



AGENDA
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, June 3, 2021
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING - GoToMeeting

Chair

Kurt Prenzler
Chairman
Madison County Board

Vice Chair

Dennis Gannon
County Executive, Jefferson County

2nd Vice Chair

Mark A. Kern
Chairman, St. Clair County Board

Executive Committee

Tim Brinker
Presiding Commissioner
Franklin County
Steve Ehlmann
County Executive
St. Charles County

Tishaura Jones
Mayor
City of St. Louis

Vicki Koerber
County Board Chairman
Monroe County

Dr. Sam Page
County Executive, St. Louis County

Members

Ron Counts
Mayor, City of Arnold
Jefferson County
Honorable Rita Heard Days
Councilwoman, 1st Council District
St. Louis County

Robert Eastern III
Mayor, City of East St. Louis

Mark Kupsy
President, Southwestern Illinois
Council of Mayors

Cheryl Maguire
Vice President, Southwestern Illinois
Council of Mayors

Roy Mosley
St. Clair County

Lewis Reed
President, Board of Aldermen
City of St. Louis

Herbert Simmons
President, Southwestern Illinois
Metropolitan & Regional
Planning Commission

Ruth Springer
Municipal League of Metro St. Louis

Donald R. Summers, Jr.
St. Louis County

Michael Walters
Madison County

John White
St. Charles County

Regional Citizens

Barbara Geisman
C. William Grogan
John A. Laker
Ron Williams

Non-voting Members

Holly Bieneman
Illinois Department of Transportation

Vacant
Illinois Department of Commerce
and Economic Opportunity

Patrick McKenna
Missouri Department of Transportation

Taulby Roach
Bi-State Development

Aaron Willard
Missouri Office of Administration

Executive Director

James M. Wild

DUE TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK, EAST-WEST GATEWAY’S OFFICES ARE CURRENTLY CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC AND WILL BE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

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Or Phone - [+1 \(408\) 650-3123](tel:+14086503123)

1. CALL TO ORDER - Carol Lawrence, Chair, East-West Gateway Council of Governments

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative – Safeguarding the Mississippi River Together Act

- Mayor Robert Eastern, East St. Louis, IL
- Mayor Phil Stang, Kimmswick, MO

B. Update on Southwestern Illinois Watershed Management Plans

- Mary Vandebord, HeartLands Conservancy

C. Land Conservation Grant Program

- Gus Raeker, Missouri Department of Conservation

D. Recap of Global Freshwaters Summit

- Laura Madden, Phoenix Consults
- Myra Jackson, Global Being Foundation

3. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Operation Clean Stream

- Bonnie Harper, Open Space Council

B. Grand Glaize Creek 319 Watershed Plan

- Jay Hoskins, Metropolitan Sewer District

4. ADJOURNMENT

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Minutes

Regional Water Resources Advisory Committee

Thursday, February 4, 2021

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Virtual Meeting - East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Attendees:

Carol Lawrence, Chair – East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Eric Karch – Reitz & Jens

Jay Hoskins – Metropolitan Sewer District

Amanda Cox – St. Louis University

Collin Wellenkamp – Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative

Steve Brendel – Madison County

John McEnery – M3 Engineering Group

Kimberly Baumann – Mississippi Lime

Roland Biehl – Metropolitan Sewer District

Gary Moore – Washington University

Danelle Haake – National Great Rivers Research and Education Center

Doug Bjornstad – Jefferson County Public Sewer District

Shawn Sullivan – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Rebecca Loesli – Metropolitan Sewer District

Paul Ryland – U.S. Geological Survey

Tyler Burk – Heartlands Conservancy

Brooke Butler – Nine PBS

Rick Brown – City of Wildwood

Tom Schweiss – Great Rivers Greenway

Barbara Charry – The Nature Conservancy

Bonnie Harper – Open Space Council

Warren Grace – America's Confluence

Libby Reuter – Watershed Cairns

Traci Lichtenberg – Missouri American Water Company

Mike Hartoin – SCI Engineering

Diane Bauhof – St. Louis Aquarium Foundation

Maria Morgado – UN Environment Programme

Jennifer Wendt – Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative

Jason He – Washington University

Rachel Rimmerman – St. Louis University

Todd Miller – Missouri Department of Transportation

Christina Favilla – Sierra Club Piasa Palisades Chapter

Staff:

Mary Grace Lewandowski Jennifer Vuitel Aaron Young Gena Jain Maureen McCarthy

1. CALL TO ORDER

The virtual meeting of the Regional Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRC) was called to order by Chair Carol Lawrence, East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG). Those attending introduces themselves.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Mississippi River Plastics Pollution Initiative

- Jennifer Wendt, Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative

The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI) is an association of mayors along the Mississippi River. The group focuses on clean water, sustainable economics, disaster resilience, international food and water security, and the celebration of river culture and history. In September 2018, through MRCTI, state legislators and mayors along the Mississippi made a commitment to reduce plastic waste in the Mississippi River Valley. To support this goal a new initiative has been launched to generate a first-ever snapshot of plastic pollution along the river. The initiative is starting with a pilot phase in St. Paul MN, St. Louis, MO, and Baton Rouge, LA. There is not a baseline number of plastic pollutants in/adjacent to the river, an inventory of the types of plastics, or known origins of these plastic pollutants. The pilot phase will use a citizen science approach to gather data in these pilot locations which then will be analyzed to understand the state of plastic litter along the river's banks. The goal is to eventually have a system that can be used throughout the entire Mississippi watershed. Community volunteers will be trained to use a free mobile app called the Marine Debris Tracker that will use GPS to log the data collection locations and to identify plastics found. The training sessions will take place at the end of February and March. Data collection will begin on April 1, 2021 and go through April 18, 2021. This initiative also serves as an educational resource by working with schools, teachers, and students in the region to enhance their knowledge on marine plastics and pollution. Data collection will take place during organized cleanup events in select locations as well as individual/impromptu cleanups. The Marine Debris Tracker data is an open source which means anyone can access the data. More information about this initiative and how to register to collect data can be found at www.unep.org/Mississippi

B. WATER Institute

- Amanda Cox, St. Louis University

The Water Access, Technology, Environment, and Resources (WATER) Institute was established to find innovative solutions to water issues in order to serve humanity. It was launched in June 2020 through the Big Ideas competition at St. Louis University (SLU). It is comprised of a diverse group that includes: a leadership team made up of a director and two associate directors; eight primary investigators from the College of Arts and Science, College for Public Health and Social Justice, and Parks College of Engineering, Aviation, and Technology; and thirteen Associated Investigators from across SLU, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), and Missouri American Water.

The WATER Institute has three main areas of research. The first is water in the built environment which is about improving water infrastructure to secure water supplies and address key social

needs. The second area of research is aquatic ecosystems which involves protecting aquatic ecosystems and improving local and global efforts at ecological restoration. The final area of study is social justice which focuses on developing clean water access at home and around the world. The WATER Institute uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine and find solutions to the water issues they study. It is important to involve people from all backgrounds including engineering, science, policy, economics, public health, and social justice. The WATER Institute at SLU has advantages to its location. There are several large rivers nearby, there are urban watersheds and agricultural landscapes, and major industry in the area. The internationally renowned faculty involved in the institute bring active research and opportunities for collaboration.

There are currently several active research projects that are collaborations between SLU and other universities. The HydroClim project is being funded by the National Science Foundation and is a collaboration between SLU, Tulane University, and Indiana University. The objective of the study is to develop a data set of current and future streamflow and water temperature estimates across the United States and Canada to enhance conservation and management of freshwater systems in a changing climate. A second active study is the Future River Analysis and Management Evaluation Tool (FRAME) project. It is a collaboration between the US Army Corps of Engineers, the University of Portsmouth, the University of Nottingham, Mendrop Engineering, and SLU. This project is examining the changes in river channels by utilizing a hybrid model made up of a sediment transport model and geomorphic rules for channel evolution. The data can assist in evaluating plausible futures for rivers. Another active study is the River Morphology Data and Analysis Tools (RiverMorph) project. It is a web platform for enabling river morphology research. The RiverMorph tool will advance river morphology research through easy availability, accessibility and reusability of river morphology data. The research team wants to create a national scale repository of river morphology data. This tool can be used to provide socio-economic benefits through better flood modeling and river morpho-dynamic forecasting.

There will be a free virtual one-day SLU Summit for WATER on March 22, 2021. The keynote speaker will discuss the topic of hydroinformatics. There will be presentations from WATER Institute primary investigators and a panel discussion on regional water resource priorities and research needs.

If you have questions or would like more information you can contact Amanda Cox at Amanda.cox@slu.edu or go to the website at slu.edu/water.

C. Urban Waters Program Update

- Mary Grace Lewandowski, East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Mary Grace Lewandowski is the Director of Community Planning at East-West Gateway and is also the current Urban Waters Ambassador for the Meramec and Big Rivers Federal Partnership. The Urban Waters Federal Partnership is a federal level coalition of state and federal agencies. The federal agencies include the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of the Interior (DOI), and others. There are also 28 non-

governmental organizations involved in the partnership such as The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, and American Rivers. There are 20 Urban Waters Federal Partnership Watershed locations across the United States.

The goal for the partnership is to reestablish connections between urban communities to waterways by approving coordination among federal agencies and targeting the areas that are overburdened and economically distressed. The Partnership also collaborates with community-led revitalization efforts to improve our Nation's water systems and promote their economic, environmental, and social benefits. More information about this partnership can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners>

The Meramec River and Big River watershed cover 12 counties and 360 miles of linear waterway. There is a mix of urban, suburban, and agricultural land within the watershed. It includes the main stem of the Meramec as well as the Big River and Bourbouse River watersheds. This area was a formerly booming lead producing area going back over 200 years. There has been lead contamination in the watershed that affected wildlife such as mussels. There are national priority list lead sites in three main counties of the watershed: Jefferson County, Washington County, and St. Francois County. There are efforts by the EPA, USACE, the US Forest Service, Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR), the Department of Health, and others to address these lead contamination sites.

The Big River Clean-up and Restoration Effort is a coalition of federal, state, and non-governmental organizations dedicated to restoring the Big River with support of landowners and the public. The organizations involved want to address the lead mining contamination by educating communities and other agencies about lead prevention and river restoration strategies. Efforts to clean the river include: removing built up contaminated sediment from behind dams and other structures; restoring trees and vegetation along the riverbank; stabilizing eroding riverbanks with engineered designs using trees, shrubs, and rocks; restoring native mussels, crayfish, and fish; and addressing contaminated yard soil.

Five different infographics have been created to help raise awareness about the lead contamination in the watershed. The first infographic informs us that Missouri is one of the world's largest lead-producing regions, dating back to the 1700's, the lead pile waste from mining has contaminated the rivers, the lead contamination is toxic to fish, and lead exposure can cause health issues for people. The second infographic describes what lead contamination means for the Big River: The soil and sediment may contain lead; the lead in the sediment impacts fish, crayfish, and endangered mussels; a fish advisory is in effect for the Big River; and without action, contamination will continue moving down the river, impacting the Meramec and Mississippi. The third infographic is about the human health component to lead pollution. Lead exposure can be especially harmful to children, reducing their ability to learn and focus. Adults and their children can be exposed to lead by eating a lot of a certain fish, swallowing or breathing contaminated dirt or dust while playing along the Big River and stream banks, and tracking contaminated dirt or dust into their home on toys, shoes, and pets. The fourth infographic focusses on the ecological side of lead pollution and how state and federal agencies work together with landowners and the public. The fifth and last infographic provides five ways

to protect yourself from lead: regularly wash your hands; talk to your healthcare provider about testing your children for lead poisoning; don't eat certain fish caught from the Big River; have the soil in your yard tested; and avoid using untested soil and sod from the Big River and surrounding areas.

The Urban Waters Federal Partnership is conducting research to find future sources of funding to conduct their work. Funding for this effort is being received from the EPA through the Wichita State University Environmental Finance Center. The partnership is also working on a communications strategy implementation that highlights the dangers of lead, blood level testing, soil testing, and residential soil remediation. They are also working on a workplan update that identifies what projects and activities each federal partner will be working on over the next five years.

For more information you can contact Mary Grace Lewandowski at marygrace@ewgateway.org or go to the website at www.ewgateway.org

3. OTHERBUSINESS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Report from OneSTL

- Aaron Young, East-West Gateway Council of Governments

The Water and Green Infrastructure Working Group has not met since early 2020, but plan to start meeting again in 2021. No date is currently set. The group is exploring the possibility of creating a water quality index for the St. Louis region. This would be an illustrative display of water quality monitoring and data collected across the region.

OneSTL will be hosting a Sustainability Lab on Tuesday, February 23. Soon the annual report for OneSTL in 2020 will be released. In several weeks the report will be found on the OneSTL website.

B. St. Louis County Stormwater Management Plan

- Roland Biehl, Metropolitan Sewer District

The 2022 – 2026 Stormwater Management Plan is currently being drafted. It is the fourth term phase II stormwater permit. You can go to www.projectclear.org to review the draft plan. The public comment period ends on February 25. Also on February 25 there will be a public meeting to address questions about the stormwater management plan. This plan addresses non-point source pollution in stormwater runoff.

C. Water Related Activities at Washington University

- Dr. Jason He, Washington University

Dr. Jason He is an Environmental Engineering professor at Washington University. Previously he was a professor at Virginia Tech and is a graduate of Washington University. Dr. He's expertise is in water and wastewater treatment. Washington University has recently created the Center for Water Innovation (CWI). The center focusses on sustainable wastewater management, resource recovery wastewater treatment, wastewater based virus tracking, clean drinking water, and the nexus of agriculture and water. More information can be found on the website at <https://watercenter.wustl.edu/>

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the Water Resources Advisory Committee will on Thursday, June 3, 2021.