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# CALUMET STORMWATER COLLABORATIVE

MEETING SUMMARY – April 3, 2020  
Metropolitan Planning Council  
Zoom meeting



## Attendees

Brad Kasberg, Audubon Great Lakes  
John Mick, Baxter & Woodman  
Matt Moffitt, Baxter & Woodman  
Serrater Chapman, Calumet Collaborative  
Tess Conway, Calumet Collaborative  
Graig Neville, CERA Solutions  
Kate Evasic, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Emily Okallau, Chicago Region Trees Initiative  
Thomas Burke, Christopher B Burke Engineering  
Jack Eskin, Delta Institute  
Mary Mitros, DuPage County Stormwater Management  
Cheryl Watson, Greenest Region Corps  
Patrick Lach, Hey and Associates, Inc.  
Vidya Balasubramanyam, IDNR Coastal Management Program  
Jeff Edstrom, IDNR Coastal Management Program  
Lisa Krause, IDNR Coastal Management Program  
Casey Sebetto, IDNR Coastal Management Program  
Kira Baltutis, Metro Strategies  
Josh Ellis, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Justin Keller, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Adam Slade, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Justin Williams, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Ryan Wilson, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Richard Fisher, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
Justin Hart, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
Brian Wawczak, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
Saki Handa, Mott MacDonald  
Mollie Dowling, OAI  
Ted Haffner, Openlands  
Bill Wood, SmithGroup  
Jen Jenkins, The Nature Conservancy  
John Legge, The Nature Conservancy  
Eliana Brown, University of Illinois Extension/Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant  
Layne Knoche, University of Illinois Extension  
Karen Kreis, Village of Midlothian

## Member Updates

Justin Keller from MPC announced that this meeting marks the six year anniversary of the CSC. He is honored to be part of this amazing group of collaborators, and he thanked everyone on the Zoom meeting today, the CSC's first-ever virtual meeting!

Rich Fisher from MWRD said they accepted applications for their Stormwater Partnership and Flood-Prone Property Acquisition programs in January. They are reviewing applications now and expect to notify applicants by mid-summer (slight delay because of COVID-19 pandemic). They received 50 applications for both programs.

Jeff Edstrom from the IDNR Coastal Management Program said all seven sections of the coastal nonpoint source program have been approved by NOAA and USEPA. They received notice this week and will be going out for a comment period.

Lisa Krause from the IDNR Coastal Management Program said the Training & Maintenance Work Group had their first one-day training for green infrastructure maintenance on March 10. They will be presenting about the training at the [Equitable Green Infrastructure Summit](#) on April 28. Thirteen people attended, and there was a positive response. Mollie Dowling from OAI added that the event was really great, and there were job seekers and employers present. They look forward to reporting on the outcomes in a few months.

Brad Kasberg from Audubon Great Lakes said they are currently drafting resources for people to do some birding while sheltering in place. Also, the big restoration [project to connect Wolf Lake and Powderhorn Marsh](#) is moving forward. The project will address flooding issues and connect areas that have been separated for more than 100 years.

Kate Evasic from CMAP said that 14 Local Technical Assistance projects were approved at CMAP's Board meeting in March, including the [Midlothian feasibility study for a stormwater fee](#) and several other projects in the Calumet. Karen Kreis from the Village of Midlothian added that they are thrilled that things are still moving along.

Emily Okallau from the Chicago Region Trees Initiative said they were awarded a Great Lakes Restoration grant to plant trees in the City of Chicago. Things are currently delayed, but tree work can continue during the quarantine, so reach out to her with any tree-related inquiries.

Jack Eskin from the Delta Institute said they are planning a webinar for early May with Alliance for the Great Lakes and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant related to their work in Michigan City. They also plan to use that work to develop a municipal guide about stormwater districts, land acquisition, etc.

John Mick from Baxter & Woodman said the State of Illinois has allocated \$50 million for its Rebuild Illinois program. Eligible projects include water and sewer line extensions, waterway dredging, and other stormwater projects. [Click here for more information.](#)

## Discussion

As governments respond to COVID-19, many groups are advocating for nationwide rental assistance, expanded SNAP and unemployment benefits, protections for incarcerated individuals, assistance for water/wastewater utilities, and more. *Urban*

*flooding is missing from these conversations*, though, and people are being asked to stay home just as the rainy season is about to begin. In light of this, the CSC spent some time in Zoom breakout rooms discussing the following questions:

- What actions should Federal/State government take (e.g., stormwater infrastructure in stimulus package)?
- What should we be advocating for locally? Is there a clear CSC role?
- How can we help people help their neighbors? How can we help prepare local governments to help?

The discussions centered around the possibility of a years-long impact on capital improvement spending and, in response, strategies for funding and restarting stalled projects after the crisis subsides. Many comments focused on the need to use government stimulus to support job creation. In the meantime, floodplain managers and residents need training and education around how to respond in the case of a flooding emergency, e.g., precautionary measures when maintaining social distance is infeasible, such as placing sandbags along a swollen river.

## **Presentation**

### **Update on MWRD Stormwater Master Planning Process**

*Rich Fisher, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago*

*Brian Wawczak, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago*

The mission of MWRD has always been to protect the health and safety of residents, starting with the reversal of the Chicago River. With that goal in mind, MWRD conducted the Stormwater Master Planning (SMP) pilot ([which Rich presented on in January 2019](#)). This involved developing an Individual Study Profile (ISP) for four areas, each with unique characteristics ranging from highly urbanized and impervious to rural and undeveloped areas. Through this process, they found that the cost to protect every structure in Cook County will be prohibitive. Even with combined grey and green solutions, the price tag works out to \$70 billion. Along the way, they also learned that municipal participation can be challenging, e.g., resistance to planning, lack of buy-in, planning fatigue, and constraints related to municipal capacity.

MWRD concluded that it would be inefficient to develop ISPs for the entire county. The process needs to be streamlined so that projects can be realized as quickly as possible. After some introspection, they decided to pivot to using volumetric storage as a metric. They will determine how much volume is needed to address flooding countywide and use that figure to work backwards and determine how much storage is needed. From there, they will help communities develop maps to delineate flowpaths and identify where they can put in storage.

Visit the [CSC website](#) to review the full presentation materials.

## **Next Meeting**

Friday, May 1, 2020

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Location: TBD

**For more information contact:**  
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