

Summit Working Group

2023 Work Plan



The Water Summit Working Group

In keeping with the shift toward a more action-oriented Indiana Water Summit, the Summit Working Group was organized in early 2022 and introduced at the 2022 Summit. The Working Group is composed of leaders from public and private, state and local organizations, and communities across all sectors of the Indiana water community. These dedicated professionals volunteer their time, expertise, and insights throughout the year to refine Summit content and Indiana Water Roadmap strategies into proposed actions.

Roadmap Focus	Legislative Action	Working Group	2023 Priority
Drinking Water			
Monitor and map aquifers, including the listing and ranking of threats	✓		✓
Improve wellhead protection, including model ordinances, risk communication resources for public officials, and minimum state law exploration		✓	
Increase investments in targeted agriculture conservation BMPs to protect source water through Partners' programs and related university research efforts		✓	✓
Wastewater			
Train, recruit, and retain waste/drinking/stormwater operators			✓
Fund more agency staff to align State Revolving Fund and other IFA-fundable projects with broader goals; conduct more community outreach to help leaders understand current water management needs and infrastructure investment	✓		✓
Address climate change volume challenges associated with gray infrastructure (especially CSOs); Incentivize green infrastructure		✓	✓
Industry/Energy/Economic Development			
Fund and complete regional water studies; funnel information to IEDC and local economic development offices		✓	✓

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Climate			
Fund matching county or regional investment in modeling to guide local planning and decision-making (CDBG, DHS/FEMA)	✓	✓	✓
Coordinate with/assist local communities with adaptation planning for flood/drought/quality issues; create a template that includes modeling data/guidance (use Purdue, IGWS, IDNR)		✓	
Show and share impacts of renewable energy investments on water consumption and water resource stresses		✓	
Drought			
Reignite drought management conversations and planning		✓	
Develop widespread, well-funded public education campaign on lawn watering and water use		✓	
Increase use of irrigation ponds and non-potable water for irrigation; Promote drainage water recycling via ponds, wetlands, storage areas in wet season for use in dry periods; Consider/develop incentive funds		✓	
Septic & Sewer			
Create State funding mechanisms to extend sewer facilities and aid homeowners with septic repair/replacement match and/or forgiveness		✓	
Develop a clear vision and plan for regionalizing wastewater utilities using the state budget surplus for capacity investments to reduce septic systems	✓	✓	
Determine what constitutes a failing septic system; Expand the role of health departments in assessing needs, conducting inspections, and informing property conditions for sale		✓	
Flooding & Green Infrastructure			
Incorporate requirements for BMP installation and implementation into building permit processes; Adopt green infrastructure standards for all new developments; Develop/promote appropriate technical standards		✓	
Incentivize retrofitting developments with green infrastructure; Use IFA funds for infiltration incentives; Require green retrofits whenever properties are altered		✓	
Promote model flooding and stormwater ordinances		✓	✓
Educate development community, including homeowners, city/town leaders, engineers, etc., on projections of increased rainfall volume and intensity and the need to manage water at smaller scales and/or scale up stormwater retention facilities; Develop digital tools to aid communication		✓	✓

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Wetlands & Floodplains			
Incorporate flood resilience into comprehensive planning, zoning, and county hazard mitigation plans; Provide funding and technical assistance to local governments for flood resilience plans		✓	
Fully fund state regulatory staff to enforce environmental protections already in place for wetlands and floodways/plains; Foster buy-in and support from local officials for state regulations, build trust and collaboration around common goals; Help local officials understand the need for consistent flood hazard regulations and wetland protection	✓	✓	✓
Fund wetland restoration and/or construction and two-stage ditches as part of stormwater management and infrastructure (i.e., utility funding, drainage assessments, IFA funds, etc.)		✓	
Review and revise the state's Drainage Handbook		✓	✓
Restore and/or advance state-level protections for wetlands and floodplains	✓	✓	✓
Quality of Life			
Develop protective strategies (model ordinances, incentives) for development around waterways		✓	
Ecology & Environment			
Identify gaps in habitat that isolate wildlife; Create overlay zones for targeted restoration; Rank the targeted areas; Provide funds to municipalities for incorporation into local planning, and/or to IDNR and ISDA for incentive programs, and/or to water utilities for alignment with source water protection initiatives		✓	
Develop low-flow projections and protections, starting in 2023 with a push for better data; need better and more complete data on low flows (esp. in urban areas); need better data on the impacts of low-flow conditions, on water quality, habitat, vegetation, etc.		✓	✓
Establish tax incentives for habitat restoration	✓		
Establish dedicated funding source for habitat projects; Leverage federal wildlife habitat funding	✓	✓	

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Agriculture			
Increase technical assistance and outreach to farmers; Explore and expand funding sources and more widespread deployment of assistance		✓	✓
Identify gaps in conservation BMP funding by practice; Expand funding opportunities for better drainage management in target areas and potential buy back of floodplain/floodprone lands		✓	✓
Explore tax incentives for improving drainage management on fields and along property perimeters; Identify target areas using LiDAR mapping and aerials.		✓	
Explore adding more water quality and quantity management-focused permissive language to the Drainage Code	✓		✓
Work with county surveyors and others to generate comprehensive GIS maps of regulated and unregulated drains (surface and subsurface)		✓	



The Working Group meets four to six times a year for half-day workshop sessions. If you're interested in participating in the Group, please contact info@thewhiteriveralliance.org.