

# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC Auditorium, Portage, IN

April 5, 2012

## MINUTES

### **Members/Guests Present**

Geof Benson, Leslie Dorworth, Susan Mihalo, Sherryl Doerr, Lauri Keagle, Charlotte Read, Deb Backhus, Kay Nelson, Mark Reshkin, Ashley Snyder, Kris Krouse, Kevin Breitzke, Colin Highlands, Maggie Byrne, Nick Minich, Mike Molnar, Beth Shrader, Cathy Csatori, Michelle Caldwell, Chandra Viswanathan, Nicole Barker, Don Parker, Dan Plath, Denarie Kane, A J Bytnar, Jane Kobak, Tracey Krueger

### **NIRPC Staff**

Kathy Luther, Joe Exl, Bill Brown, Kevin Garcia, Hubert Morgan, Meredith Stilwell

### **Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **◆Approval of March 1, 2012 EMPC Minutes**

On motion by Kevin Breitzke and second by Susan MiHalo, the March 1, 2012 EMPC minutes were approved.

### **Presentations**

#### **◆Air Public Perception Survey – Tracey Krueger, AC Incorporated**

NIRPC has been implementing an Air Quality Public Education program for ten years with an overarching goal to move consumers through the progression of awareness of air quality challenges, taking ownership, realizing and knowing what to do and finally taking action. The research study was conducted to gauge and quantify the effectiveness of NIRPC's air quality public outreach campaigns and to gain insight into consumer's attitudes, education, motivators and barriers. 601 adults in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties were surveyed by landline and cellular interviews between January 19 and February 5, 2012 with quotas set representing census numbers. Research results were reviewed and while the majority perceived air quality in the area to be good/okay, over half are concerned about air quality and most don't think it's changed in the last five years. Most issues take priority over air quality, especially in LaPorte County where residents are very concerned about lack of jobs. Half of those interviewed stated they have friends/family with breathing problems, but the majority said those individuals are not impacted by poor air quality days. It was also found that while residents attribute improvements in air quality to fewer effects from factories/mills, they also feel that worse air quality is a result of more pollution in the air – primarily from factories/mills or automobiles. Awareness/perceptions of initiatives results were reviewed and while residents can't remember many initiatives on their own, once prompted, household hazardous waste collection and ozone action days are the most known and for the most part hear about the campaigns via newspapers/magazines or on TV. Residents also feel that while household hazardous waste collection events have the most impact on air quality education, ozone action and asthma awareness days aren't far behind. When questioned about individual impacts of air quality, a quarter of the residents felt they can individually make a difference in the air quality. Nearly half are on the fence about whether they can make a difference which gives opportunity to make them feel empowered to make a difference. Residents currently take approximately six different actions to improve air quality and are consist mostly of recycling, car maintenance, and combining errands and about half of those not already conducting a routine car maintenance plan to do so. They feel the actions they are doing most also have the most impact on air quality and while they want to do their part to be a good citizen by helping the environment some feel they're doing all they can but are limited because they can't commute in a different way.

*The survey will be used to determine how money is spent to continue to improve NIRPC's public education program and will be posted on the NIRPC website for review. Conducting an air quality education program in the schools was discussed and Kathy Luther indicated she would look for the program that was mentioned as having previously been conducted by NIRPC. The importance of public transportation was discussed and becoming more involved in the issue was suggested. The possibility of the Chicago Metropolitan area being classified as non-attainment due to the ozone monitor in Zion, Illinois going over the ozone standard by .001 was brought up and the fact that this could result in a public perception issue. Odor and the fact that most odor issues are not regulated was mentioned and it was noted that the Porter County Commissioners could be of some help in that area since they are already in the process of writing a letter to the recycling facility in Union Township about the smell.*

## ◆ Local Food Study Report – Kevin Garcia, NIRPC

The Local Food Study has been completed and the draft report was posted for comments on the NIRPC website. The final version of the report should be posted soon. The genesis of the local food study came from outreach during the Comprehensive Regional Plan outreach process. Funded by Donnelly Foundation grant, a kick-off meeting was held in November, 2010 and from that a Food Study Advisory Committee was formed. The table of contents was reviewed, with the food system profile and issues noted as the “meat” of the study. The food system consists of five components which are production, processing, distribution, consumption, and “waste”/reuse. The USDA defines local as 400 miles, but for the purpose of this study that did not seem local enough so this study used a 100 mile area. Some issues identified and focused on in the study were access, demographics of farmers, economics of local food systems, environment, health, land use, and transportation which are covered extensively in the Report. A map was reviewed detailing land use in the region and most of the area is used for growing commodity crops with very little devoted to specialty crops that may be for human consumption.

*Since a portion of Valparaiso is considered a food desert, what defines a food desert was questioned and Kevin indicated the USDA definition was used and the identified census tracts were determined to have low-income households that are greater than one mile from the nearest store that has healthy foods in it. A series on food desserts will begin Sunday, April 8 in The Times and will feature faces and names to go along with the USDA statistics. Additional topics mentioned were insurance, vertical growing, reuse of brownfields, aquaculture, as well as the fact that often times it is more expensive to purchase locally grown foods. It was noted that one large component in a local food system is home grown foods, and although addressed in the Report it is hard to track. Kevin Breitzke thanked all of the people involved with the effort and thanked them for their cooperation. Possible next steps to the report involve going out into the field to inventory what foods are available locally, as well as securing funding to put into action some of the goals. **Charlotte Read motioned for the EMPC to recommend accepting the Local Food Study Report to the Full Commission. On second by Nicole Barker and with no opposition, the recommendation passed.***

## TE-Environmental Criteria - discussion

Transportation Enhancement funding is typically \$2m annually and historically the majority of the money has been awarded to trail projects with an 80/20 funding split between trails projects and the Scenic, Commerce, and Other category. There were to be two funding cycles in 2011 and in an effort to encourage more environmental project submissions a 50/50 split was agreed upon for the first funding cycle with the understanding that the second cycle was to revert to the 80/20 split. However, the second funding cycle for 2011 never occurred, and with the possibility of a 2012 funding cycle the issues of the funding split as well as criteria for scoring in the environmental category need to be decided. The Ped, Pedal, and Paddle Committee voted in their March meeting to recommend a 75/25 split to the Transportation Policy Committee, and the EMPC has the ability to come forward with a percentage recommendation as well. It was noted that the TPC is expecting a recommendation from the EMPC regarding the funding split. The environmental project submissions will be coming before the EMPC to be reviewed, scored, and prioritized beginning with the next round of funding. After Mitch Barloga’s TE funding presentation and the discussion at the March EMPC meeting, in an effort to encourage better environmental project submissions, Kathy Luther and Joe Exl reviewed and revised the TE application environmental scoring criteria for the next funding cycle. Those revisions were shared with the group. *Discussion regarding the scoring criteria was held and it was noted that for trail projects there is a regional priority trails corridor map agreed upon by the 3PC participants and approved by the TPC that influences scoring for funding and it was suggested to have criteria to prioritize environmental projects so that the types of projects that are desired are being submitted, as well as making criteria clearer to involve watershed mapping which will be looked into by Joe and Kathy. Joe encouraged the communities to look into the TE section under Federal Highway for guidance and example projects. **Kevin Breitzke motioned to recommend a 60/40 funding split to the TPC. With second by A J Bytnar and no opposition, the recommendation passed. Kevin Breitzke motion to accept the 2012 criteria as proposed. On second by Susan MiHalo and no opposition, the motion passed.***

## Announcements:

### Coastal Awareness Month Event Submissions

Organization: Coastal Partners

When: April 15, 2012 (**Deadline for event submissions**)

Where: [www.coastalmonth.in.gov](http://www.coastalmonth.in.gov)

Contact Info: Mike Molnar [mmolnar@dnr.in.gov](mailto:mmolnar@dnr.in.gov)

## **Purdue Calumet Environmental Forum**

*"Environmental Challenges and Opportunities for the Calumet Region"*

When: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 / 7:00 p.m.

Where: CIVS Theater - Powers Building, Room 123 - 2200 169<sup>th</sup> St., Hammond, IN 46323

Contact Info: Due to limited seating advanced registration is encouraged – (219)989-2468

For more details: <http://webs.purduecal.edu/news/2012/04/05/environmental-forum/>

## **IDEM CARE Public Meeting Agenda**

When: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 / 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Where: IDEM Northwest Regional Office - 8380 Louisiana St., Merrillville, IN 46410

Contact Info: Ashley Snyder [asnyder@idem.in.gov](mailto:asnyder@idem.in.gov)

## **LMCP Coastal Advisory Board Meeting**

Organization: DNR Coastal Program

When: Wednesday, April 18, 2012 / 10:00 a.m.

Where: IDEM Northwest Regional Office - 8380 Louisiana St., Merrillville, IN 46410

Contact Info: Mike Molnar [mmolnar@dnr.in.gov](mailto:mmolnar@dnr.in.gov) (317)233-0132

## **Picnic for the Planet**

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

When: Sunday, April 22, 2012 / 10:00 a.m.

Where: Fort Harrison State Park – Cherry Tree Shelter - 5753 N. Glenn Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46216

For more information & to register: [www.nature.org/IndianaPicnic](http://www.nature.org/IndianaPicnic)

## **Partners for Clean Air Kick-off Breakfast**

When: Thursday, April 26, 2012 / 8:00 a.m.

Where: International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 697 Hall - 7200 Mississippi St., Merrillville, IN 46410

Contact Info: **RSVP by April 18** to Letty Zepeda [lzepeda@idem.in.gov](mailto:lzepeda@idem.in.gov) (219)757-0278

## **Campout at the Dunes- a Save the Dunes 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event**

Organization: Save the Dunes & Field Museum

When: Saturday, May 5, 2012 / 4:00 p.m.

Where: Indiana Dunes State Park – Group 3 Campsite - 1600 North 25 E., Chesterton, IN 46304

Contact Info: Nicole Barker [Nicole@savedunes.org](mailto:Nicole@savedunes.org)

## **Invasive Plan Management Workshop**

Organization: Indiana Coastal Cooperative Weed Management Area

When: Thursday, June 14, 2012

Where: Douglas Center – Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore - 100 N. Lake St., Miller, IN 46403

Contact Info: Maggie Byrne [mbyrne@tnc.org](mailto:mbyrne@tnc.org) (219) 981-9183

## **Dunes Day Barbecue and Council Fire**

Organization: Save the Dunes – 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event

When: Thursday, June 21, 2012 / 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Where: Barker House - 444 Barker Rd., Michigan City, IN 46360

Contact Info: Nicole Barker [nicole@savedunes.org](mailto:nicole@savedunes.org) (219)879-3564

RSVP to: [office@savedunes.org](mailto:office@savedunes.org)

## **Presentation celebrating Save the Dunes 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Organization: Save the Dunes / Ogden Dunes Historical Society

When: Sunday, June 24, 2012 / 4:30 p.m.

Where: Ogden Dunes Community Church (**not confirmed**)

Contact Info: Susan MiHalo [smihal763@frontier.com](mailto:smihal763@frontier.com) (219)763-4871

Joe Exl announced that NIRPC now has a Northwest Indiana Watersheds Facebook page dedicated to exchanging watershed information.

The next EMPC meeting will be May 3, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

### Reasonable Accommodations

Requests for alternate format materials or interpreters may be made 48 hours in advance to Kathy Luther:  
(219)763-6060, Ext. 127 or e-mail [kluther@nirpc.org](mailto:kluther@nirpc.org)

### Non-Discrimination

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, parental status, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.