

“Using On-line Data and Tools for Your Watershed”

A Watershed Capacity Building Workshop hosted by Prairie Rivers Network and the Illinois Lake Management Association

Topics and Presenters: In northern Illinois (Chicago), two groups participated in the workshop – those interested in technical skill-building, and those interested in outreach topics. In central Illinois (Champaign), there was only interest in the technical content, although a shortened outreach section was presented over the lunch break.

At both the northern (Chicago) and central (Champaign) workshops, U.S. EPA presented the technical modules of this workshop. Save the Dunes, from Indiana, also spoke at both locations. PRN presented an outreach module in Chicago only.

The same topics were covered in the morning session for all attendees of both tracks in Chicago, as well as in Champaign:

- finding on-line data you can use for watershed planning (e.g. EPA's My Environment, Enviromapper for Water, STORET)
- compiling on-line data into useful sets of information
- using the data you have collected to prioritize projects, needs and goals

The afternoon topics for the Chicago technical track and Champaign were:

- using Data2Maps (D2M) to display monitoring data for assessment and analysis purposes
- creating informative maps/resources for your watershed group
- creating a customized water quality monitoring template for your area by inputting monitoring data and images
- using data to calculate monitoring needs

The Chicago outreach track and a lunch-time presentation in Champaign covered:

- finding available resources in U.S. EPA's Non-Point Source (NPS) outreach tool box
- using the NPS toolbox to customize public service announcements for outreach and education

Additionally, the Chicago outreach track covered:

- using data to create websites and presentations which convey the problems in your watershed
- using data to provide others with meaningful action steps they can take in your watershed

Attendance: Thirty people total learned about on-line data and tools, 12 in northern Illinois and 18 in central Illinois. Participants represented a variety of organization types, with a slight majority working for the government (see charts below).

| "Using On-line Data and Tools for Your Watershed – Chicago" June 22, 2009 | | | |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Organization Type Represented | Technical Track | Outreach Track | Number of Evaluations Received |
| Local Lake Association & Consultant | – | 1 | 1 |
| Local Lake Association, Watershed Group, & Environmental Organization | – | 1 | 1 |
| Local Watershed Group & Government | – | 1 | 1 |
| Environmental Organization | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Government | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Consultant | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 6 attended | 6 attended | 12 evaluations |

| "Using On-line Data and Tools for Your Watershed – Champaign" August 7, 2009 | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Organization Type Represented | Outreach Track (only) | Number of Evaluations Received |
| Local Lake Association | 2 | 2 |
| Local Watershed Group & Academia | 1 | 1 |
| Environmental Organization | 4 | 3 |
| Environmental Org. & Academia | 1 | 1 |
| Environmental Org. & Government | 1 | 1 |
| Government | 6 | 6 |
| Consultant | 2 | 2 |
| Academia | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 18 attended | 17 evaluations |

Outcomes: At both locations, the majority of people found the workshop extremely helpful or very helpful. People were pleased with the workshop binder that was provided, the one-on-one interaction with U.S. EPA staff, and the hands-on approach at their own computers. Detailed feedback is in the following charts.

| "Using On-line Data and Tools for Your Watershed – Chicago" (6/22/09) | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Participant Rating of Presentations – Chicago: | | | | |
| Topic and Presenter: (not all participants ranked each topic) | Extremely Helpful | Very Helpful | Somewhat Helpful | Not So Helpful |
| "Getting the Data and Tools On-line" <i>Lucy Stanfield, Carmen Masó, Cyd Curtis</i> | 8 | 3 | 1 | – |
| "Putting the Pieces Together" <i>Jennifer Nebe, Tom Davenport</i> | 3 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Technical Track: <i>Cyd Curtis, Janice Huang</i> | 3 | 2 | – | – |
| Outreach Track: <i>Tom Davenport, Kim Erndt, Jennifer Nebe</i> | 3 | 3 | – | – |
| Wrap-Up Session | 1 | 1 | – | – |

| Participant Feedback – Chicago: | |
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| Is this material useful to your watershed work? If so, how will you apply it? | |
| Local Lake Association & Consultant | “Very. The on-line resources are amazing. The only issue is how few people know about it.” |
| Lake Assoc., Watershed Group, Environmental Org. | “To continue the planning and implementation process in local watershed planning.” |
| Local Watershed Group & Government | “Yes, very much so. I think we now are more familiar with using the data to make it more accessible and understandable to the general public.” |
| Environmental Organization | “Extremely useful information. Thank you.” “Identifying impaired waters.” |
| Government | “Yes – the outreach track will be useful to educate our residents.” “Yes – this could add another useful layer of information when reporting current conditions.” “This is my first session on watershed work so it was very useful because I learned where data is located.” |
| Consultant | “Yes, very helpful. However I think someone with less familiarity might be easily overwhelmed.” “Very much so. It will make it easier to quantify our baseline data.” “Yes. It will help in obtaining and working through the data.” “Yes. Very nice to have condensed references and help.” |
| What did you like about this workshop? | |
| Local Lake Association & Consultant | “The information presented and the size of the group.” |
| Lake Assoc., Watershed Group, Environmental Org. | “Hands-on activities – handouts were excellent.” |
| Local Watershed Group & Government | “The speakers were excellent and made following along very easy and understandable.” |
| Environmental Organization | “The hands-on process. Handouts on excellent paper.” “Google Earth portions.” |
| Government | “Hands on!” “Very organized.” “The step-by-step instructional guide and the person walking about adding extra assistance.” |
| Consultant | “The introduction to resources.” “Learning about the ways to use Excel to help quantify data and give a visual reputation.” “Learning how to obtain the information. The D2M workbook is awesome – it should help a lot. The binder is a great resource.” “Interactive components. Being able to actually click and explore helps process the information.” |
| What else would you like to learn about using on-line tools and data? | |
| Local Lake Association & Consultant | “Where sources of information (KMZ & KML files) can be found.” |
| Lake Assoc., Watershed Group, Environmental Org. | (no comments) |
| Local Watershed Group & Government | (no comments) |
| Environmental Organization | “More!” |

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| | "not sure" |
| Government | "When and how I would need the data and tools. I would also like a session that used this data in the bound of GIS." |
| Consultant | "It would be helpful to work through the process and an actual report to understand the goal of the tools." How to implement data groups larger than 16" "Explanation on how we should reach out to everyone on importance of global watershed approach. It would have been nice to see municipalities attending to have them pull together and put watershed plans together." |
| Do you have ideas for future workshop topics? Other comments? | |
| Local Lake Association & Consultant | (no comments) |
| Lake Assoc., Watershed Group, Environmental Org. | "Thanks for the effort necessary to make these sessions a success." |
| Local Watershed Group & Government | "Possibly how to keep watershed groups focused and produce results, not just a plan; i.e. improved water quality pollutant loads." |
| Environmental Organization | "International environmental work – sharing of knowledge." "no" |
| Government | "GIS watershed usage." |
| Consultant | "Introduction to watershed management; mitigation planning." "Field methods and other sampling protocols." "More discussion on available funding to develop a watershed plan." |

| "Using On-line Data and Tools for Your Watershed – Champaign" (8/7/09) | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Participant Rating of Presentations – Champaign: | | | | |
| Topic and Presenter: (not all participants ranked each topic) | Extremely Helpful | Very Helpful | Somewhat Helpful | Not So Helpful |
| "Getting the Data and Tools On-line": <i>Carmen Masó, Cyd Curtis</i> | 9 | 6 | – | – |
| "Putting the Pieces Together": <i>Jennifer Nebe</i> | 7 | 5 | 4 | – |
| D2M User Guide: <i>Cyd Curtis, Janice Huang</i> | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Wrap-Up Session | 3 | 3 | 1 | – |
| Participant Feedback – Champaign: | | | | |
| Is this material useful to your watershed work? If so, how will you apply it? | | | | |
| Local Lake Association | "Yes, we are trying to build a database." "Yes, we are collecting data currently and this is the perfect time to learn what to do with it." | | | |
| Local Watershed Group & Academia | "We have needed to find a way (complete with step-by-step instructions and pictures, thanks!) to convert our data into a good, user-friendly addition to our current webpage." | | | |
| Environmental Organization | "To create maps and understand water quality changes over time." "I comment on projects that impact wetlands and streams, so I plan to use this information to help me learn more about particular wetlands and streams that are in project areas, as well as learning more about other natural resources that are close to project sites." | | | |

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| Environmental Org. & Academia | "I learned of many new resources that I can add to our website. I also have a better idea of the type of information that is in demand." |
| Environmental Org. & Government | "Yes. I had seen some of these sites, but never taken time with them. It's great to have versed people showing one how to navigate them and show examples. I have been wanting to add more detailed data about impaired streams to reports that I do for developers and county planners. We are pretty rural and many people will appreciate data in this form at (pretty maps)." |
| Government | <p>"I wish I had this training earlier. The ability to access data and maps from internet resources and sites. Just knowing where to go saves so much time and frustration."</p> <p>"Yes. I will apply the material to management plans for a county forest preserve."</p> <p>"Yes. I will use it to bolster my own data with additional on-line sources. I will also use ideas on how to present the data in a meaningful way."</p> <p>"Yes! In reviewing development proposals, the ability to match physical data (population, water quality) with the development gives us the facts and rationales for steering development to specific locations as well as types of compatible development for a given site."</p> <p>"Yes – I turned in an EPA 319 grant last week. If I had this training earlier, my application would have been <u>much</u> better. I will use the info. to improve and target my 319 grant if we are approved."</p> <p>"Yes – for preparation of maps, and where and how to find other sources."</p> |
| Consultant | <p>"Yes."</p> <p>"I intend to use the mapping and data calculations/collection to benefit clients who could benefit from grant acquisition/funding to improve their watersheds and water supplies."</p> |
| Academia | "This will be used to generate maps for presentations." |
| What did you like about this workshop? | |
| Local Lake Association | <p>"Handouts for future reference."</p> <p>"Very <u>helpful</u> and <u>clear</u> presenters! The notebook with step-by-step instructions!"</p> |
| Local Watershed Group & Academia | "I also like the data about how to prepare a public service announcement." |
| Environmental Organization | <p>"Being on computer. Using tools of different avenues."</p> <p>"I liked having the example presentation on how these tools were used by the Save the Dunes group – first, because it let me know that what seemed overwhelming to me can actually be mastered; second, because it provided a break away from the computer."</p> |
| Environmental Org. & Academia | "That you made learning a hands-on exercise, instead of always lecturing." |
| Environmental Org. & Government | "Convenient location and nice facilities. Very well-organized. Great overview of tools. Nice pace. Binder and presentations very clear and useful. I liked that you tied in an example of application of tools in Jennifer Nebe's talk." |
| Government | <p>"Applicability of information – take it and use it right away."</p> <p>"I knew there was a lot of information available on-line, but didn't know there was this much or how to access and use it. Thanks to my sherpa guides Carmen, Cyd, and Janice for helping me climb this mountain of data."</p> <p>"Presentations were well-supported with take-home information."</p> <p>"1. The access to on-line data is tremendous; I really had no idea. 2. The data accessible will allow us to be specific in requesting consultant work."</p> <p>"It gives an excellent overview of what can be done."</p> <p>"The notebook – extremely helpful when I will get back to the office."</p> |
| Consultant | "Hands on is nice. Several different tools are useful." |

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| | "Hands on approach; lots of information, but detailed handouts to take home so the info. is retained." |
| Academia | "The follow along binder!!" |
| What else would you like to learn about using on-line tools and data? | |
| Local Lake Association | "Probably do this again to refresh my memory or get new ideas." |
| Local Watershed Group & Academia | "When I get caught up with all this information, there may be more information I'll need." |
| Environmental Organization | (no comments) |
| Environmental Org. & Academia | "Your focus for this session was mainly oriented towards maps – creating maps. What about other on-line resources? Finding data, summaries, publications, reports?" |
| Environmental Org. & Government | "This is plenty for now, so I'm having trouble thinking of something new." |
| Government | <p>"Let me let all this sink in first, then we'll see."</p> <p>"I just need to explore everything that was skipped today."</p> <p>"Not enough knowledge yet."</p> <p>"This was good general info., but I am sure a lot could be learned about how to use the info. for making and implementing the plan."</p> <p>"Grants available to watersheds."</p> |
| Consultant | (no comments) |
| Academia | "Getting the 'hard' numbers from the different map layers." |
| Do you have ideas for future workshop topics? Other comments? | |
| Local Lake Association | <p>"Do not schedule workshops for Friday."</p> <p>"This was very well worth our time. Well-organized!"</p> |
| Local Watershed Group & Academia | (no comments) |
| Environmental Organization | <p>"I can't remember if this was intentional, but at one point we had a longer break (or longer lunch) that provided the opportunity for folks to choose to stay in the lab and 'practice' – this was helpful for me as I'm not a quick learner on computer programs – so I was able to do a little at my own pace while there were still people around to help me with questions."</p> <p>"It felt too fast and too cursory. How does one use STORET, for instance? What is the scope of the available data? TMI! Need in-depth help with a few databases."</p> |
| Environmental Org. & Academia | "This was great and everyone was very friendly. I learned a lot! Thanks! Parkland was a convenient location." |
| Environmental Org. & Gov't | (no comments) |
| Government | <p>"Thanks to presenters, ILMA, PRN and anyone else I might have missed. Excellent job. Don't let the Excel 2007 snafus bug you. All did an excellent job!"</p> <p>"Great workshop! More useful than I anticipated. Obviously – 2007 vs. previous editions of Windows issues."</p> <p>"For having a minimal knowledge of procedures, the presentation was very well thought out. Excellent help. Thank you."</p> <p>"More of these workshops – I know others who could use it. The next step would be translating the data into an implementation plan. Other comment: A lot to cover in one day."</p> <p>"Examples of other watershed plans."</p> |
| Consultant | "Make sure people know they need to be proficient in Excel." |
| Academia | "We could have cut down on the breaks – maybe technical failures." |