservation Award was presented to Robert Williams (Dr. Bob), a true and dedicated friend of the Illinois River.

Dr. Bob

Dr. Bob noted for many years, the Clean Water celebration and the River Congress have been held at this location in Peoria, and the 2004 meeting will be on March 21 and 22 at the Civic Center. More than 3,000 people attend the annual event and this year, high school students will be taken down to the river to give them more of a feel of “Our River.” Dr. Bob has always worked with enthusiasm while teaching students about the river. He mentioned just returning from a trip where he canoed 277 miles in 11 days along the Illinois River for the third time. The Illinois River should be referred to as “Our River” since it flows only through Illinois, starts in Chicago and outside Kankakee, and never leaves the State until dumps it into the Mississippi. “If we cannot make this river, THE FINEST RIVER IN AMERICA, then we should be ashamed.”

Lt. Governor Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Dr. Bob for his inspirational speech and noted they met in Alton earlier this year and had a discussion about the river and eagles. Lt. Gov. Quinn said the two issues merge together and stressed his belief in electronic democracy, which provides citizens with an opportunity to get involved in a movement to make sure that it is “Our River”. Email is a very efficient way for citizens to communicate in order to make sure their voices are heard on these important policy issues. Next, he suggested hearing a Science Advisory Committee (SAC) update, and since Dr. Nani Bhowmik was not able to attend the meeting, Dr. John Marlin presented an update of behalf of SAC.

Science Advisory Committee - Dr. John Marlin

Marlin said the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) met recently to address questions posed by Lt. Gov. Quinn. The SAC reviewed a report written by the Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Panel regarding two species of Asian carp moving up the Illinois Waterway toward Chicago. Dr. Marlin said that if they get into the Great Lakes, based on what they had done in other places, it would be an immense ecological disaster because they are prolific breeders and consume large amounts of food. There is a small temporary electronic barrier in place in the Cal-Sag Channel, to keep Asian carp from Lake Michigan by repelling them with electric currents. This temporary barrier is subject to breakdowns, and will be replaced by a more permanent barrier in 2004. The SAC recommended as a stopgap measure, the State be prepared to put toxicant into approx. a 5 mile stretch of the canal near Lemont, where the river channel is very narrow (it’s a dug channel). The plan would be to use either Rotenone or Antimycin to eradicate the fish in this section of the stream. Marlin suggested it would be a rather serious step to take; however, both of these toxicants can be detoxified in place. The SAC reviewed these recommendations and concurred as a last gap measure, this would be a good thing to do in order to keep Asian carp out of Lake Michigan. Other affected fish would be quickly re-colonized. The proposed

measure would not permanently solve the problem, but would slow down the expansion of the Asian carp.

Next, Marlin mentioned the Illinois River Decision Support System (ILDRSS), a computerized, publicly accessible database supported during the last several years at the Illinois State Water Survey with funds coming from the State of Illinois' Environmental Protection Trust Fund. The fund was set up to provide temporary funding, since this fund was not designed to be an ongoing source (although, some funding for this year is available). ILDRSS is on-line and accessible via the World Wide Web. It consists of numerous databases containing data on the Illinois River, and there are plans to include working models so users can input parameters to basic models and get some idea of how the river and the ecosystem would respond. It also has a wide variety of maps of the system and video animations. While using the system, it is possible to see Lake Peoria or the Kankakee River as they appeared in 1903, and then, switch to the present. Marlin noted that the Illinois Natural History Survey provided some data on fisheries and macro-invertebrates; the SAC concluded ILDRSS is a very good resource that needs to be funded. The original plan was to fund it through the Illinois River Ecosystem Study, and then as an ongoing part of the monitoring and assessment that goes with the project. He suggested the IRCC make recommendations to the project managers of the "2020" and "Ecosystem" projects that the Decision Support System be funded or look for other sources of funding in order to provide \$295,000 annually.

Finally, for the last five years, they had been trying to get the oldest aerial photographs of the State of Illinois (late 1930s) preserved and digitized. Three or four sets of photographs exist: one at the University of Illinois library (heavily marked by researchers over the years); another at the Southern Illinois University; and the best, but not totally complete copy, can be found at the Illinois Office of Water Resources. Mainly through the efforts of the Geological Survey, they digitized in high quality the six-county metropolitan Chicago area and five or six other counties in Illinois. Marlin also indicated the National Leadership Grant for Libraries under the subheading of Preservation and Digitization will provide funding for the rest. Marlin stated these he uses aerial photographs for his own research and these photos would provide a tremendous base for learning how the rivers, streams and lakes had changed over time.

Additionally, Dr. Marlin noted that the SAC also has been working on recommendations for the IRCC about an expert panel for outside overview.

Lt. Gov. Quinn

He asked John Marlin to give an update on the sediment project.

Dr. Marlin

Marlin thinks the project is going very well and thanked Lt. Gov. Quinn's for his efforts in pulling together all interested governmental and other parties. He said a lot of progress has been made during last the six months. Since the first meeting in June, the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development has become very active. With the intention to redevelop the former USX site, they contributed \$45,000 to do a risk assessment overseen by the City Department of Environment with a private contractor, which determined from the public health point of view, that Illinois River sediment from Peoria is suitable for use on this type of site. Marlin said the City of Chicago had filed a grant application for \$5 million to develop the site through "Illinois First". He noted that \$2 million could be re-targeted to the movement of sediment and site planning. By paying for the risk assessment from its own funds in order to move this project forward, the City of Chicago had shown a good example of cooperation.

Next, Dr. Marlin thought what remained to be done to get \$1.4 million for actual sediment movement was DCEO approving and finalizing the grant. Currently, he believes the Comptroller is reviewing the grant, and, as soon as the Comptroller approves it, DCEO approval would follow. Next, he said the Chicago City Council would have to approve giving money to IDNR, so

IDNR would be able to arrange with the contractors to ship sediment to Chicago. He noted that Mayor Daley is about to meet with the (Chicago) Park District on this topic. Dr. Marlin mentioned, finally, IDNR had to put a stamp of approval on a draft of the Comprehensive Environmental Review of this project. He concluded that there are a lot of agencies involved, but despite difficulties in coordinating this type of project, much progress had been made. Dr. Marlin said that it would be great to have at least part of the project done by winter. The U.S. Army Corps, Rock Island District, expedited the dredging permit through the federal and state process. Previously, they provided money from the Illinois River Ecosystem Study for the two demonstration projects (moving one partial barge load of sediment from Peoria to Chicago and testing of a variety of handling equipment).

Additionally, he said that the U.S. Army Corps, Chicago District, which has equipment on that site, helped the contractors get a better understanding of the logistics involved. Illinois Marine Towing was a big help with logistics, and, locally, ARTCO Fleeting and Midwest Foundation in conjunction with Arrow Terminal in Chicago – all went way out of their way to help set up the logistics. The Chicago Park District had been very helpful, and IEPA, both Bureau of Land and Bureau of Water, provided a lot of insights how the sediment project had to be implemented from a regulatory standpoint. The Fon Du Lac Park District at East Peoria, which has the recreational boat channel from Spindler Marina to the main channel where the sediment came from, offered to use their permit to remove sediment from their channel for the project.

Lt. Gov. Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn said he would really like to start the project this fall, if it at all possible, since few more governmental agencies had to be moved. Lt. Gov. Quinn said he was optimistic that this initiative would be successful and asked John Marlin where else the sediment from the Illinois River could be applicable.

Dr. Marlin

Marlin noted numerous areas in desperate need of the decent soil, including the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, including American Bottoms on the Alton side; the Gary, Indiana crescent, which is accessible by barge; thousands of acres in Chicago; the Rice Lake Banner Marsh area - just south of Pekin – as well as other old strip mines.

Lt. Gov. Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked John Marlin for his hard work. He noted there are many places in Illinois and outside of Illinois that need to be reclaimed and all need topsoil. Next, he gave a microphone to Brad McMillan, District Chief of Staff for Congressman Ray LaHood, a great friend of the Illinois River and IRCC.

Brad McMillan

McMillan thanked Lt. Gov. Quinn for bringing the IRCC meeting to Peoria. He stressed the significance of the project: \$1.4 million of state money was set aside in order to send 24 barge loads of Peoria Lake sediment to Chicago. He said Lt. Gov. Quinn and his staff are engaged in this project and committed to make things happen. He suggested recognizing Lt. Gov. Quinn and his staff for their commitment to the project and Sen. Risinger from the Peoria area. Next, he introduced Ted Eubanks, the foremost eco-tourism expert in the country, who takes areas with environmental wildlife significance and turns them into popular tourist destinations with great economic benefits. His study on birding trails in Texas resulted in \$30 million investment made by the Texas legislature. McMillan said that Mr. Eubanks, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and Peoria Area Conventions and Visitors Bureau, was conducting a study of the Illinois River Valley - wildlife, bird watching and cultural and history opportunities can make the Illinois River Valley a great tourist destination.

Special Presentation: Ted Eubanks, President of FERMATA, Inc. The Business of Nature in Illinois

Eubanks noted the ever-changing demographic landscape in the U.S., dominated by the decades-long flood of rural residents into a relative handful of cities, had captured many Midwest and Great Plains communities in a social and economic vice grip. Yet that which hurts can help as well. Many of these urbanites, isolated from the natural and cultural resources that are still contained in rural America, are vacationing out of the cities in an effort to reconnect with their roots. As a result, experiential travel is among the most significant travel sectors in the U.S., and one that continues to prodigiously expand.

Consider these examples. According to the Travel Industry Association (TIA), "81 percent of U.S. adults who traveled in the past year, or 118 million, are considered historic/cultural travelers." In fact, "for 30 percent of historic/cultural travelers, their destination choice was influenced by a specific historic or cultural event or activity." Outdoor recreation and/or visiting national or state parks are also one of the top activities for U.S. travelers taking leisure trips within the U.S. One in four (27 percent) leisure person-trips includes some form of outdoor recreation and/or a visit to a national or state park.

These travel sectors represent significant economic drivers for many rural communities. From Walhalla (North Dakota) to Great Bend (Kansas), from Canadian (Texas) to Damascus (Virginia), experiential tourism is contributing to the economic vitality of rural America. Tourism does indeed "work for America."

In addition to the traditional economic impacts from tourism (direct, indirect, induced), there are two additional benefits that are critically important to Illinois. First, there are environmental impacts that should be recognized. Yes, there are negative effects that occasionally are attributed to tourism (such as the draining of a marsh to build a golf course). But ecologically (and culturally) sensitive tourism development undoubtedly benefits the environmental health of a region. Tourism revenues allow communities to invest in green spaces, hike-and-bike trails, interpretative centers, and a variety of amenities that are enjoyed by travelers and residents alike. In fact, Illinois Nature Conservancy's Emiquon project is a perfect example of how tourism, economic development and conservation efforts can work in concert.

Second, there are "enabling" benefits that flow from tourism. Experiential tourism development in Illinois River communities such as Havana or Canton will directly lead to an enhanced quality of life in the region. As stated above, amenities demanded by tourists also benefit residents. A diverse offering of restaurants, theaters, retail shopping and cultural centers represent an amenity base upon which future economic development efforts may be constructed.

The U.S. is comprised of 50 states vying to be the next economic growth engine. Most have realized that the future of high-end industry in this country depends on human resources. There are countless communities in the U.S. that want to attract a biomedical research lab or a nanotechnology center. All are able to extend tax abatements, offer new shell buildings, and pipe in the next generation of Internet services. The few communities that will succeed will be those who recognize that the human resource will be the critical deciding factor. In the end, the next nanotechnology center will be dependent on researchers deciding where they want to live and raise their families.

Experiential tourism allows Illinois to utilize existing resources (nature, culture, history) to attract additional travelers. These travelers will invest in a variety of amenities that are valued by residents as well. As the amenity base (or quality of life) improves, Illinois and the Illinois River region will be better positioned to attract high-end industries that would have fled elsewhere. Combined with specific efforts to develop a diversity of local products and services for this travel market (such as value-added agricultural products and experiences), Illinois River residents have much to gain from the business of nature.

Lt. Gov. Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Ted Eubanks for his outstanding presentation, and identified Plum Island with its bald eagles as an example of one of the best ecological tourism destinations in Illinois. Next, he asked Dr. Gary Rolfe to speak about the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center.

Dr. Gary Rolfe

Dr. Rolfe was pleased to present the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center activities to the IRCC and stressed the Center's practical location in the confluence area of the Illinois, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and described its establishment as a partnership between Lewis and Clark Community College, the Illinois Natural History Survey and the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

The purpose of the Center is to provide field support for the development of sound watershed and river management strategies in order to protect valuable natural resources and maintain their viability for public use in an ecologically conscientious manner. He noted the Center combined the study of social, biological and physical aspects of water issues; promoted multidisciplinary research; provided natural resource information; sponsored conferences and workshops; and addressed critical water issues. Rolfe described how the Center's programs serve the objectives of the IRCC and proposed the Center serve as the research and education "arm" of the IRCC.

He suggested meeting with Lt. Gov. Quinn and staff and the Center's Executive Committee to discuss the activities of the Center and how the work of the IRCC and the Center would be enhanced through a collaborative relationship. He noted the starting area for discussion was the Center's internship program. He proposed that the Center and the Office of Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn commit to providing one intern each, to work out of Lt. Gov. Quinn's office and focus on work of importance to the IRCC. The intern announcement will to be sent in early in 2004 and the IRCC work could be featured for student consideration.

The Natural History Survey involvement on the Illinois River goes back to the late 1800's, when Steven Forbes began his studies on the river, so they do have a long history of data. The large river was perceived as a new frontier in many ways. Now, there is certainly renewed interest in learning more about our rivers. The confluence of the Illinois, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers makes Illinois a prime location in North America for a large river station. Presently, two stations there are involved in the USGS long-term resource-monitoring program: at Havana and Alton. These stations are rental facilities and a permanent place is needed. There is hope that staff who had been doing the monitoring studies on the Mississippi River in that area will have a new permanent home. The field station is designed for visitors and other researchers, so researchers from the Midwest and from all over the world can come to this part of the country to conduct their research.

Lt. Gov. Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn noted that it was a great place in Southern Illinois where three great rivers come together creating indigenous resources. He pledged his support of the creation of the Education and Research Center, to be one of the greatest centers in the world where people would be able to come and study the rivers. He said it is important that people from Illinois and other states know where the Illinois River is. Next, Lt. Gov. Quinn introduced Brad Thompson, US ACE, and asked him to give an update in the Illinois River 2020 Program.

Brad Thompson

Thompson thanked Lt. Gov. Quinn for the opportunity to present to IRCC members the Illinois River 2020 Executive Summary Report. First, as Project Manager, he acknowledged the other team members who have been involved in a study produced by a large partnership; Jim Mick, IDNR, represented the State's participation in the project. Thompson noted the project started

two years ago, and with funding in place, and a comprehensive plan put together. They are ready to start more detailed work on specific restoration sites. They are very close to having an action plan completed regarding the Illinois River Basin restoration efforts, and are evaluating the level of effort it might entail and identify specific projects. He mentioned some of these projects were in design and nearing contract awards right now; and they were satisfied with the progress.

US ACE relied on non-federal sponsors, and in this case, the study is conducted for benefit of the State and the local communities along the Illinois River. He stressed the Illinois River Basin Restoration plan came out of the State's initiative, a proposal of the 20-year effort and commitment of \$2.5 billion - a big initial concept linking all federal, state and local resources to accomplish the goal of river restoration. The idea is to use existing programs and resources across the number of agencies and legislative efforts, such as the Farm Bill, the Clean Water Act and Water Resources Development Act (US ACE appropriations). The State was partnering with the US ACE in a number of ways: working with IDOA and IDNR, IEPA, Office of Lt. Gov. Quinn, as well as federal and local agencies, and also, private sector and the public. He named projects focused on the Illinois River itself, and other related projects, such as Peoria Riverfront Development project, and other projects throughout the basin. There are a lot of things being studied that are near completion. Things are ready to start happening now.

In 2000 legislation, Section 519 of the Water Resources Development Act, called for the US ACE in partnership with the agencies to put together a comprehensive plan in order to address several things:

- Program for restoration
- Long-term resource monitoring program
- Computerized inventory and analysis system
- Program of sediment removal and use

Thompson said these programs would be presented for public review in the near future. In the meantime, the US ACE was authorized to use \$100 million for critical river restoration projects, the six sites started two years ago.

Thompson briefly reviewed an organization of the study and a regional team approach. People can bring project ideas, which will be evaluated, organized and considered for moving forward from the system prospective – with the input from IRCC, SAC and potential co-sponsoring agencies. It will be decided between the U.S. ACE and other agencies which items will be implemented by each member of the partnership for each particular project.

US ACE will have a public meeting in about a month, and now, they are sharing a vision for restoration of the Illinois River Basin, the goals, objectives and alternatives related to the restoration efforts. In the next month, U.S. ACE has to come to an agreement with the State regarding what level of the restoration efforts was required and would be recommended. This needs to be determined before going to the public meetings-workshops in order to obtain public input.

Next, Thompson referred to a diagram illustrating the sediment problem and noted about 6.7 million tons was the average amount of sediment deposited annually in the basin. He stressed the importance of restoration and protection of backwaters and side channels as the most vulnerable elements of the whole river system. The US ACE needs to study water level fluctuations caused by a number of factors, and develop potential for the improved floodplain management and environmental restoration. Next, he referred to work that has already been done: the Integrated Management Plan provided vision for sustainable eco-system and the economic activities that go with it (a balanced vision for the Basin). In this context, he stressed the following system goals identified in the six-step planning process:

- Maintain and restore diversity and sustainable populations of native species

- Reduce sediment delivery
- Restore side channels and backwaters, impacted by sedimentation
- Restore floodplain and riparian habitat and function
- Increase longitudinal connectivity
- Naturalize hydrologic regimes

Presently, they are evaluating alternatives in order to develop appropriate recommendations. The U.S. ACE is working with resource managers on the river to identify the desired restoration needs in terms of 50-year planning:

- Reduce sediment delivery to the Illinois River by 20 percent (still about 20-30 percent of what had historically been there)
- Increase depth diversity for 19,000 of backwater
- Restore 75,000 acres of floodplain and 75,000 acres riparian habitat
- 500 miles stream restoration and stabilization
- Increase connectivity
- Reduce water level fluctuations

To illustrate the scope of work to be done, Thompson compared Illinois and Louisiana restoration efforts: in Louisiana, the Everglades project cost was \$7.8 billion (3,480 sq. miles) and the Coastal Louisiana - restoration of the cost line that had been lost - \$14 billion (20,000 sq. miles); in Illinois, the Illinois River Basin restoration involves 30,000 sq. miles and will cost significant amount of money and will take a lot of time and resources.

Next, he presented a matrix illustrating different restoration goal categories and alternatives to be evaluated, selected and implemented in order to achieve these goals. He discussed various levels of efforts (in dollar amounts) for sediment reduction (up to 20 percent for the system), backwaters restoration (up to 19,000) and floodplain restoration. The proposed annual total cost varied from \$15 million (Alternative 1) to \$270 million (Alternative 9), and the funding come from approximately 33 percent state and 70 percent federal sources. In the following months, they will evaluate what it takes - in terms of money - to maintain ecosystem health at the current level, without losing its existing hydrology and natural habitat.

Next, he stressed the implementation framework for the projects as follows:

- Assessments: pool/reach or watershed (which practices will need to be put in place)
- Prioritization: project identification, criteria, framework (way to get project submitted)
- Restoration measures templates

Prioritization matrix would include selection from biological, goal specific, geographic and local interest projects as it applies to a particular watershed or reach.

The process starts with submitting of un-funded ecosystem restoration projects or ideas by local groups to the regional teams. Then, in partnership with existing local groups, local government, counties, federal and state agencies, the proposed projects get evaluated and matched with corresponding funding programs (not everything has to go through U.S. ACE). There will be a process when they decide first on a regional level, then on the system level and, finally, decide on funding; also, all projects have to be done with willing landowners or state owned land. In terms of geographic focus, it is good to start with upstream reaches first and move downstream throughout the basin.

Mr. Thompson presented the following schedule of evaluation of alternatives:

Comprehensive Plan:

- Evaluation of alternatives – Jun-Oct 2003
- State administrative review – Oct 2003
- Public review of alternatives – Nov 2003

- Final comprehensive plan – Aug 2004

Critical Restoration Projects:

- State administrative review – Oct 2003
- Complete study, plans and specifications – FY04
- Construction - 2005

Additionally, he outlined several critical restoration projects: Blackberry Creek and Waubonsie Creek (The Fox River tributaries – fish passage); Kankakee and Iroquois River (sediment issue); Pekin Lake (backwaters heavily impacted with sedimentation that results in key habitat loss), McKee Creek (sediment and stability issues).

Project status FY04:

- Pekin Lake (North) – Design just started (a six month effort; a small real estate issue)
- Pekin Lake (South) – Complete feasibility, design – ready for public review
- Waubonsie Creek – Complete feasibility, design – ready for public review
- McKee Creek – Sediment gage
- Blackberry Creek – On hold
- Iroquois River – On hold
- Kankakee river – On hold (due to funding problems)

To conclude, he referred to a three-island project in the low Peoria Lakes and reported the feasibility phase is complete. The project consists of 200 acres of dredging and 75 acres of islands, and the cost of this project will be \$15 million. Currently, design of the first of three islands is complete.

Lt. Gov. Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn stated the whole idea of the IRCC was to work together with US ACE and IDNR and other agencies to restore the Illinois River Basin. He expressed his hope in order to accomplish this ambitious plan, they had to move forward aggressively in the next couple of years. Lt. Gov. Quinn called on attendees to be progressive and aggressive in order to continue ongoing movement forward.

Public Comments

Jack Shepler (Member: Friends of the Illinois River, Tricounty Riverfront Action Forum, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club)

Shepler noted that in 1939, 4,000 sportsmen from the Pekin area signed a petition to replace the dam at the south inlet to Pekin Lake. The dam was installed in the 1800s and removed in 1938 by opponents of the Pekin Rod and Gun Club. In 1997, he brought the dam replacement project up under Congressman Ray LaHood's Heritage River program. In 1998 Jim VonBoeckman and Mr. Shepler met with Mike Smith and George Shadid to enlist their support for the project. They got \$150,000 to start the project. In 1999, Ducks Unlimited moved their representative into the area from Michigan. Pekin Mayor Dave Tebben, and Jack Shepler went over the project with Ducks Unlimited and enlisted their support. Shepler said that Ducks Unlimited and the IDNR decreed that the project would not work in a floodplain because "you cannot farm in a floodplain."

Shepler said they wanted the ecosystem of the lake restored, and not a become a "duck farm". Next, Shepler stated the \$150,000 was pulled off the table and they stopped their project. With a new IDNR director in Springfield, he hoped that the director would listen to their request for the dam replacement and the re-establishment of the original ecosystem of the lake complex.

Lt. Gov. Quinn

He referred to Havana as the “Imperial Valley of the Midwest”, a hidden-away place to go and wanted to encourage people to take the 100-150 mile journey to the Illinois River to have this experience and to see 6,000 acres of wetlands near Havana. He mentioned two other things about Havana – its excellent riverfront and watermelons. Next, Lt. Gov. Quinn noted that Tom Tincher (and the Heartland Water Resource Council) had done a wonderful job on Peoria River waterfront.

Judd Hulting

Hulting mentioned this is his first IRCC meeting and appreciated the opportunity to speak. He noted the economic development and improving the waterways as part of the mission of IRCC. The U.S. ACE is about to complete a study on navigation on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois River Systems; the public hearings would be held in October - St. Louis, Quincy, Peoria, Quad Cities and Dubuque. He farms with his parents along interstate I-80, and all their corn and soybeans travel via the Illinois River. Hulting just came back from a trip to Brazil where he saw some infrastructure improvement on the Amazon River, and what they were doing for eco-tourism as part of economic development.

The U.S. ACE has developed two proposals: on navigation and on eco-system restoration, and he believes there is a balance between the two. Hulting strongly believes 1200 ft. locks are needed; the existing locks were built in the 1930-s and are 600 ft long. Hulting would like to have bigger locks on the Illinois River in Peoria and in LaGrange. He asked the IRCC to come to the hearing and make a positive statement regarding this subject; he said that they have been working with some other State agencies and the General Assembly had passed a resolution in support of the 1,200 ft locks.

Bob Frazee

On behalf of the Conference Planning Committee, Frazee welcomed attendees to the 2003 Governor’s Conference on Management of the Illinois River System. He expressed his pleasure that the IRCC had its meeting in Peoria. He commended the new administration, Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn and Harmony Dean for their excellent work. Frazee wished attendees a productive time in Peoria, and mentioned the Conservation Tour was one of the important parts of the Conference’s agenda. Frazee referred to the Conservation Tour as a showcase for many important visions of many landowners, farmers, municipalities, organizations and agencies demonstrating positive proactive things could be done on this landscape to help protect the Illinois River Basin, but also the river itself.

Lt. Gov. Quinn

Lt. Gov. Quinn thanked Bob Frazee and suggested that everyone take advantage of the Internet to e-mail and exchange ideas: the more we communicate, the more we can accomplish together.

Adjournment

Lt. Gov. Quinn adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.