

DeKalb County Watersheds Council

Meeting Minutes



DATE: Wednesday, July 29, 2026

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT: 3:06 p.m. by Dean Johnson

ATTENDANCE:

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Kris Aves, Grace Coveliers, Matt Deitch, Dean Johnson, Kelsey Musich, Nick Newman, Beth Prestegaard and Kyle White

STAFF: Brooke Watson

ABSENT COUNCIL MEMBERS: Autumn Carlson, Matt Anderson, Peggy Anesi, Jolene Willis and Anita Zurbrugg

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Beth Prestegaard moved to approve the agenda, Kelsey Musich seconded the motion, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Grace Coveliers moved to approve the May 27, 2026 meeting minutes, Nick Newman seconded the motion, motion carried.

REPORTS:

Watershed Coordinator:

- An announcement from IEPA regarding the grant application for the Somonauk Creek Watershed is imminent. Baxter & Woodman will assist with consulting once it is finalized. One of the first steps will be looking for candidates for the steering committee. Ideal candidates will include county engineers, county board members, landowners, farmers and other stakeholders who live or do business in the Somonauk Creek Watershed.
- The Lake Holiday Property Owners Association was very excited to hear about the Somonauk Creek Watershed plan. Dean and Grace presented at their July meeting and they are interested in being an active partner.
- The IEPA released the FFY 2026 Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Pollution Notice of Funding Opportunity. DeKalb SWCD proactively forwarded the notice to city leaders in DeKalb County for communities that have completed watershed plans and therefore projects that qualify.

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DeKalb County Stormwater Management Committee:

- Kelsey Musich reported continued forward progress on the DeKalb County Storm Water Ordinance proposal, which includes better policies on greenspace, water connectivity and water volume. Kelsey has been meeting informally with various stakeholders to receive feedback and hopefully address comments prior to a proposal to the DeKalb County Planning, Zoning and Development Committee. The main pushback has centered around developing BMPs to treat one inch of rain in the annual flush. Key stakeholders would rather commit to developing BMPs to treat only half-of-an-inch of rain in the annual flush.
- Kelsey also shared a cautionary situation playing out in California courts regarding a municipality suing the EPA and trying to narrow their focus and authority to only providing BMP recommendations. Nationally this could create vulnerabilities for MS4 regulations.
- Kelsey and Peggy Anesi also added that there is interest from Boone County in partnering with McHenry County, DeKalb County and others to do regional stormwater management.

Natural Resources Education (U of I Extension)

- Peggy Anesi reported that the Watershed Stewards program has been rescheduled for Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., starting Oct. 6 through Nov. 17. Sessions will be in-person at Russell Woods Nature Center and will include an additional fieldtrip to the Water Treatment Plant.
- Extension is collaborating with Purdue University on rainscaping work. University of Illinois Extension – DeKalb County has been selected for a grant to host one of six, rainscaping demonstration sites across Illinois. Peggy is installing a rain garden at the Genoa Water Treatment Plant and native plants will be installed this fall. She anticipates having a budget of approximately \$6,000 to cover the cost of the project. The rain garden demonstration site will be monitored, with reports compared against the other demonstration sites in various regions of the state. Peggy suggested this could be a good stop on a future watersheds bus tour.

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DeKalb County Watersheds Council Outreach/Marketing Committee:

- Beth Prestegaard shared there is no business to report.

NIU:

- Matt Deitch reported NIU is very interested in pursuing the IEPA's FFY 2026 Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Pollution Notice of Funding Opportunity. Matt is assisting with the modeling and they hope to submit projects that are part of Watson Creek.
- The Forty North project is proceeding slowly. Unfortunately one of the project leaders has since left her position.

DeKalb County Community Foundation:

- Kyle White highlighted DCCF's Community Needs grant, which does have funds earmarked for conservation and wildlife. This is specifically for capital projects with allocations up to \$20,000 per project. Applications are due September 1, 2026.
- Kyle also noted Promise Grants are also accepting ideas with letters of intent until August 1, 2026. Accepted projects will then be invited to apply for further funding.

Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District:

- Nick Newman reported the major sewer basin rehab project in DeKalb at 4th Street and Taylor Street to reline the sewer system, should be wrapping up in September. They are beginning the next planning phase with Baxter and Woodman, for the next sewer basin rehab which is not far from the current project.
- The Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District has several sewer basin rehab projects scheduled over the next five years and is starting the projects in the oldest parts of DeKalb first.
- Part of the water sewer basin rehab plans involve eliminating the need for trash pumps, which are temporarily installed and moved around during large stormwater events to help alleviate issues in infrastructure that was not originally designed to handle the volume it currently has to during periods of significant rainfall.
- Rehabbing water sewer basins also will hopefully prevent and eliminate the need to utilize excess flow treatments and chlorine.

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Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District (continued)

- There has been significant recent interest in potential data center water usage and how water used by data centers feeds into sanitary basins.
- Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District is finalizing plans to add Waterman to the District and convert the village's wastewater treatment plant to a pump station. This will regionalize existing and future wastewater flows from Waterman and significantly improve nutrient source point pollution into tributaries and rivers from the wastewater lagoons. The anticipated completion date is late 2028.

APPROVAL OF THE REPORTS Kelsey Musich moved to approve the reports. Matt Deitch seconded the motion, motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- "Pain Points" submission needs to be made to NIU's Dr. Jason Gorham. DeKalb SWCD will review submissions and forward to Dr. Gorham.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion continued about hosting a Water Quality Summit, to build on the interest and momentum of Watershed Stewards for Leaders. Target audience, topic ideas, time of year, time of day and day of the week were discussed. A sub-committee was formed to plan the event. Water Quality Summit Sub-Committee members include Matt Deitch, Kelsey Musich, Nick Newman, Beth Prestegaard in partnership with SWCD staff Grace Coveliars, Dean Johnson and Brooke Watson. The Sub-Committee will meet before the next Watersheds Council meeting.
- An invitation for proposals was circulated by the Prairie State Conservation Coalition, for speakers for their annual conference in November. Discussion occurred as to if there was interest in putting something together on behalf of the DeKalb County Watersheds Council. The consensus was that there is not at this time.

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New Business (continued)

- Discussion occurred about setting a new date and time to schedule the bi-monthly DeKalb County Watersheds Council meetings, as the current format (last Wednesday of the month happening every other month) now has reoccurring conflicts with other regional meetings and challenges with select council members schedules. Moving forward, meetings will be scheduled for 3 p.m. on the third Monday, happening every other month.

ACTION ITEMS:

Partnership opportunity with Dr. Jason Gorham: DeKalb SWCD will review “Pain Points” submissions and forward to Dr. Gorham.

- Dr. Gorham who will recommend if we should collaborate with Business in Action or the Experiential Learning Center.

Water Quality Summit: Water Quality Summit Sub-Committee will convene before the next DeKalb County Watersheds Committee.

- Members will discuss and provide direction on date, time, format and topics.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Matt Deitch moved to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Nick Newman.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next meeting of the DeKalb County Watersheds Council will be Monday, September 21, 2026 at 3 p.m. The meeting will be held at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau’s Center for Agriculture in Sycamore, Illinois.