

Minutes of the InWMC Board Meeting

November 19, 2014 at USGS Offices in Indianapolis, Indiana

Attendees:

Shawn Naylor,
Jody Arthur
Dave Scott
Logan Garner
Jeff Frey
Ashlee Haviland
Sara Peel
Melissa Clark
Heather Buck
Gretchen Quirk
Allen Henderson

Shawn Naylor called the meeting to order at 12:33 p.m.

Old Business

Shawn asked for comments on the minutes. No comments were given. Minutes approved.

Symposium Planning

Shawn said the final agenda came forth this week and it looks great.

Dave said everything came together well. Dave said the group did a great job identifying topics and speakers. He said there was one open slot remaining and Marty Risch offered to present. Dave said Martha Clark and Shawn will introduce the speakers, and Jody looking into refreshments. Dave asked for guidance on what remains to be done.

Jody said she got that done and was able to stay under \$196. We voted at the last meeting to spend \$200, which gives us coffee and water in the morning and coffee, water, and some hot tea in the afternoon. The beverages are sold in gallons. We have 6 gallons of coffee in the morning and another six in the afternoon. Jody said she doesn't know exactly how many that serves, but she said she based it on 150-200 people when speaking with the caterer. Jody wanted to know if we wanted to provide food. She said we can do that without catering but we would need to approve additional funds if we want food. She also asked if we are going to have a panel discussion because that might affect the room set up.

Dave said it will be more of a wrap-up session or a brainstorming session. So, we'll need to think about some of the questions we'll want to ask. Jeff Frey will facilitate.

Jody said the only thing she needs to know about that is how we want the room set up. She based the reservation on last year's setup which included a table and mics at the front for the panel discussion. She said if we don't need that, we should let them know. She just needs to know if we need it for a wrap-up.

Shawn says he's never seen a wrap-up where someone just gets up and encourages questions. But, it's not a bad idea since folks do often have questions that come up after they've seen all the talks presented. That's the way it appears in the agenda now, with Jeff getting up there and throwing out some questions.

Sara Peel asked if we are hoping for some type of outcome? Is the goal to start something like what Kentucky is doing with ag and water?

Dave said the committee was thinking about whether this would just be a list of presentations and we all go home. Or are we looking to suggest something like, "We have this stuff covered pretty well and that stuff covered pretty well but the future of monitoring maybe should include something like this?" We were looking at this as an opportunity for the researchers as well as the people who use the data, who may have a need for it someday to do some brainstorming. Not that all you folks haven't thought about these things. But, providing a place to openly discuss them might be a good thing if the InWMC can help with that process.

Dave said one of the things he found interesting about this is that he was talking to Jane Frankenberger and learned that the Purdue Water Community is having a meeting the very next day in which they are going to be talking about a lot of these same things.

Shawn likes Sara's idea that the last presentation should be about what Kentucky is doing right now to get the different players that are involved in agriculture and water resources and that this could provide a segue into some open-ended questions that we could close with.

Jeff says that IN is a bit different than KY. In KY, it's really developed. They meet monthly or quarterly to work on project development that they can do together as a state. projects. Here, we have some groups that are working on ag issues, like the one that Farm Bureau has put together. But, not everyone is associated with that. That's why I think that this meeting fills a nice niche here, bringing together people who are not part of that group being able to hear what's going on and also present as well. So, it seems like we could be moving in that direction. But, would it be like stepping on toes of groups that have already started in this direction? That would be something to talk to Justin [Schneider] about, but I think that's worthwhile.

Shawn asked if Justin was going to be there in the afternoon. Dave said he may not be there in the afternoon.

Dave said we're not saying that we need to be like KY. There is value in getting some discussion and thoughts about it. He said that is more what the group is thinking.

Shawn said in the past, we've solicited questions for the panel discussions. He suggested we could send out a request to the membership for questions related to ag and water resources, broad questions that they feel need to be answered. Jeff could stand up there and ask these questions of the audience and see who out there wants to provide input.

Jeff said he likes that idea but in the past we've also come up with questions of our own. He suggested that this might be a good way to focus the discussion. He would like to have a brainstorming session to come up with our own so that we can have an end product.

Jeff said in the past, we have also come up with our questions so that we can lead the discussion. Sara said if we have a goal in mind, we should throw that out as part of this discussion to see if it floats. And, if it doesn't, we know that this might be a good thing to pursue. Sara said that we have 123 people registered and most of them registered before there was even an agenda. So, that suggests that this is a pretty important topic for this state.

Shawn asked Logan if he has any ideas on how to wrap this up. Logan mentioned a feedback form, perhaps posted on the web site to cover questions that may not have been covered at the symposium. He said he still gets questions from time to time about whether or not there are deliverables from the energy and water symposium.

Logan asked if we'll have the opportunity for the a brief Q&A with the speakers at the end of their talks. Unanswered questions could provide new ideas for future symposia.

Dave said there is a potential for that. He said a lot of people have come forward willing to present. He said there may be folks there wanting to let the others in attendance know what they are doing and how it might be related to the work the council does.

Logan said ending up with ideas on where we go from here is really kind of dependent on people having ideas. You don't want a quiet room. If we have some sort of way to provide feedback, that can help.

Shawn asked if we can have a slide that have some general questions, like whether there other monitoring activities that need to be highlighted in some way so that these people who didn't get to give a presentation can share their information. Then we can ask another question like, "Is there a need for more coordinated meetings between the water resources community and the industry?" Maybe just 3-4 questions on a slide.

Sara suggested we could use flip charts for people to add their thoughts, then maybe grouping topics into what we can address now and later.

Jody said she thinks that's a good idea for a lot of reasons, one being that you get more audience participation. They've sat and listened to presentations all morning and have probably talked about them over lunch and come up with ideas. This gives them an opportunity to share. This gives you a good wrap-up. And, it is kind of what Jeff was talking about before in that we're coming up with the questions. But, I think that's okay because we're starting this ag and water conversation. That's part of the goal of this symposium. So, I think it's okay for us to come up with the questions. It gives them a way to participate, a way to digest what they've heard, and direction for further thought.

Ashley Haviland suggested that we could have flip charts at eight or so different stations in the room, maybe grouping them based on topics or guided thoughts to get what people are thinking about now. We would then be able to group them into what we can think about now and what needs to go to the parking lot. During the breaks, you can also see what the room is thinking, too, after each presenter.

Jody suggested that the same questions we put on the flip charts should be the same questions we ask at the end so that we can prep them for the discussion. The trick is coming up with the questions.

Shawn said one could be, "Are there other monitoring and/or conservation efforts that need to be explored?" and "Is there a need for better coordination?"

Jeff said that it would be useful to provide of all the different places that are being monitored how or are going to be, like School Branch, Great Lakes project, Jasper County, Middle Eel River. Dave said that prompts you visually.

Ashley suggested that we could add Laura Esman's cards with pins for folks to identify where they are monitoring. Sara said that it would be better to ask people to add their information directly to the [water monitoring inventory] site.

Jeff said it might be good to look at regional work as well. There's a lot of stuff that's going on regionally that's not being coordinated at all. That's a nice role for the council to have to show the regional stuff that's going on out there. Ashley said we could have a regional map set up, too.

Ashley asked if there might be a way to facilitate a regional coordination down the road if that's identified as a need. Jeff said that would be a real nice thing to do at the end during our facilitated discussion. Sara noted that everyone registered except for one is an Indiana person but it's a pretty diverse group.

Jody said she could send the announcement to her 305(b) contacts but they likely wouldn't be able to come. Jeff said he could it send to his contacts in other states.

Dave said that the end of the symposium doesn't need to be the end of the discussion. He said we need a mechanism for providing feedback after the symposium, to ask their questions or express interest in coordination, maybe on the website.

Jody said this might be possible to set up a form on the website for this purpose, maybe on a special page devoted to symposium feedback. Sara said we could also use our Facebook page for this purpose.

Gretchen Quirk asked if we will post the presentations on the web site after the event. Shawn said we posted PDFs of the presentations on the event page. Shawn doesn't want to devote an entire page to each symposium because it would become outdated and the site becomes cluttered. The cleanest way is to post them on the page for the event itself.

Jody asked if a good compromise might be to have a symposia page for all of them. Shawn showed up where he puts the presentations now. Jody asked if people know to look there for past presentations. Jeff said we would need to tell people how to find it.

Sara said it still helps to summarize the events of the day and post it in addition to the presentations. Sara asked Logan to do that and he agreed. Logan said he would send it out a week or two after the event.

Jeff will make maps.

Jody said this would be good material for the newsletter. Ashlee asked for material to include in the newsletter or Facebook. She asked if we could get a mini-abstract or a short blurb from each presentation. Dave will ask but he needs contact info.

Shawn asked if we are going to ask for bios like we did last year. It was agreed that bios are not necessary, they take too much time. Jeff said we need a moderator, too, to keep people from talking too long. Dave said Martha volunteered to do this.

Allen said to let them know that they won't get the big intro, Shawn said to remind them of time allotted and Sara said to send them the final agenda.

Shawn would like to try to come up with 5-8 minutes to discuss the goals of the symposium. It's nice to have an opportunity to tell people why they came today. Shawn will do the introduction.

Shawn asked if there was anything else we need to do to wrap up our symposium plans.

Jody said she needs to know if we want to provide food. Sara asked if we have the money in our budget for this. Dave said that Martha had volunteered the IWRA to help with refreshments if we want that. Jody said we'll have \$1,200 in our account after this expense. The last time we provided snacks, it was only about \$75. So, it would probably be less than \$100.

Jody made motion to spend another \$100 on refreshments. Sara seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mike Griffin entered the meeting to introduce himself. He said he will become a real board member once the MOU is signed and approved by his regional management. He spends most of his time in the KY. The ag committee has really benefitted from the KY water group. He thinks the presenter from KY USGS will do a good job.

Shawn said Mike sent him a memorandum to sign about a week ago that outline the role of the USGS in serving on the council. He just wanted to bring the MOU to the board's attention before he signed it.

Newsletter Discussion

Before moving onto discussion about the strategic plan, Shawn wanted to discuss the December newsletter. He wanted to know if she needed anything else to pull that together. Ashely invited more content. She said she is trying to focus on water management issues.

One of the stories is about the West Boggs Lake project. Dave asked if Ashley mentioned the rotenone application. He said the OISC was there and monitored it, and the application came off without a hitch. Ashley asked Dave to send her a blurb to that effect to include in the article.

Jody asked if she was planning to use the 303(d) information. Ashlee said she hasn't looked at it yet. Jody told the group that she and Ashlee had discussed doing a series of articles about the 303(d) list and process to help people better understand how to interpret it.

Sara said she will send Ashlee something for the Wabash River and asked when she needs it.

Ashley said she wants to get the newsletter out by December 1 if possible.

Shawn asked if Ashlee wants to start publicizing the white papers going up on the web site. She said she will copy and paste into the newsletter and Shawn will write a blurb for her to explain the white paper initiative.

Strategic Plan Discussion

Shawn said next steps are to look at what we have now. He has taken from Jill's notes to provide a summary of the plan's purpose. He's tried to keep it short and sweet. The primary component will be the work plans.

Shawn asked for comments. Dave asked if this is draft plan. Shawn said yes, that the plan is to have committee work plans for standing committees. Dave asked when he wants comments.

Shawn asked what we want to develop as a timeline for incorporating suggestions. Jody said the committees could use the one the Communications Committee used. Providing a template would help to standardize and reflect at the end of the year. Sara said to provide a clean copy. Jody said timeline is more important than mechanics.

Shawn said the groundwater Focus committee is meeting in January so we wouldn't be able to expect anything from them before then.

Sara suggested Feb 1 as a deadline. Jody said she would send a cleaned up copy of the Communications work plan out to the committees to use. Now need to figure out which committees need to develop them. She doesn't remember which committees were combined and which are ad-hoc. The info on the web site isn't current.

We have the GW Focus Committee and the Optimization Committee. The Information Resources Committee does not have current leadership identified. Need to ask Joe Foy who replaced Daragh Deegan.

Jody said we discussed during our strategic planning whether or not we still need a committee devoted to the data clearinghouse. Some of the things we were talking about in terms of supporting this work doing are really more like board tasks, which would fall into a board work plan rather than a committee work plan. She didn't think that there's anything going on in that committee. Sara suggested we ask Laura Esman if she needs a committee to help her with the data clearinghouse. Jody said she will ask Laura.

Shawn said it looks like we may now be down to three committees. Shawn asked if there was a nutrients committee or a Jeff said that was a low flow, ecological committee. Jody said she thought there was the anticipation that this group would work on something for down the road. Jeff asked if that was a full-fledged committee.

Jody said she could look at the minutes but she doesn't remember voting on this. Jeff said he thinks it was a loose group that was going to do an issues page. Sara said it would be nice to know what they are doing.

Shawn said Feb 1 can also be the deadline to provide feedback on the strategic plan. Jody asked if we need to do a board work plan to cover those things that don't fit neatly into a committee work plan. Jody said she would put that together and send it out for the board to look at. Shawn will send out a draft of the strategic plan to the board with the Feb 1 deadline.

Groundwater Focus Committee Update

GW focus committee will meet next in January. Logan said they have been discussing soil moisture monitoring, exploring the possibility of setting up a monitoring network. There may be a possibility of getting USGS or NRCS support. Jeff said they haven't gotten very far. Part of the problem has been getting the ag community to buy into it. The committee has wrapped up the arsenic work. So this may be the next thing they will focus on. Haven't made any formal decisions in this regard but will try to solidify this at next meeting. Logan needs to touch base with Jim Sullivan and Randy Bayless to see if this is where they are headed. Shawn reminded Logan that the IGS has a soil moisture monitoring network and will be presenting at the symposium. Logan asked if having Shawn come to the next committee meeting to present might help to jump start the conversation. Sara said Ron Turco is working on soil moisture on one of his projects. Logan said that the problem may be that they don't have the right people around the table. Sara suggested that if the GW focus committee is going to change directions, they may

want to put that out to the membership. Logan says that a lot of farmers don't want to participate in any monitoring project as they think it leads to regulation. And with shrinking budgets, there is the argument that they need to focus resources on existing work.

Logan asked if Shawn would be willing to meet with the Dept. of Ag to talk about the soil moisture monitoring work he is doing. He said they are resistant to the idea of this kind of monitoring, Jeff said that Mike [USGS director] would like to put soil moisture monitoring equipment in with some of their gages.

Jody asked if producers can use this information. That's the key to selling the monitoring. Logan said if there exists some kind of tool that farmers can use to understand the data. Shawn said the soil moisture storage can be useful because farmers are always thinking ring with their nutrients. This would be really helpful to helping them normalize for soil moisture. It's a good indicator of water storage, too.

Moon Kim is doing some work in northern IN. If we can organize this through the GW committee, there would be a lot of potential. Logan said there are clearly other people they need to be talking to. Maybe the next meeting will bear some more direction. Logan said he could propose a the next meeting to get something down on paper about what they are interested in.

Shawn showed the board his groundwater white paper and asked if this is a good way to post supplemental information for these issues. Jeff suggested different titles, more descriptive of content. The board agreed that it looks good presented in this way.

Shawn asked if we should look into standardizing the format. Jeff said that the front page could have a common template but that may or may not be suitable when you get down into the issue-specific detail. Jody suggested that this could be presented from a user-centric way with all the resources grouped under questions or identified needs. Shawn doesn't have time to figure this out. Jody will bring up the standardization of supplementary info for the issues pages at the next Communications Committee meeting. Jeff wants to be a part of that discussion. Jody will send Jeff a link to Doodle Poll to Jeff.

Shawn said this is a different way to present information, a topical way. There may be a better way to provide resources across the entire website. Jody said she still sees a need for a static resources page for things like the water monitoring inventory. She wouldn't want to see that go away. Sara said this is probably for the Communications Committee to decide.

Network Optimization Committee Update

Jeff said there is a lot of good energy, good involvement in this work. There are a lot of new people in the group. They are making good headway. There 320+ sites thought the state. They've made a bunch of maps and they now want to give each site a number and connect to gages where possible so they can model loads. Three to four people working on this effort. They are ranking the sites based on their proximity to a gage. This information may help us get around having to install new gages as it might identify gages across state lines that are still in close proximity to sites in IN. Gretchen identified some. There are different sites where two agencies are working but not talking to each other. With the information they now have, Jeff thinks they can finalize this paper pretty quickly.

Jeff said that he learned in his meeting with Jill Hoffman that the mayors group is pushing really hard to get water quality information associated with that. Even though the Chamber of Commerce wanted to avoid this to begin with, the mayors may advocate it. Jill wants the paper

to include recommendations. It's a touchy subject for USGS but not for council. Jeff asked the board for thoughts on this. Sara said she thinks this is a good idea. It's the same thing as with the symposium. If you put the data out there, then what? By including recommendations in the paper, you're stating your "then what". Jeff said the USGS can't go out there and make recommendations. Sara said the council can. Jeff said they have included some and once they get the draft out there, they will be able to get some feedback on them.

Jody said this is consistent with our mission. There is no other body right now who can defend a position with this kind of data. We cannot lobby, but we can have position papers. Shawn asked if it really isn't just a matter of semantics, that presenting recommendations isn't very different than presenting a gap analysis. Sara said recommendations need to be stated not as opinions but based on fact.

Jody said there is a gray area between stating conclusions and making recommendations. Jeff said the USGS can't make recommendations but the way they have gotten around that is to just let legislators know what they are doing. Shawn said to provide a bulleted summary of the data gaps in the executive summary. Jody said then the conclusion would speak for itself.

Shawn said this is a database approach to communicating what everyone is doing and where there are gaps so that people can start using the data. Jeff said another thing they are beginning to do is to look at setting some minimum reporting levels so that maybe you could use somebody else's data. Jody said that IDEM is working on its External Data Framework, which will identify how IDEM will use data like these, how it will rank them for different uses. She asked Jeff if that what he meant by minimum reporting levels. He said its partly that, but they're also looking at frequency, where an agency can make a change in their frequency that would allow them to pool their data with another data set. If you're looking across agencies, there is potential cost-savings in looking at this.

Jody said that having it all in one paper is a huge statrt. IDEM looks at its monitoring strategy every year. This will be very useful for that work. Sara said it would be nice to publish a GIS database that people can use as they need. Jeff said that could be easily done and that it would be nice to publish this. Shawn told Jeff to think about how we might do this on a single web page. He said that interactivity is difficult. He said you could post a shape file with an attribute table that's really a database. A spreadsheet would work fine. Sara said to include a citation so people can cite this work when they use it.

Communications Committee Update

Jody said that she and Melody met a few weeks before and that they will meet again in January at which time they will work on tweaking the plan.

Ashley said that Twitter does not seem as heavily followed as Facebook. Sara asked how many followers we have. Ashley said about 60. The board talked discussed the mechanics of sharing the page in Facebook and strategies for building that following. The Twitter feed on Facebook isn't very good right now but if you post directly to the Facebook page, the traffic is usually pretty good, posts usually reach over 100.

Wrap-up

Sara asked if the board could see the MOU. Shawn said he would send it out to the board and asked Jeff if that will work with Mike's timeline. Jeff said it would work.

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of September 23, 2014	\$1,313.26
Income (dues)	\$96.68
Expenses (PayPal fees)	(\$4.64)
Current Balance	\$1,405.30

Next meeting scheduled for January 21 at 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

