

NORTHWEST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

1600 East Golf Road, Suite 0700
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016
(847) 296-9200 • Fax (847) 296-9207
www.nwmc-cog.org



*A Regional Association of Illinois
Municipalities and Townships
Representing a Population of Over One Million*

MEMBERS

Antioch
Arlington Heights
Bannockburn
Barrington
Bartlett
Buffalo Grove
Deer Park
Deerfield
Des Plaines
Elk Grove Village
Evanston
Fox Lake
Glencoe
Glenview
Grayslake
Hanover Park
Highland Park
Hoffman Estates
Kenilworth
Lake Bluff
Lake Forest
Lake Zurich
Libertyville
Lincolnshire
Lincolnwood
Morton Grove
Mount Prospect
Niles
Northbrook
Northfield
Northfield Township
Palatine
Park Ridge
Prospect Heights
Rolling Meadows
Schaumburg
Skokie
South Barrington
Streamwood
Vernon Hills
West Dundee
Wheeling
Wilmette
Winnetka

President
Donna Johnson
Libertyville

Vice-President
Eric Smith
Buffalo Grove

Secretary
Paul Hoefert
Mount Prospect

Treasurer
Scott Anderson
Barrington

Executive Director
Mark L. Fowler

Poplar Creek and Upper Salt Creek Watershed Planning Councils

AGENDA

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

10:30 a.m.

Zoom Video Conference

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81182909158>

Meeting ID: 811 8290 9158

Passcode: PCUSWPC

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. July 9, 2025 Meeting Transcript (Attachment A)

IV. Capital Improvements

Clare Adams will provide an update.

Action Requested: Informational

V. How to apply for a Partnership Presentation

Mark Castillo will cover the documentation needed to apply to MWRD's partnership programs.

Action Requested: Informational

VI. FY 2026 Meeting Schedule (Attachment B)

Action Requested: Approval

VII. Other Business

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Poplar Creek and Upper Salt Creek Watershed Planning Councils will be held January 14 at 10:30 am via Zoom video conference.

IX. Adjournment

POPLAR CREEK AND UPPER SALT CREEK
WATERSHED PLANNING COUNCILS

* * * * *

Held on Wednesday, July 9, 2025,
commencing at the hour of 10:30 o'clock, a.m., via
Zoom.

PRESENT:

NORTHWEST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE:

Eric Czarnota

METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT

Clare Adams
Mark Castillo
Rich Fisher
Arturo Hernandez
Sara Sukanen
Annie Wright

ALSO PRESENT:

E Danielczyk
Eng Consultant
Abigail Garofalo - Illinois Extension
Renee Schroyer - Elk Grove Village
Alan Wenderski
Kim Nowicki - Department of Emergency Management

1 MR. CZARNOTA: It's 10:33. We'll go ahead
2 and get started. This is the Poplar Creek and Upper
3 Salt Creek Watershed Planning Council for Wednesday,
4 July 9, 2025.

5 We will start with roll call. When
6 I call your organization's name, if you could just
7 put your name and organization's name in the chat for
8 the minutes, that would be greatly appreciated. If I
9 don't call your organization, if you could just put
10 your name in the chat for the minutes, that would be
11 greatly appreciated as well.

12 So we'll start with the roll call
13 for the Poplar Creek Watershed Planning Council, and
14 that includes: Barrington Hills, Bartlett, Elgin,
15 Hoffman Estates, Schaumburg, South Barrington,
16 Streamwood, Unincorporated Cook County, Barrington
17 Township, Hanover Township, Palatine Township and
18 Schaumburg Township.

19 And for the Upper Salt Creek
20 Watershed Planning Council we have: Arlington
21 Heights, Deer Park, Elk Grove Village, Hoffman
22 Estates, Inverness, Palatine, Rolling Meadows,
23 Schaumburg, Roselle, Unincorporated Cook County, Elk
24 Grove Township, Palatine Township, Schaumburg

1 Township and Wheeling Township.

2 Now I'll move to item number 3,
3 which is the April 9, 2025 meeting transcript, and
4 actually, after taking a look before this meeting, I
5 realized that I had accidentally attached the North
6 Branch of the Chicago River Watershed Planning
7 Council meeting minutes in the agenda that I sent
8 out. So I will take a look, and I will get the
9 correct April 9th meeting minutes of the Poplar Creek
10 and Upper Salt Creek Watershed Planning Council sent
11 out before the next meeting. And if anyone has any
12 questions regarding those, feel free to reach out to
13 me, and I will hopefully be able to answer those.

14 So now we will move on to item
15 number 4, which is capital improvements, and Sara go
16 ahead and take it away.

17 MS. SUKANEN: Yeah, I'm Sara Sukanen, and I'm
18 an engineer at MWRD. I'll be talking about the
19 capital improvement updates.

20 First off, we have our grant
21 opportunities. Our first one we have is the National
22 Fish & Wildlife Foundation, this program goals
23 include improving the habitat quality and
24 connectivity, expanding and maintaining nature-based

1 solutions to improve stormwater storage, activating
2 restored habitat in natural areas. Projects must
3 occur in close proximity or directly benefit area
4 waterways. The grants range from \$150,000 to
5 \$400,000 and no matching funds are required.
6 Applications for this program are due on July 30th.
7 You can visit their website for more information.

8 We also have the IEPA Section 319,
9 Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Financial
10 Assistance Program. This includes best management
11 practices, implementation, development of watershed-
12 basin plans, implementation of nonpoint source
13 components of an IEPA approved watershed-basin plan.
14 Awards range from \$50,000 to a \$1,200,000. This
15 includes a 40 percent matching funds requirement.
16 Applications for this are due July 23rd, and you can
17 visit the IEPA website for more information.

18 Moving on to our stormwater
19 partnership. Our partnerships help communities
20 manage stormwater and improve their resilience to
21 flooding. Applications are currently closed for our
22 stormwater partnerships, but applications are planned
23 to reopen this summer.

24 We have our Stormwater Partnership

1 Program, which funds the construction of traditional
2 stormwater infrastructure to help manage stormwater
3 and reduce flooding, including sewer upgrades and
4 stream channel improvements.

5 We also have the Green
6 Infrastructure Partnership Program, which funds the
7 construction of green alleys, rain gardens, permeable
8 pavement and other permeable surfaces that manage
9 rainwater where it lands. Communities that need
10 technical assistance to study and design solutions
11 for local stormwater issues can apply for our
12 conceptual project partnership.

13 And finally, we also provide funding
14 to help municipalities acquire property in the
15 floodplain through our Voluntary Flood-Prone Property
16 Acquisition Program, and you can visit our website
17 for more information.

18 But more info on our website. You
19 can -- Our website has links to apply to each program
20 and includes overviews of who can apply, how funding
21 can be used and partnership requirements.

22 For our resources, we also have
23 several pre-recorded webinars that go through what
24 information and documentation is needed to apply, as

1 well as recent updates to each program's
2 requirements. We have project highlight videos with
3 interviews of past partners, where they share how
4 their partnership with the MWRD helped them build
5 that stormwater project.

6 And to join our mailing list, you
7 can request to do so by e-mailing us at
8 stormwater@mwrld.org. And.

9 Then a summary on our applications.
10 We received 54 applications from 43 organizations in
11 this last year. 24 applications were from -- 24
12 applications from 18 organizations were from
13 disproportionately impacted areas. We received 53.9
14 million in costs, 72 percent of which were eligible
15 expenses, and 104.8 million of construction costs.
16 And then you can see a breakdown of what project
17 type, we'll get more into that in a second.

18 For our stormwater -- Sorry, 15
19 applicants identified other funding sources with 5
20 applicants confirming awards totaling 6.9 million.
21 18.8 million, which was from FEMA, which included the
22 BRIC fund, along with the Hazard Mitigation Grant
23 program. We saw 5 million from IEPA which included
24 the Green Infrastructure opportunity and IEPA Section

1 319, along with 5 million from Illinois DCEO and .3
2 million from American Rescue Plan Act.

3 Moving into our Stormwater
4 Partnership Program. We received 19 pre-
5 applications through January. 11 new projects were
6 prioritized based on benefited structures, extent of
7 flooding, sewer service area, detention provided,
8 median income, along with other criteria. 13.9
9 million was requested from the MWRD. 26.1 million
10 dollars was estimated to be the total construction
11 cost of these projects. Applications will be
12 notified based on the prioritization list and as
13 funding becomes available.

14 And on to our Green Infrastructure
15 Program. We received 29 pre-applications through
16 December. 15 green infrastructure projects were
17 selected and will begin construction in 2026. 9.6
18 million is estimated as the total construction costs
19 for GI. 22 acres will be draining into these
20 projects, and we're estimating 1,809,000 gallons of
21 design-retention capacity.

22 For our conceptual projects, we
23 received three applicants through December. Three
24 projects were prioritized for technical assistance.

1 This assistance includes developing an engineering
2 solution to severe streambank erosion; engineering
3 assistance to develop green infrastructure plans;
4 stormwater planning, including inventory of existing
5 stormwater infrastructure and stormwater planning --
6 sorry, and then applicants were notified and work
7 will be assigned to MWRD task-order consultants.

8 And then for our Flood-Prone
9 Property Acquisition Program, we received three
10 applications through January. 40 properties were
11 reviewed for the program. Our largest review since
12 our 2015 round. 22 properties were cost effective
13 and met the eligibility requirements for the program,
14 which is estimated at 6.4 million dollars of fair
15 market value. Application -- Applicants will be
16 notified based on prioritization list and as funding
17 becomes available.

18 Here is map of our stormwater
19 infrastructure projects in the Poplar Creek and Upper
20 Salt Creek Watersheds. We have one regional project
21 completed, four local projects completed. For green
22 infrastructure, we have one completed project and one
23 ongoing, and one completed flood-prone property
24 acquisition. Collectively, these projects benefit

1 over 2,000 structures and create 250 acre feet, which
2 is 83 million gallons of stormwater storage.

3 Moving on to our current green
4 infrastructure projects. We have the village hall
5 green parking lot in Hoffman Estates. This is
6 located at the village hall. This will be converting
7 several portions of the existing impervious village
8 hall parking lot with permeable pavers and bioswales
9 with native plants providing approximately 201,600
10 gallons of DRC. The IGA was executed in March.
11 Design was also completed in March, and construction
12 will be starting this month.

13 Upcoming events that we have:
14 MWRD's next virtual tours are scheduled for July
15 10th, tomorrow, at 10:00 a.m. and August 7th at 2:00
16 p.m. Join us for an inside look on how to reclaim
17 water, protect waterways, reduce pollution and even
18 turn waste into renewable resources all from the
19 comfort of your home or office. Sign up to receive a
20 fresh perspective on Water Reclamation.

21 Come see how the MWRD recovers
22 resources and transforms water. We'll be hosting an
23 open house on Saturday, August 2nd from 10:00 a.m. to
24 2:00 p.m. at our Stickney Water Reclamation Plant.

1 There will be tours and educational activity for all
2 ages, free tree saplings, and we'll also be
3 collecting unwanted medicine.

4 Please join us to celebrate the Salt
5 Creek restoration at a ribbon-cutting ceremony. This
6 will be on Tuesday, August 19th at 11:00 a.m., at the
7 Fullersburg Woods. This project is a partnership
8 between the MWRD, DuPage County Forest Preserves and
9 the DuPage River Salt Creek Work Group.

10 You can also join us for another
11 ribbon-cutting ceremony with the MWRD and the Village
12 of Glenwood to celebrate the completion of the
13 Glenwood Levee project. This is a vital flood-
14 control project that features a newly constructed
15 levee designed to protect 29 structures, including
16 homes from overbank flooding along the Thorn Creek.

17 In addition to the levee, the
18 project includes a thousand feet of new storm sewer
19 and essential utility improvements that strengthen
20 the local infrastructure and enhance community
21 resilience against future flooding.

22 You can also join us for our
23 seminars. MWRD hosts seminars at the Stickney Water
24 Reclamation Plant that are open to the public. These

1 are eligible for professional development credits.
2 All seminars begin at 10:30 Central time, and you can
3 join us in person at the Stickney Water Reclamation
4 Plant or virtually at our website. The next one is
5 Friday, July 25th at 10:30, which will be the
6 phosphorus removal, filter performance in an urban
7 watershed by Dr. Andy McCabe.

8 If you have any questions about our
9 Stormwater Management Programs, partnerships or
10 current capital improvement updates, you can contact
11 us at our e-mail address, that is
12 stormwater@mwr.org.

13 And then I believe I can open it up
14 to questions.

15 MR. CZARNOTA: Thanks, Sara.

16 Does anyone have any questions?

17 (No response.)

18 MR. CZARNOTA: Hearing none, I think we're
19 going to move on to item number 5, which is the Small
20 Streams Maintenance Program update.

21 MR. HERNANDEZ: All right. So yes, I will be
22 going over the Small Streams Maintenance Program and
23 a couple of the things the M & O Department handles.

24 So if you are not familiar with the

1 Small Stream Maintenance Program, so what we do, if
2 you are not familiar with us, our basic mission is to
3 basically do maintenance on the streams and entirety
4 of the county.

5 This slide here, is kind of an
6 example of the top picture there. This is a picture
7 of a blockage before and after. Below the same thing
8 was a blockage back on the Des Plaines River over in
9 Wheeling.

10 We work 24 -- I guess not 24 hours a
11 day, we work every day basically, rain or shine, 365
12 days a year.

13 This kind of covers the amount of
14 volume that we removed over the last year. Down here
15 you'll see there is the -- It looks like Upper Salt
16 Creek, we only did 329 cubic yards, and Poplar Creek
17 we did 10 cubic yards of volume last year.

18 Our average cost to remove per cubic
19 yard is \$146.

20 Work we do in the watersheds here.
21 We removed some beaver dams. It looks like we
22 trapped and got rid of five beavers and removed the
23 fallen trees from the creek.

24 And then let's see here, I'm not

1 sure with the purpose of the slide is. It's a slide
2 that shows we just removed some trees from the creek.

3 This is some of the equipment that
4 we have available, that our crews run. We run a Skid
5 Steer. We have a mini Skid Steer. We do have other
6 additional resources available. So we do have some
7 Gradalls that we can get to our disposal to help
8 clear stuff out.

9 And in terms of waterway blockages,
10 so I only have two guys that really schedule and do
11 the work. So we really rely on the public and the
12 local municipalities to find blockages and report
13 them to us. Once they are reported to us, we can
14 take a look. There is just so much ground to cover,
15 we really rely on the public.

16 And here are some options that can
17 be done. These are for the -- It looks like some
18 recommendations for residents and whatnot.

19 And in terms of contact, you can
20 contact me directly. My phone number is right here
21 (708) 588-3171. My e-mail as well. Fabio is the guy
22 that does the day-to-day work on the program, so I
23 would recommend reaching out to him. If you can't
24 get ahold of him, I'm more than glad to take care of

1 any reported issues.

2 And this slide covers how to enter a
3 blockage request on the District website. So if you
4 go to MWRD's website, if you follow this, there is a
5 little report button somewhere on our website.
6 You'll click through that, and basically follow the
7 prompts that say you have a waterway blockage. Click
8 the link and there's an entry form. Or like I said,
9 you can call Fabio or myself, and we'll take care of
10 it.

11 So okay, so right here I'm going to
12 cover the District's Rain Barrel Program. This is
13 administered by another group, but I do present the
14 slide on it.

15 So the District offers subsidized
16 rain barrels for basically anybody requesting one
17 within the county. It looks like the current Cook
18 County resident pricing is \$21.50 for a barrel. If
19 you are over 65, ten seventy-five. And let's see, it
20 looks like we already started deliveries, because
21 we're after April.

22 Here is our website, and if you have
23 any specific questions on the Rain Barrel Program,
24 you can reach out to our Public Affairs Office, (312)

1 751-6633.

2 We also have the Restore the Canopy
3 Program. What this program does is we provide free
4 trees for the public. Basically, these are the
5 locations. It is every Wednesday, I want to say
6 through the season, whatever the season is. We're in
7 season right now, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. If there
8 is anybody from the village, there is -- You may have
9 a larger program or something in mind, you are more
10 than welcome to reach out to the Public Affairs
11 Office. I think we can coordinate. And that's the
12 extent of my slides.

13 Any questions?

14 (No response.)

15 MR. CZARNOTA: Thanks, Arturo.

16 So now we will move to item number
17 6, which is the stormwater leadership summit, and
18 Abigail Garofalo will be presenting that.

19 MS. GAROFALO: Hello everyone. My name is
20 Abigail Garofalo, I work for University of Illinois
21 Extension. I -- Previously, my role was within Cook
22 County doing natural resource education programing
23 with the Master Naturalists & Conservation Program.
24 I'm a resident of Mount Prospect, so it's cool to be

1 here with this group.

2 So I'm working -- I'm currently in a
3 different role that just started a couple months ago,
4 which is not relevant to this topic, so we can talk
5 about that another time. But a project I'm working
6 on is this Stormwater Leadership Summit, so I'll just
7 kind of share a little image so you can see, just to
8 have a visual to look at while I'm talking.

9 So the summit, itself, is on
10 September 25th. It's from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
11 It's at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. The goals of
12 the summit it's for you all. It's for community
13 leaders. We want you to bring people, like two to
14 three people, stakeholders from your community,
15 public works, public health, if you have, you know,
16 an engineering firm you work with, a representative
17 from that firm, anybody in administration, finance,
18 zoning groups, something -- a group of two to three
19 people within your community that are addressing a
20 stormwater challenge. That could be anything from,
21 you know, you have an MS4, you have to get that plan
22 together or your re-upping it. You have water
23 quantity issue, infrastructure mitigation, any other
24 stormwater mitigation challenges that you are facing.

1 I know it's all very forefront right now what's
2 happening in Texas, and we experienced this, we just
3 recently got a lot of rain, the flash flooding
4 warnings happening in Chicago. So definitely showing
5 up and having our stormwater plans in place are
6 really, really important. And we know that a lot of
7 these challenges don't happen independently. That is
8 why these kind of groups exist. And so the point of
9 this summit, in particular, is for you and your group
10 of people that you want to go -- want to be there to
11 be able to work with people in this group, people
12 in -- across the county, people in Northern Illinois,
13 anywhere, we're looking across the north region of
14 Illinois, to find ways to coalition build, to
15 network, to just hear about the other resources and
16 other cool things that people are doing. And so
17 essentially, we will be providing a training from our
18 community and economic development team on a
19 framework for addressing your stormwater challenges.
20 We'll be looking at asset development, and then we
21 will also provide coalition building and networking
22 sessions for you to actually hear these -- I don't
23 know if I like the term success stories, but cool
24 things that people are doing to address in creative

1 ways their stormwater challenges, as well as a
2 resource fair from the University of Illinois
3 Extension and surrounding groups that are offering
4 things like what MWRD is talking about, like these
5 grants and like resources and just options for
6 support in these challenges.

7 And so I really encourage you to
8 take a look at it. I'm going to put the link to
9 register in the chat. If you are interested, it's
10 \$75 a person, and so I believe actually it's 75 for
11 the first and then it's cheaper for another. Like
12 it's 50 for the second and then the third. And it
13 will be all day. Lunch will be provided. It's at
14 the Botanic Gardens. You also get free admission to
15 the Botanic Gardens if you're like hey, I would love
16 to go. I know that can be kind of pricey. And so --
17 and if you have any more questions too, I'll also put
18 my e-mail in the chat as well, if anybody, you know,
19 wants to learn more about it.

20 The last thing that I wanted to just
21 pitch was that if you -- I'm hearing a lot of really
22 cool projects from MWRD. If you're apart of any of
23 these projects or if you have a really -- something
24 that you think is a lesson learned or that you want

1 to share, we're looking for people to showcase as
2 well. So if that is something that you are
3 interested in, I would love to chat with you more to
4 hear and to possibly feature you for like a little 10
5 minute feature within this summit as well, which gets
6 you access to the summit for free as well. So if you
7 present, you get in for free. Let me know.

8 Otherwise, I'm happy to take
9 questions if anybody has any questions about it.
10 Otherwise, please too, if you have anybody who you're
11 like oh, maybe my community can't make that work but
12 another community might or I want this other adjacent
13 community to come with me too, let them know. Share
14 the news about this. And I believe Eric has the
15 marketing materials, so...

16 MR. CZARNOTA: Yes, I do. Thanks, Abigail.
17 I'll be sending out some reminders kind of leading up
18 to this event through our e-mail list, just so
19 everyone is aware of this opportunity.

20 I did have a quick question. Is
21 there a deadline to register or can you register up
22 until kind of the day of the summit?

23 MS. GAROFALO: Yeah, that's a great question.
24 I don't think we have a deadline quite yet. We want

1 to see how many we get. We do have limited space
2 available. We're looking for about 30 communities,
3 and it's for all of Northern Illinois. So right now,
4 we would like to see, you know, registration sooner
5 rather than later, I would say probably it -- I would
6 say probably until the end of August if people need
7 to talk about it and think about it, I think is a
8 safe bet.

9 MR. CZARNOTA: Sounds good. Thank you.

10 MS. GAROFALO: Thanks, everyone.

11 MR. CZARNOTA: All righty. So now we can
12 move on to item number 7, which is improving the
13 Watershed Planning Council meetings, roundtable
14 discussion, and Mark will be taking that one.

15 MR. CASTILLO: Thanks, Eric.

16 My name is Mark Castillo, and I'm a
17 Senior Civil Engineer in the Stormwater Management.
18 And this presentation is called improving the WPC
19 meetings.

20 So basically, as long as I've been
21 attending or working with the District, attendance at
22 these WPCs is pretty low. We noticed that there was
23 a very brief uptake five years ago, but recently,
24 attendance has dropped again. We had an initial call

1 with many of the COGs that kind of helped administer
2 these meetings, and you know, kind of discussed like
3 potential solutions to improve the attendance. What
4 we heard is some of the meetings can be repetitive,
5 and there is like little participation or guided
6 discussion outside of usual topics that we run, which
7 is like the capital improvement stuff, the SSMP and
8 WMO topics. The other thing is that like there isn't
9 anything that we could do -- isn't content that
10 members can use and take and like implement
11 immediately. So one of the things we wanted to do is
12 get some feedback from the Watershed Planning
13 members, get some ideas of what we can do to improve
14 these meetings.

15 So we sent out a survey last March,
16 closed in May. We had 31 responses, which is pretty
17 low for the number of members that are in Cook
18 County. You can see the break out here on the
19 slides. In general, the survey asked questions about
20 the meeting format, the time, the feeling on the
21 regular agenda topics, potential individual
22 presentation topics, and then each community's
23 current stormwater issues and grant and partnership
24 experience.

1 So I'll be going through each of the
2 results that we have and kind of just summarizing
3 some maybe actionable things that we plan on doing on
4 our end.

5 As far as WPC meeting times,
6 mornings were preferred between 9:00 and 12:00 a.m.
7 and virtual meetings were preferred as well, although
8 we do know that each WPC has the ability to move to
9 kind of this combination in person and virtual
10 meeting format. Potential updates to these meeting
11 times we will coordinate with each WPC, and we will
12 share the new meetings in quarter four of the WPC
13 meeting.

14 Updates to the regular agenda, some
15 of the feedback that we got is to just streamline the
16 presentation and just focus on major updates since
17 the last meeting. Previously, we would just go
18 through every potential proper -- every ongoing
19 project, and that created that repetitiveness.
20 Additionally, just sharing more pictures and showing
21 the before-and-after construction would definitely
22 help people kind of understand the size and scope of
23 the projects that we are working on. And finally,
24 another comment was just providing project metrics,

1 so the number of projects in the watershed,
2 construction costs, the time frame and development of
3 that project, and then doing a better job describing
4 the project's benefits, you know, the impact that
5 that project has.

6 As far as the SSMP and WMO, we are
7 going to continue alternating these every quarter,
8 and we'll work with each of those departments to make
9 sure that their presentation is more engaging and
10 photos provided where applicable.

11 Based on some of the survey results,
12 we decided we're going to make a very consistent
13 grant section. So this is a section that is just
14 going to be about the available opportunities and
15 providing information like the due dates, a brief
16 overview of that opportunity and then links to
17 resources or contact information, if they need
18 more -- if they need more info.

19 And then finally, in the regular
20 agenda, we wanted to do an annual review potentially
21 maybe at the end of each year. And that is just
22 meant to be this open discussion to see how we're
23 doing with the changes and if we need to incorporate
24 something else in the future WPC meetings.

1 So in addition to updating the
2 regular agenda items, we wanted to provide
3 information that would be more actionable and could
4 help members address an issue that they're facing.
5 So we asked -- In the survey, we asked surveyors to
6 rank seven potential presentation topics in order of
7 importance. So you can see obviously, funding is the
8 top issue that most communities have, as well as
9 just, you know, different types of stormwater -- like
10 understanding better like stormwater design and those
11 types of developments and maintaining that
12 infrastructure. And then further down, we have issue
13 regarding the permitting process and collaboration
14 with other agencies, learning about green
15 infrastructure and then public communication and just
16 generally what the MWRD does. Water management was
17 lower priority.

18 Going down into some of the top
19 issue, we asked several open-ended questions, the
20 first being, what is the current stormwater
21 management issues in your community. Again, funding
22 is the biggest item on everyone's minds, figuring out
23 how to design or address a flooding issue was a
24 second and then maintenance of current stormwater

1 infrastructure and then coordination with other
2 entities was a big challenge as well.

3 We also had an open-ended question
4 about the grant partnership experience people had.
5 Most reported having applied for grant partnership,
6 and surprisingly, a lot of people were awarded one.
7 One of the major issues that kept -- that kept being
8 brought up was that it was just the workload of
9 applying for a grant. So it's a very long, extensive
10 process. There is no certainty of an award, and
11 sometimes there is no certainty that the award will
12 be -- the timing of that award as well. And so there
13 is just like -- There is kind of like a game of
14 chicken, where people don't want to commit to putting
15 all of this effort into applying for a grant if they
16 are unsure about if they're going to get an award or
17 even if that grant will be issuing an award. And
18 then we had a couple of responses saying that people
19 kind of mitigated that by basically hiring a
20 consultant or needed to have a dedicated staff
21 member.

22 So using this information, we tried
23 to brainstorm several potential presentation topics
24 for each category. It will take some time to develop

1 these presentations. So right now, as I go through
2 the next several slides, those of you who are members
3 of this Watershed Planning Council, I hope that you
4 share your opinion either in chat or go off mute and
5 maybe we can kind of just discuss which presentation
6 or which topics are worth creating presentations on.

7 So starting with the most -- the
8 highest priority topic was just funding and grant
9 opportunities. So again, some concerns that we saw
10 in the survey, keeping up to date with the available
11 grants, being able to provide matching funds, the
12 grant complexity and administration and not having
13 staff available to apply or manage a grant.

14 Some of the potential presentation
15 ideas or just maybe we have a presentation
16 overviewing the best practices for funding projects.
17 So kind of like doing a high-level look at the
18 different types of funding and grants that are
19 available, strategies that you can implement and the
20 design of your project before you even apply for
21 additional funding. And then ways that you can maybe
22 like manage the workload of those grants.

23 Another presentation topic is doing
24 maybe a deep dive on how to apply for a specific

1 grant or cost-share program. That could be FEMA,
2 like HMGP or IEPA 319 Grants or even MWRD's
3 stormwater partnership.

4 And finally, we could also bring in
5 a guest speaker to do a testimonial on their
6 experience kind of searching for applicable grants
7 for the project, applying to them and administering
8 those grants.

9 So I just was wondering, you know,
10 these three, did any of these kind of hit for you?
11 Do you have any additional like ideas that could
12 maybe work for those that are in attendance?

13 I'll give it a minute.

14 MR. CZARNOTA: Hi, Mark, Eric here. I don't
15 know if anyone else had anything to share. I think
16 maybe the -- kind of a mixture of kind of the deep
17 dive of the specific grants and also the testimonial
18 from a guest speaker I think could be beneficial.
19 Maybe bringing in a community that was able to
20 complete a project using, you know, some sort of
21 grant kind of related to, you know, stormwater. I
22 think that can kind of help maybe other communities
23 that might be joining in on the call, kind of an idea
24 of potential project in their communities and also

1 kind of be able to ask some preliminary questions,
2 obviously, how they started, kind of what the process
3 was, just so they can be a little bit more prepared
4 when they apply and maybe get a couple tips or tricks
5 that might be able to kind of elevate their
6 applications a little bit more. Just so they kind of
7 have a better baseline understanding of specifically
8 what these grants might be looking for, but then also
9 kind of what the end goal should kind of be when they
10 receive this grant funding for a specific project
11 type.

12 MR. CASTILLO: Okay. Thank you so much for
13 that comment, Eric.

14 If there is anybody else?

15 (No response.)

16 MR. CASTILLO: All right. We'll distribute
17 these slides. We'll share these slides with Eric,
18 and he can distribute them to the members. If we
19 have any other feedback that can come in, that would
20 be great.

21 Moving on to the next major topic,
22 it was stormwater management, best practices and
23 operation and maintenance of stormwater
24 infrastructure. So some of the concerns noted in the

1 survey, we had keeping up to date with latest design
2 and maintenance procedures, learning about stormwater
3 projects that get grant or cost-share funding, being
4 able to fund maintenance and operations, and then
5 like specific how tos for different types of
6 stormwater best practices. So maintaining specific
7 types of infrastructure, and then there was a lot of
8 concern about what to do during streambank -- or how
9 to handle streambank erosion issues.

10 So some of the presentation ideas
11 that we kind of came up with was maybe we invite an
12 industry expert to go over these best practices on
13 operating and maintaining municipal stormwater sewer
14 infrastructure, so that could be, you know, the
15 specific tasks for those maintenance and like going
16 over like time periods and what to do at work,
17 tracking and schedule that work. We could do a
18 highlight of either a local stormwater project in the
19 watershed or we could do maybe a multiphase project
20 outside of the watershed. MWRD does several large
21 projects that kind of hit a lot of topics, both as
22 far as project design, construction, funding,
23 right-of-way acquisition. And so some of these like
24 larger projects that might not necessarily be in this

1 watershed could have, you know, a lot of information
2 that could be useful to learn and could be
3 transferred on to, you know, your own project.

4 And then we had another topic was
5 maybe how best to work with a consultant to study,
6 design and manage a stormwater project. The MWRD has
7 a lot of experience with their task-work consultants,
8 and we go through this process constantly where we
9 work with our consultants to study an issue and then
10 come up with a design for a project. So kind of like
11 learning how we kind of go through that process could
12 help other communities better work with their
13 consultants.

14 And then because of the streambank
15 comment, we were thinking maybe we could do a deep
16 dive on a specific stormwater issue and specific
17 things that could be done to like ameliorate that
18 issue.

19 So kind of overviewing some of these
20 topics, again, just asking, do you guys have any
21 preference towards one? Is there any information
22 that you would -- any other ideas that you think
23 would be useful in this category?

24 (No response.)

1 MR. CASTILLO: All right. I'm not seeing any
2 comments, so I will move on.

3 We are looking at presentations
4 to -- regarding like permitting processes for
5 different government agencies. So some of the
6 concerns that we saw was coordinating county and
7 state -- coordinating with other county and state
8 agencies, and there are actually a lot of comments
9 about WMO permitting process and the role the
10 municipality has in that permitting process. So
11 another -- Some of the presentation ideas that we had
12 were one that kind of more focussed on interagency
13 collaboration. Again, kind of leaning on some of our
14 larger projects to show as an example how we've
15 coordinated with utilities, with state, county and
16 federal agencies for the development and construction
17 of a project. We could invite a guest speaker from a
18 specific permitting agency to discuss and go into
19 depth their permitting process. So that could be
20 Army Corps, IDOT, or IEPA. We can bring in a -- have
21 a specific topic regarding our Watershed Management
22 Ordinance permitting process, and then we could also
23 do an overview of the FEMA flood maps and you know,
24 discussion on the amendments of those flood maps.

1 And so once again, I'm just asking
2 if there is any opinions you guys have about these
3 presentations?

4 You know, this feedback is
5 important. We plan on going to each watershed asking
6 these same questions, and I do know that a lot of
7 upper management folks at the MWRD attend these
8 meetings, and so being able to just verbally say hey,
9 I like this, can really put a focus on, you know,
10 what you all need in your watersheds.

11 So was there any comments on this
12 slide?

13 MR. CZARNOTA: Yeah, Eric here again.

14 I think this would actually be a
15 really good topic, because I know this is --
16 especially just with what I work with transportation,
17 utilities and just kind of working through the
18 permitting process is always a big thing. So I
19 assume it's also a big sticking point for a lot of
20 these kind of stormwater projects as well.

21 But yeah, I think we can maybe try
22 to figure out what the best way of kind of conveying
23 this information for everybody, if it's bringing in
24 guest speakers and them talking about the permitting

1 process or if it's just kind of presenting on kind of
2 what the most important to knows when you're filling
3 or when you are working through projects with these
4 permits, but I think this would definitely be a topic
5 of interest for communities just in general, since --
6 you know, for basically any construction project
7 there is going to be usually some sort of permitting
8 process that they need to go to. So you know, the
9 more information that we can kind of get out there
10 for people to learn, I think the better.

11 MR. CASTILLO: All right. Thank you so much,
12 Eric.

13 Moving on, green infrastructure. We
14 were considering presentations on just the
15 maintenance of green infrastructure, potentially
16 highlighting a local GI project in the watershed to
17 serve as an example. We do an onsite visit to a
18 completed project or take a look at potentially some
19 of the work that we've done in say the City of
20 Chicago with Space-To-Grow and our suburban
21 schoolyard program -- programs.

22 I don't know, do you think there is
23 any value in some of these presentations or topics?

24 MR. CZARNOTA: Eric again. I know my boss,

1 Mark Fowler, said that I think prior to like 2020, a
2 lot of times at least one of the meetings would be
3 somewhere out in region where a project was
4 completed. So I think there could be value in maybe
5 going out, and I think similarly what I said just
6 kind of other communities being able to see finished
7 projects and kind of the process that these projects
8 went through, it might inspire them to apply for
9 funds for specific projects in their communities. I
10 think there is a system that maybe we can put
11 together and see if people are interested in going
12 out and visiting a site visit. We can possibly do
13 that on top of one of these meetings or in lieu of
14 one of these meetings. I think that's something that
15 we can work on and try to work on what would be best
16 for this specific Watershed Planning Council.

17 MR. CASTILLO: Okay. Sounds great.

18 Last slide or last set of topics.
19 We were considering, you know, maybe we need to have
20 a presentation topic about MWRD's role in stormwater
21 management or how best to communicate with the public
22 regarding stormwater projects. I know our grant
23 manager had a recent presentation about public
24 engagement for stormwater management projects. So we

1 think maybe that could be a useful presentation.
2 Other topics could include what to do during a flood.
3 You know, how to document that flooding, coordinate
4 with agencies and how to communicate with the public.
5 Another thing is just to kind of go over the MWRD in
6 general, I know a lot of elections occurred recently,
7 and you know, public works staff have been kind of
8 shifting around. So maybe it's worth kind of going
9 through our history and the programs that we offer
10 to -- and to help, you know, municipalities.

11 And finally, maybe we could just do
12 an overview of MWRD's structure, in general,
13 throughout the county, and that could do a deep dive
14 of our interceptors, treatment plants, the TARP
15 system, and that could include potential tours.

16 So any thoughts from anyone?

17 Again, you can just write it in the
18 chat or just unmute yourself.

19 MR. CZARNOTA: Yeah, I think actually maybe
20 some public engagement might be good. Just because I
21 know specifically, for some of the Northwest
22 Municipal Conference members, there's been
23 turnaround, you know, in mayoral areas, but also
24 there has just been some public works turnover as

1 well in the past couple of years. I think it would
2 be good to maybe put together some sort of a
3 presentation, and I could take a look at maybe
4 inviting some of our members as well that maybe
5 extend a little bit beyond the specific Watershed
6 Planning Council but obviously, are still effected by
7 flooding and kind of stuff like that that MWRD does
8 focus on. So that may be a potential future meeting
9 that we put together just to, you know, educate, you
10 know, new public works directors, and you know,
11 workers as well as, you know, new mayors and kind of
12 elected officials.

13 MR. CASTILLO: All right. Thank you so much,
14 Eric, again.

15 If you have any questions, I will
16 open it up to questions right now.

17 (No response.)

18 MR. CASTILLO: Well, I'll share this
19 presentation with Eric, and he can kind of distribute
20 it to the members.

21 So if there are any other thoughts,
22 potential future presentations, we can get it through
23 that way. Please e-mail us at stormwater@mwrld.org if
24 you have any other feedback to share or if you have

1 any other questions about our programs, partnerships
2 or any of the current capital improvement projects.

3 Thank you so much.

4 MR. CZARNOTA: Thanks, Mark.

5 One quick question, I can send these
6 slides out to our e-mail list and kind of try to get
7 a little bit more feedback. Is there a specific kind
8 of deadline that you would be looking to receive this
9 feedback for, just so I can let people know in the
10 e-mail when I send it out?

11 MR. CASTILLO: That's actually a really good
12 question. I can talk to my supervisor about that. I
13 do know it's going to take some time to put together
14 some of these presentations, and I'm trying to think,
15 we might be trying to target maybe like January 2026.
16 Because I know potentially the next order is going to
17 be more focused on MWRD's partnership programs,
18 because we will have opened our applications by then.

19 So yeah, there will be some time to
20 be able to get some feedback, but I'll let you know
21 when I send you the slides.

22 MR. CZARNOTA: Perfect. Thank you, Mark.

23 MR. CASTILLO: All right. Thank you.

24 MR. CZARNOTA: All righty. We'll now move to

1 item 8, which will be other business.

2 Does anyone have any other business
3 to share at this time?

4 (No response.)

5 MR. CZARNOTA: Hearing none, the next meeting
6 of the Poplar Creek and Upper Salt Creek Watershed
7 Planning Council will be held on October 8th at 10:30
8 a.m. via Zoom video conference.

9 And we can -- Not hearing anything
10 else, we can go ahead and adjourn the meeting for
11 today. Thanks everybody.

12 (The meeting concluded
13 at 11:25 a.m.)

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)

) SS.

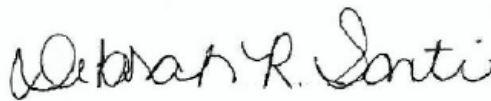
2 COUNTY OF COOK)
3

4 I, DEBORAH R. SANTI, Certified Shorthand
5 Reporter for the State of Illinois, do hereby certify
6 that on the 9th day of July, 2025, the Poplar Creek
7 and Upper Salt Creek Watershed Planning Council
8 Meeting was taken before me, reported
9 stenographically, and was thereafter reduced to
10 typewriting.

11 The said hearing was taken via Zoom.

12 I further certify that the foregoing is
13 an accurate record of the hearing at the time and
14 place hereinabove referred to.

15 Witness my official signature on the 5th
16 day of August, 2025.

17
18 

19 DEBORAH R. SANTI, CSR

CSR # 084-004107
20
21
22
23
24

NORTHWEST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

1600 East Golf Road, Suite 0700
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016
(847) 296-9200 • Fax (847) 296-9207
www.nwmc-cog.org



*A Regional Association of Illinois
Municipalities and Townships
Representing a Population of Over One Million*

MEMBERS

Antioch
Arlington Heights
Bannockburn
Barrington
Bartlett
Buffalo Grove
Deer Park
Deerfield
Des Plaines
Elk Grove Village
Evanston
Fox Lake
Glencoe
Glenview
Grayslake
Hanover Park
Highland Park
Hoffman Estates
Kenilworth
Lake Bluff
Lake Forest
Lake Zurich
Libertyville
Lincolnshire
Lincolnwood
Morton Grove
Mount Prospect
Niles
Northbrook
Northfield
Northfield Township
Palatine
Park Ridge
Prospect Heights
Rolling Meadows
Schaumburg
Skokie
South Barrington
Streamwood
Vernon Hills
West Dundee
Wheeling
Wilmette
Winnetka

President
Rodney Craig
Hanover Park

Vice-President
Donna Johnson
Libertyville

Secretary
Eric Smith
Buffalo Grove

Treasurer
John Lockerby
Skokie

Executive Director
Mark L. Fowler

TO: Poplar Creek and Upper Salt Creek Watershed Planning Council

FROM: Eric Czarnota, Northwest Municipal Conference

DATE: October 8, 2025

RE: Poplar Creek and Upper Salt Creek Watershed Planning Council Meeting Dates for 2026

Below are the quarterly Poplar Creek and Upper Salt Creek Watershed Planning Council meeting dates for 2026. Please note these dates are subject to change pending any conflicts with other MWRD meetings. Unless otherwise posted, meetings will be held virtually:

Wednesday January 14, 2026 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday April 8, 2026 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday July 8, 2026 10:30 a.m.

Please note that there is potential for the Q3 meeting to be held in person, so the date may be subject to change.

Wednesday October 14, 2026 10:30 a.m.