



Hickory Creek Watershed Planning Group

www.hickorycreekwatershed.org

Hickory Creek Watershed Planning Group
150 W. Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60432

January 15, 2015

Dear Government Official:



Figure 1: Volunteers sampling in Union Ditch

Hickory Creek and its tributaries are listed on the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list as being *impaired* for aquatic life and primary contact. Causes of impairments include arsenic, chloride, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, ammonia sedimentation/siltation, visible oils, fecal coliform, total suspended solids, changes in stream depth and velocity patterns, alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetation covers, and other flow regime alternatives¹. IEPA's primary mechanism for controlling water quality is through the permit limits in wastewater treatment plants NPDES permits. Municipal storm sewer systems also operate under an IEPA General NPDES permit that will in the next permitting cycle require Best Management Practices (BMPs) on de-icing practices in order to reduce chloride concentrations (see figure 2). If we collaboratively work with the regulators to reduce pollution in runoff, not just what comes out of the WWTPs themselves, by default **we help to continue to defer promulgation of additional state regulations** because our collective efforts have demonstrated a positive impact on the overall water quality of the watershed.

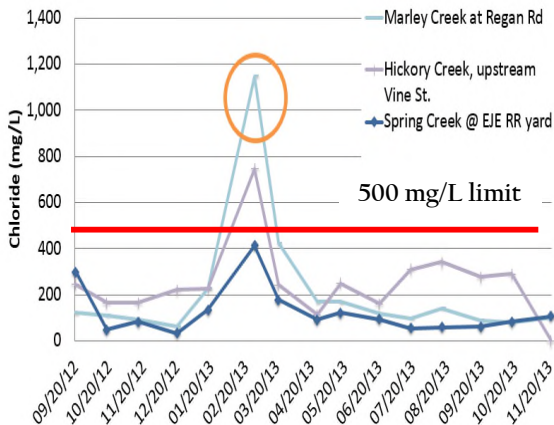


Figure 2: Chloride concentrations within Hickory Creek Watershed from 2012-2013

The Hickory Creek Watershed Planning Group (HCWPG) is taking the lead role in identifying the solutions to address the water quality impairments. A list of HCWPG's efforts are as follows:

- HCWPG identified critical areas and sources of impairment in the 2011 Watershed Plan.
- In 2012, HCWPG partnered with wastewater treatment plants within the watershed to collect in-stream water quality data.
- Two years of monitoring data were compared to historical data cited in the watershed plan to identify any gaps with the data in achieving water quality goals.

¹ Illinois EPA's 2014 Integrated Water Quality Report.



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Figure 3: Macroinvertebrate collected by volunteers at Bio-Blitz



Figure 4: Volunteers sorting macroinvertebrates at Bio-Blitz

- In 2014, HCWPG in a meeting with the IEPA, suggested a priority list of pollutants to target for continued monitoring and reductions; excessive sediment, E.coli, and chloride. IEPA concurred with this approach.
- On Sept. 20th, 2014, HCWPG hosted a one-day Bio-Blitz within Hickory Creek watershed to collect macroinvertebrates as an indicator of water quality. The Hickory Creek Bio-Blitz brought volunteers and scientists from five communities and one private utility together to collect macroinvertebrates within five distinct stream segments. **Attached is memorandum of the Bio-Blitz monitoring results.**
- HCWPG hosted seven steering committee meetings in 2014, where technical presentations were delivered with regards to stormwater management, water quality monitoring, and environmental regulations
- HCWPG is engaging municipalities to implement BMPs/ green infrastructure for stormwater management and stream restoration. The BMPs proposed shall align with HCWPG's larger goal of improving water quality and tracking BMP performance will be vital as the group work towards 3rd-Party Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

As a government agency within Hickory Creek Watershed, we urge you to participate in identifying BMPs for improving water quality. **Attached is a Request for Proposals (RFP) of BMP Implementation.** Please consider submitting potential BMPs for implementation within the Hickory Creek Watershed. Sponsored applicants will be included in the 2015 Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Section 319 grant application by HCWPG. This is an opportunity for applicants who are seeking financial assistance for implementation of BMPs within their municipality to leverage IEPA 319 grant resources. **All selected applicants who are awarded a 319 grant would have the opportunity for up to 60% of the project costs to be reimbursed by the IEPA.** In-kind labor is acceptable as part of the 40% local match. If you have any further questions on the RFP, please contact Dr. Lindsay Birt (Watershed Coordinator) by email at lbirt@huffnhuff.com.

Sincerely,

Dale Schepers, Chairman of HCWPG
dschpers@tinleypark.org

The following opportunities for improving and restoring Hickory Creek were recommended in the watershed plan:

- Implementation of stormwater management retrofits
- Water quality treatment BMPs
- Stream corridor restoration projects