

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC Auditorium, Portage, IN

May 3, 2012

MINUTES

Members/Guests Present

Geof Benson, Jim Ton, George Adey, Brian Wolff, Jeff Stoakes, Leanne Whitesell, Mark Reshkin, John Rhyne, Lee Botts, Susan MiHalo, Vanessa Villarreal, Paul Leffler, Linda Wilson, Lauri Keagle, Nick Minich, Pete Julovich, Leslie Dorworth, Michelle Caldwell, Ashley Snyder, Bob Daum, Cathy Csatari, Hala Kuss, Mardanna Soto, Nick Dernik, Scott Falk, Kay Nelson, Charlotte Read, Dorreen Carey, Sherryl Doerr, Amber Winter, Michael Kuss, Jim Micheals, Kevin Breitzke, Lauren Riga

NIRPC Staff

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

Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

◆ Approval of April 5, 2012 EMPC Minutes

On motion by Kevin Breitzke and second by Jim Ton, pending review and possible correction to add a Porter County Earth Day announcement, the April 5, 2012 EMPC minutes were approved.

Presentations

◆ Lakeshore Air Toxics Study – Jeff Stoakes, IDEM

The Northwest Indiana lakeshore area is a highly industrialized area of the state and several studies have indicated the area may have elevated air toxic concentrations. The 2005 National Air Toxic Assessment (NATA) predicted six of the top 10 highest risk census tracts were located in Gary and East Chicago and was the main driver for the IDEM Study. Other factors which contributed to the need for this type of study were the complex network of heavily traveled roadways, many high risk schools from *The Smokestack Effect* report were concentrated in East Chicago, and the results of Outdoor Air Near Schools monitoring in Gary and East Chicago concluded that metals concentrations may be elevated. The goal of the study were cited and the framework to achieve those goals consists of refining detailed air toxic inventory, analyzing data using Regional Air Impact Modeling Initiative (RAIMI), calculating concentrations to determine risks and hazards, comparing results to 2005 NATA and existing monitoring data, and communicating results to the public. Existing air toxic inventory has been obtained from various sources and facilities will be sent emissions data for verification around the first of June. The data requested includes stack data, stack locations, and throughputs and air toxic speciation data. Facilities will be given 60 days to respond to the verification request and IDEM will conduct workshops in the Lakeshore area to help facilities with completing data verification. Responses are required in accordance with the emission reporting rule. Final results should be available in a year or less. The Study is not only concerned with facilities but also with mobile and area sources. Five lakeshore monitors have been established and are in East Chicago, Hammond, Whiting, Gary, and Ogden Dunes. *Commissioner Ton noted that Northwest Indiana attainment has been challenged due to the close proximity to Chicago and is encouraged to see reports that a couple of coal fire generators in Chicago are shutting down and should have a positive effect.*

Kathy reported on the Partners for Clean Air Breakfast which was an interactive meeting and suggestions were obtained from the attendees. The Steering Committee which is comprised of IDEM, NIRPC, South Shore Clean Cities, US Steel, and Clean Air Car Check are making a serious effort to reboot the group and plan more events for more participation and attention to voluntary actions that can be done for clean air. A report will be produced and distributed to the attendees as well as the EMPC.

◆ Permitting and the Importance of Wetlands – Paul Leffler, US Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District

The message of the presentation was to enlist the EMPC's help to spread the message that wetlands are important, wetland violations are a problem, and the US Army Corp and IDEM need to be contacted before wetland areas are filled in. Indiana has lost 87% of its wetlands which is fourth most across the country. Some of the important functions of wetlands are water storage, water filtration, and biological productivity. There are numerous legal requirements associated with wetlands including sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act as well as state isolated

wetland permits. The violations are not just being committed by individuals but cities and counties as well. The Corp should be called before projects are started and they will help with the process. For most violations the first thing is to have the person remove the fill and restore the area. If the area cannot be restored or the offender is unwilling to do so, legal action can be taken or mitigation can be required. For most violations to this point people have removed the fill. *A question and answer discussion followed the presentation during which it was suggested the EMPC take on a larger role in informing and educating others. Kathy Luther noted that while driven by transportation funding, NIRPC now has more responsibility in the environmental aspects of projects and are involved earlier in the process of municipal transportation projects. This provides entrance to conversations on the local level in regard to permitting issues and mitigation. In regard to the 2040 CRP, wetlands are a large part of the green infrastructure network and areas of wetland restoration were identified and the Full Commission approved the Plan. Issues in Gary were also raised by a member of the public and Hala Kuss from IDEM and Lauren Riga, Gary's Director of Environment and Green Infrastructure, responded to the concerns. Chairman Benson asked Paul if he would like to speak to the Full Commission in June or July and he indicated he would.*

◆ **NWI Restoration Projects** – Frank Veraldi, US Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District

Six US Army Corps of Engineer Indiana Ecosystem Restoration Projects were detailed including status, animal species found in the areas, as well as the cost of the projects. The presentation power point will be available on the NIRPC website for review. The six projects detailed were:

- Portage Lakefront Park Section 125: *Restore 161 acres of stream, dune, ridge & swale, wet prairie and savanna. The feasibility study has been completed and needs to be approved. Project construction will hopefully commence in about a year and has an estimated project cost of \$8.3m.*
- Cedar Lake Green Infrastructure: *Restore 800 acres of marsh and lacustrine habitat. Currently the project is in the feasibility phase and has an estimated project cost of \$12m.*
- Wolf Lake Section 206: *Restore 450 acres of marsh and lacustrine habitat with in the Indiana portion of Wolf Lake and was completed in 2009 and is in the monitoring and operation and maintenance phase. The estimated total project cost is \$7.2m.*
- Red Mill Pond Section 506: *Preserve and restore 156 acres of marsh and forested wetland in headwaters of the Little Calumet River and is 99% complete. In order to preserve the hydrology the water height the dam was holding was maintained and a new channel was created leading to the Little Calumet River. Planting and seeding was completed in July 2011. The estimated total project cost is \$1.877m.*
- Calumet Prairie Section 506: *164 acre wet sand prairie restoration clearing non-native and opportunistic trees and shrubs, removal of invasive species, recovery of native seed banks, and conducting prescribed burns. The construction contract was awarded in September 2011 and has begun and a burn was conducted recently. The estimated total project cost is \$2.1m.*
- Little Calumet Riparian Section 506: *Restore 42 acres of bottomland hardwoods, wetlands, and forest habitat that surrounds east branch of Little Calumet River. Construction contract was awarded in September 2012 and estimated total project cost is \$385,000.*

Project funding availability was discussed and Frank indicated GLRI has been funding and is open to new projects. A letter of intent is needed from an acceptable non-federal sponsor to start.

Kathy Luther noted that an application had been submitted for a 319 grant for a watershed planning update for the Deep River/Turkey Creek watershed. Since then it has been learned it would be helpful if the watershed was on the near term TMDL list. IDEM can respond to local interest in pursuing TMDLs, but right now it is not on the schedule. Kathy questioned if the EMPC wanted to officially request the watershed be elevated on the TMDL list. Joe Exl noted IDEM would request a letter of support to be able to fast track the TMDL for Deep River and the next 319 funding cycle is coming up. He also noted the watershed is now known as the Deep River/Portage Burns Waterway watershed and is one of the critical watershed identified in the Northwest Indiana Watershed Framework. **Kevin Breitzke moved for the EMPC to recommend to the Executive Board to bring their authority for a letter of recommendation for the TMDL fast track of the Deep River/Portage Burns Waterway watershed. The motion was seconded by Susan MiHalo and approved by the EMPC.**

Announcements:

Campout at the Dunes- a Save the Dunes 60th 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

Gary Household Waste Collection

Organization: City of Gary

When: Saturday, May 5, 2012 / 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Where: 455 Massachusetts St., Gary, IN 46402

Green Infrastructure Workshop

Organization: NOAA, NIRPC, & DNR

When: Friday, May 11, 2012 / 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Where: NIRPC

6100 Southport Rd., Portage, IN 46368

Contact Info: must RSVP to Meredith Stilwell by 5/4/2012 to attend

Spring Out to Sunset

Organization: Porter Co. Parks

When: Saturday, May 19, 2012 / 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Where: Sunset Hill Farms

775 Meridian Rd., Valparaiso, IN 46383

Contact Info: Porter Co. Parks pcparks@porterco.org (219)465-3586

Railcats Asthma Awareness/Partners for Clean Air Day

Organization: Partners for Clean Air

When: Friday, June 8, 2012

Where: U.S. Steel Yard

One Stadium Plaza, Gary, IN 46402

Dunes Day Barbecue and Council Fire

Organization: Save the Dunes – 60th 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 (219)879-3564

RSVP to: office@savedunes.org

NIRPC hosts Chicago Wilderness Meeting

(visit to Portage Lakefront Park to follow meeting)

When: Wednesday, July 18, 2012

Where: NIRPC

6100 Southport Rd., Portage, IN 46368

Contact Info: Kathy Luther kluther@nirpc.org (219)763-6060 ext. 127

Summer Children's Events

Organization: Porter Co. Parks & Porter Co. Waste Reduction & Recycling

Further Info: <http://www.itmeanstheworld.org>

The next EMPC meeting will be June 7, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 10:43 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

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.