



Interstate Environmental Commission Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

EPA Region 2 Headquarters
290 Broadway
New York, NY
27th Floor Room 2728D (Conference Room D)
April 27, 2018
10:00am-12:30pm

Attendees: Jill Lipoti (IEC Chair), Evelyn Powers (IEC), Jessica Haley (IEC), Jim Ammerman (LISS/NEIWPC), Jim Ferretti (EPA Region 2), John Kushwara (EPA Region 2), Robert Elburn (NYSDEC), Scott Friedman (Industrial Economics), Kate Doiron (Industrial Economics), Heather Ballastero (Industrial Economics), Aimee Boucher (EPA Region 2), Rosana DaSilva (NY/NJ HEP), Rick Winfield (EPA Region 2).

Via Phone: Jessica Bonamusa (IEC), Jason Fagel (NYSDEC), Esther Nelson (EPA Region 2), Matt Lyman (CTDEEP), Liz Butler (EPA Region 2), Mark Tedesco (LISS)

I. Welcome

IEC Chair Jill Lipoti welcomed and thanked attendees for attending the meeting. Jill emphasized that the TAC is important to ensure that regional partners know where IEC's grant funds are being spent, and have an opportunity to provide input and comment on activities included in grant workplans, particularly the CWA106 grant workplan.

II. Introductions

III. FY 2017 106 Current Workplan Activity Updates and Discussion

IEC's current 106 workplan and grant closes September 30, 2018. This grant is administered by NEIWPC. The project period for the grant was two years, with many projects completed. Some of the larger projects are being wrapped up now. We have also received EPA approval for our FY18 workplan and are in discussions with EPA grants regarding conditions for the final grant award.

a) Compliance Inspections- IEC is looking carefully at the value of compliance inspections. Currently compliance inspections are primarily performed in Connecticut. In the past IEC performed routine inspections annually at all ~70 plants in its district. Inspections are now only performed at the request of the states, the EPA or in the event IEC feels an inspection is warranted based on information supplied via DMRs or bypass reports. New Jersey and New York have expressed less of a need, especially in regards to wastewater treatment plant inspections, while compliance inspections in Connecticut have expanded in recent years.

b) WLIS Data Synthesis Project

A significant project in IEC's FY17 workplan involved the synthesis of IEC's 25 years of data from western Long Island Sound monitoring program, on which there was a presentation (later in the agenda).

c) Website Re-design

Another significant project in IEC's FY17 workplan that is wrapping up is the re-design of IEC's website. IEC's first website was developed in 2000 with one re-design since. IEC selected Acuta Digital, Inc. as the contractor for the website redesign through an RFP process. The website is expected to launch in June 2018. The contract also included a logo re-design as an addendum, which was designed to incorporate elements of land, water, and air, as well as include a reference to IEC's unique laboratory capabilities. With the pending website redesign, a question to consider is what type of social media presence, if any, IEC wishes to have in the future. This topic was brought up by our website designer but is beyond the scope of the current project. Acuta Digital recommended IEC carefully consider which types of social media outlets best fit its image, possibly with the assistance of a consultant. Social media platforms are more difficult to manage than may be immediately apparent, and a poorly managed social media presence is worse than not having one. It was recommended that we reach out to a number of our partners, including HEP, Baykeeper, LISS, and citizen science groups their experience with social media. Some of IEC's activities (e.g. compliance information) is not appropriate for social media but it may be an avenue to "market" IEC's activities and capabilities in certain realms such citizen science support and ambient water quality monitoring projects. Certain social media feeds can be cross-posted and linked and responsible use must be ensured.

d) Laboratory Updates

IEC's laboratory remains NELAP-certified. Our primary NELAP certification is through NYSDOH, our secondary accreditation through NJDEP (Connecticut does not participate in NELAP, although IEC does have accreditation through CTDPH's state environmental laboratory approval program). The laboratory now has certification through NYSDOH for Nutrients-Ammonia, Nitrite, Nitrate-Nitrite, Nitrate, Orthophosphate and Total Phosphorus. The method references may need to be updated in the near future to comply with the 2017 MUR based on recent correspondence from NYSDOH. The laboratory had on-site assessments by NYSDOH in May 2017 and NJDEP in November 2017. Rick Winfield requested that IEC report both total and corrected chlorophyll a as the pheophytin/chlorophyll a ratio is important for many models. Evelyn responded that the corrected chlorophyll a method involves measuring both total and corrected chlorophyll a (absorbance before and after acidification) to calculate result so this is easy to calculate by simply adding a column in the spreadsheet. CTDEEP reports total chlorophyll.

Citizen Science: IEC will continue its coordinated volunteer pathogen monitoring program in spring-summer 2018 which will start the week before Memorial Day. We have an EPA-approved QAPP and citizens will produce addendums as necessary with site locations and schedule. Two of four groups that participated in 2017 are on board with outreach ongoing to additional groups. Jill Lipoti recommended reaching out to

NY/NJ Baykeeper as well as the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership. IEC currently performs fecal coliform and enterococcus analysis on samples submitted by citizen scientist using membrane filtration methods. IEC may consider developing and pursuing certification for the IDEXX methods if practical. IEC has done limited comparison between the membrane filtration and IDEXX methods, some more comparison may be warranted to compare methods at higher concentrations. Jim Ferretti noted that both Colilert and Enterolert are EPA approved.

EPA DESA in Edison has an equipment loan program that lends citizen science groups equipment. IEC had a recent meeting with EPA DESA at the IEC laboratory that discussed ways in which IEC can support this program, with additional equipment and/or supplies (reagents, buffers) to calibrate equipment. Evelyn will supply EPA DESA with a list of equipment/supplies that may be available to support EPA's program.

IEC recently applied for two grants to expand citizen science program. The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant proposal, which was submitted jointly with the College of Staten Island and includes seven partners, if funded, would provide funds to support staff time to train volunteers at partner organizations such as NY/NJ Baykeeper. It would also fund two sets of IDEXX equipment. Funding decision will be made in July 2018. IEC also responded to a recent EPA Environmental Education Local grant RFP. Funding decisions for that grant should be made by September 2018.

IV. FY 2018 106 Approved Workplan Highlights

FY 2018 workplan was approved. This workplan was submitted to EPA in August 2017 with TAC input and comments, received conditionally approval in November 2017 and final approval in February 2018. The FY18 workplan and grant application was submitted by IEC independently of NEIWPCC. The FY17 106 grant, supplemented by LISS and UWS funded activities, will essentially fund IEC through the remainder of FY18. FY18 106 grant funds, once awarded, will fund IEC 106 activities through FY19. Timing of FY19 workplan development and submittal is an area which IEC and EPA are having ongoing discussions.

a) Quality Management Plan

FY18 workplan tasks that have been completed include the development and approval by EPA Region 1 and Region 2 of an IEC Quality Management Plan. This is the overarching quality system under which all IEC QAPPs will be approved.

b) Strategic Monitoring Plan

IEC included the development of a strategic (long-term) monitoring plan in our FY18 106 workplan. This is something that EPA has been encouraging IEC to develop for several years. This would be similar to the monitoring plans required to be developed by states to receive supplemental monitoring funds. With IEC transitioning to an independent agency, now is the appropriate time to develop such a plan. IEC's current vision for the document is that it will work in tandem with strategies developed by organizations such as HEP, which is developing a monitoring plan and an action agenda with specific monitoring needs. This document will address regional monitoring needs and outline specific projects IEC will undertake (e.g. near-shore monitoring needs, priority waterbodies, parameters) to strategically and efficiently fill regional monitoring gaps. Jill Lipoti suggested that IEC have a specific meeting involving the EPA, the states, HEP, citizen groups

and other stakeholders to help develop the plan in late summer. John Kushwara said EPA Edison would be happy to host such a meeting.

c) MST Techniques and Continuous Monitoring

The FY18 workplan budget has specific funds set aside to develop MST technologies. More information is necessary to determine what types of MST capabilities are valuable to invest in. Strategic Monitoring Plan may help inform this.

d) RIBS and Pathogen Trackdown Monitoring

IEC is continuing its participation in NYSDEC's monitoring of routine sites in support of its RIBS (rotating integrated basin studies) program. As part of this program, IEC will sample station A4 in western Long Island Sound for an expanded list of parameters in April, June, August, and October. The first run of 2018 was completed April 24, 2018.

V. Updates on Other Grants and Upcoming Activities

a) Western Long Island Sound Monitoring

IEC will be expanding its WLIS monitoring program year-round. IEC's annual core WLIS monitoring program, which involves monitoring 22 stations weekly for 12 consecutive weeks from late June through September was incorporated into the LIS Base funding in FY18. IEC submitted an additional enhancement proposal, which was recommended for funding at the April 19th LISS MC meeting, to fund an expansion of IEC's WLIS monitoring to include 8 additional monthly runs (one run per month) from October 2018 to May 2019. This will, in effect, result in a year-round monitoring program in WLIS.

b) Unified Water Study

IEC is participating in the Unified Water Study (UWS) again in 2018 for the second year. IEC has also expanded its participation in the study to include an additional embayment. In addition to Little Neck Bay, which IEC monitored for Tier I parameters in 2017, in 2018 IEC will expand its participation in the UWS to include monitoring in Manhasset Bay. The study is set to begin in May, with two monthly surveys in each embayment through October. Each survey includes approximately 10 sites. IEC is also participating in the UWS as a partner laboratory, and will analyze up to 500 chlorophyll a samples collected by UWS participants, supported by funding provided by the UWS. Jim Ammerman mentioned the Buzzard's Bay Citizen Science program, which published a report with 22 years of data generated by citizen scientist. They are a successful model.

VI. Presentation: *Western LIS Data Synthesis and Analysis of Historical Hypoxia Data in the Western Narrows of Long Island Sound*
(Industrial Economics, Inc.)

The project synthesized 25 years of IEC WLIS data from 1991-2015. All data were entered into a database. All original data sheets were scanned and checked for data integrity. A geodatabase was also created with all of WLIS sample locations and data. oxygen. Training of IEC staff on utilizing the database will commence soon. A data import form was also developed to facilitate upload to the database. There was a suggestion that perhaps USGS data on water quantity (flow) be incorporated into the database, which was designed to be buildable. A tool that could be incorporated into data inputs is

one which automatically “flags” data entered that is outside expected range. UWS data template has a similar feature. All IEC data does currently go through an internal data integrity QA process that includes second analyst checks for calculation or transcriptional errors.

VII. Progress and Status of IEC Transition

FY18 is the transition year during which IEC is transitioning from being a program of NEIWPC to being an independent interstate agency. The FY17 106 grant was the last grant EPA grant that was applied for and awarded through NEIWPC. The FY17 106 grant closes September 30, 2018.

VIII. FY2019 Workplan Suggestions and Timeline

Suggestions should be forwarded to Evelyn Powers for activities to be included in IEC’s FY19 workplan. Please note these activities will likely begin in FY20 (October 2019-September 2020). A separate meeting regarding the Strategic Monitoring Plan will be held that will also inform FY19 workplan development. States should consider freshwater monitoring needs as well. Although IEC has jurisdictional boundaries that relate to IEC’s water quality regulations, IEC has in the past assisted with inland projects that impact the shared waters of IEC’s district. IEC followed up with EPA on timing of the F19 workplan following the TAC. It should be submitted by *August 1st, 2018*.

Jill Lipoti mentioned IEC’s water quality regulations and efforts to harmonize them with those of the states. IEC does have water quality regulations and a standing workplan item to revisit them each year, with input from the TAC. In FY17 there was no consensus to revise them until states completed review of their standards. There was a question as to whether IEC regards its standards as having primacy over state regulations and how the presence of IEC regulations compares to policies of other interstates. DRBC does have water quality regulations that in some areas of New Jersey, for some parameters (PCBs), are the applicable water quality standard. IEC’s water quality regulations exist, and IEC’s goal is for them to be in harmony with those of the states. There has been some work completed regarding comparing IEC’s standards to those of the states and a matrix developed that will be updated to incorporate any changes made by states. While IEC does not have any recreation water quality criteria (e.g. pathogen indicators) in its regulations, the regulations do contain effluent limitations for fecal coliform, including single-sample maximums that New York State in the past has indicated was helpful for compliance purposes.