

Minutes from the Indiana Water Monitoring Council Board of Directors Meeting (March 18, 2014)

Action Items

- Revise goals and strategies and pass around to the board for review prior to next meeting (Jill Hoffman)
- Review these materials prior to next meeting and come prepared to identify any additional strategies that might help the InWMC meet its goals and discuss how the council will measure its success in meeting those goals. *Note: Jill suggested that to make best use of limited time during strategic planning sessions, the board should plan on spending more time between meetings to review materials.* (All board members)
- Ask IDEM's Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program Section Chief (Bonny Elifritz) if IDEM might consider requiring grant-funded projects to enter their monitoring project metadata into the Water monitoring Inventory system. (Jody Arthur)
- Ask Laura Esman if she has developed any marketing pieces for the Indiana water monitoring inventory. (Jody Arthur)
- Provide the board with a list of all members including their stated expertise. (Sara Peel)
- Use the marketing piece developed by Melody Bernot for soliciting student involvement to develop a more general, one-page marketing piece describing member benefits. Add the InWMC's social media links to both documents. (Jody Arthur and Melody Bernot)
- Grant Melody Bernot administrative rights to the Wild Apricot System. (Jody Arthur)
- Talk to IDEM Watershed Specialist to see if they can recommend anyone from local government to fill the vacancy left by Bryan Wallace.
- Set up a Doodle poll to determine the best date and time for the next meeting. (Jody Arthur)

Attendees (17 total)

Jill Hoffman, Upper White River Watershed Initiative

Jody Arthur, Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Jeff Frey, U.S. Geological Survey

Shawn Naylor, Indiana Geological Survey

Ashlee Haviland, Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Sara Peel, Indiana Lakes Management Society

Logan Garner, Indiana State Dept. of Agriculture

Thomas Bruns, Aqua Indiana

Greg Bright, Commonwealth Biomonitoring

Dave Scott, Indiana Office of the State Chemist

Melody Bernot, Ball State University

Allan Henderson, Madison County Council of Governments

Douglas Smith, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service

Chris Ritz, National Resources Conservation Service

Bob Gillespie, St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

Melissa Clark, Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Daragh Deegan. Elkhart County Health Department

Shawn Naylor called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m.

Projects in Committee

Committee reports were not requested for this meeting to allow more time to devote to the strategic planning effort.

Strategic Planning Session

To provide a starting point for discussion, prior to this meeting, Jill Hoffman provided the board with a revised mission and vision statements and spreadsheets summarizing the goals and strategies developed during the last planning session.

Revised Mission Statement

The Indiana Water monitoring Council (InWMC) is a network of water professionals and volunteers dedicated to communication, coordination, and sharing of monitoring information to support stewardship of Indiana waters.

Revised Vision Statement

The Indiana Water Monitoring Council (InWMC) leads the way in providing the ability to address the full scope of water resource issues in Indiana now and in the future.

Goals (as summarized from the previous meeting)

1. Improve Data Sharing, Data Quality and Standardization
2. Foster Communication About Water Monitoring to Water Professionals and the Public
3. Be a strong organization that provide future-focused leadership

Based on the notes from the last meeting, Jill was also able to summarize the council's strengths and opportunities and the weaknesses and threats that it currently faces. This information helped to inform the following discussion of goals and strategies. Most of the discussion focused on developing strategies to help the council meet the goals articulated above. The strategies developed at the last meeting were revisited and new strategies were discussed within the context of each goal.

Goals and Strategy Discussions

1. Improve data sharing, data quality and standardization

Strategies discussed for this goal included, hosting networking events to get people in various regions of the state together to talk about water monitoring, supporting data inventory efforts such as Purdue's Water Monitoring Inventory, and creating a list of major data repositories

Asking current programs within organizations that participate in the council (e.g. IDNR LARE, IDEM's NPS Program) to adjust their program requirements in order to help keep Purdue's

Water Monitoring Inventory up to date was discussed as one way to support data inventory efforts. Jody Arthur will bring this question to the NPS Program Section Chief at IDEM, and Ashley Hughes will discuss it with her colleagues at IDNR LARE.

Developing processes for notifying InWMC members through social media of the availability of new data was also discussed. This would likely require that we work with the administrators for data repositories or their listservs.

With regard to creating a list of major data repositories, a few members of the board mentioned lists that already exist in different places. The development of tutorials for online repositories was also discussed. However, it was suggested that most online data repositories probably already have user tutorials. Given this, it was the general consensus that time would be better spent in compiling a list from existing sources. The idea of the InWMC providing one-stop shopping for its members was discussed.

Improving data quality was briefly discussed but it was determined that this is more appropriately considered a longer term goal.

2. Foster Communication About Water Monitoring to Water Professionals and the Public

This goal started out as “Foster Communication among Water Professionals” but was expanded to include the public based on the need for a better public understanding of water resource issues its importance in garnering support for the monitoring efforts required to address them.

Several strategies were discussed. The board chose three as its top priorities.

One strategy is to broaden the scope of the “issues” pages on the InWMC web site, which will be where the White Papers will be posted when complete. The idea here is to enlist a group of experts for each issue to keep that topic current and fresh and to funnel any updates to the InWMC social media admins.

Another strategy is to provide regular updates to members. It was decided that monthly updates would be good. The council already has a section on its website for “Water in the News”. So, it wouldn’t be hard to post snippets of these stories with links to the InWMC social media channels. Greg Bright will take the lead in posting to Twitter and Facebook.

The third strategy chosen was to host seminars that include social elements that will create more opportunity for members to network and discuss their water monitoring efforts, needs, etc. The InWMC has held three symposia to date. For future symposia could be planned in a way that includes more social time, perhaps guided networking sessions.

3. Be a strong organization that provide future-focused leadership

Several strategies were discussed. The board chose five as its top priorities.

The board identified increasing membership as its top priority. One activity that was discussed was to include marketing the InWMC through other organizations’ newsletters, conference, etc.

Identifying “key” individuals to help us promote the council at universities, professional associations, and to other potentially interested parties was identified as another way to grow council membership. To facilitate this, Sara Peel will pull a list of members, their expertise and affiliations, from the Wild Apricot system to work from.

The board also discussed strategies for increasing member participation, which goes hand-in-hand with increasing membership. It was decided that in order to increase member participation, the board needs to first identify current opportunities for involvement and the work to create new opportunities for members to participate. Melody Bernot will send the marketing piece she developed awhile back to solicit student involvement to Jody Arthur who will use it to develop a more general marketing piece and add social media links to both.

The board also discussed establishing issue-oriented task forces or committees as a way of providing leadership and discussed the development of work plans for such efforts.

The board decided another high priority strategy is to develop internal and external timelines for the work the InWMC undertakes going forward. The board generally agreed that project work plans with timelines and milestones would also be useful for individual projects to keep them moving and to measuring success in meeting their intended goals.

The final strategy aimed at making the InWMC an organization that provides future-focused leadership is to revisit its goals and strategies down the road to answer some of the larger questions about organizational structure, fundraising, staffing, etc. However, this strategy was not discussed at great length due to lack of time.

New Business

Shawn Naylor informed the board on Bryan Wallace’s resignation, which leaves vacant the chairmanship of the Communications Committee. Melody Bernot asked what the position entails. Shawn said that the chair position serves primarily as a point of contact and that he can work with folks at IGS to do any revamping of the website that might be needed. Melody volunteered to chair the committee. Jody Arthur will give her administrative rights to the Wild Apricot system so that she can become familiar with it to whatever extent she might need to use it in her committee work. Sara would prefer not to be on the Communications Committee but agreed to assist with Wild-Apricot issues as they arise.

With regard to Communications Committee work, Greg Bright has been tweeting for the council and had updated the council’s Facebook page. He asked board members to send any information that they send to Melody to him as well so he can tweet and post it on FB.

Logan Garner volunteered to contribute content from the agricultural sector and offered also to help with the web site down the road if needed.

Bryan represented local government on the InWMC board. To the matter of filling the vacancy he leaves on the board, Jody said that she would speak with IDEM’s Watershed Specialists to see if they knew of any good candidates.

Logan suggested Lyn Crighton. Shawn said that he had been contacted by John Lankowitz, at the St. Joseph CO Dept of Health who expressed an interest in getting more involved with the council. However, since the board already has representation from a county health department, Shawn said he will ask Lyn first.

Next Meeting

Jill Hoffman requested that the Board commit to working board meetings until the InWMC strategic plan can be fully developed. The rest of the Board agreed and decided to meet monthly to continue development of the plan.

Jody Arthur will set up a Doodle poll to determine the best date and time for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Dave Scott made a motion to adjourn. Jody Arthur seconded the motion.