

# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC- Lake Michigan Room

September 1, 2016

**Members/Guests:** Geof Benson, Brenda Scott Henry, Deb Backhus, Kaitlyn McClain, Mike Molnar, George Malis, Tim Kingsland, Jan Bapst, Leslie Dorworth, Lynda Lancaster, Dorreen Carey, Ellen Kapitan, Bill Emerson Jr., Jennifer Gadzala, George Topoll, Catherine Yoder, Eric Foster, Elizabeth McCloskey, Chandra Viswanathan, Natalie Johnson

**NIRPC Staff:** Kathy Luther, Sarah Geinosky, Joe Exl, Meredith Stilwell

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

Chairman Benson called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

## **Approval of July 7, 2016 EMPC Minutes**

On motion by George Topoll and second by Tim Kingsland, the July 7, 2016 EMPC meeting minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

## **Presentations:**

### **a. Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program – *Dorreen Carey, IDNR Coastal Program***

The Lake Michigan Coastal Nonpoint Program is the coastal piece focusing on impaired tributaries to Lake Michigan in the coastal region of Lake, Porter and La Porte Counties. In 2006 the Program was given conditional approval by EPA, with additional management measures to meet. By 2012 several of those measures had been met and by 2016 all had been met except one, which is the measure for ensuring that Operating Septic Systems are inspected at a frequency adequate to ascertain whether the system is failing. The final approval of this remaining management measure must be met by 2019 or risk monetary penalties to NOAA and EPA 319 funding to the State of Indiana. The Northwest Indiana Septic System Coordination Work Group has been meeting since early 2013 to develop collaborative plans and implementation strategies to address the potential impacts of failing septic systems on local water quality and public health. Accomplishments have been made by the Work Group one of which includes an ordinance passed by La Porte County in April 2016 requiring inspection of septic systems at the time of property transfer. If all Counties passed ordinances such as this, the management measure would eventually be met. The Work Group will be developing a Coastal Septic System outreach and education program to be funded through the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program. SepticSmart Week for 2016 will be September 19-23 at the State and Local level. NIRPC passed a resolution in 2015 supporting SepticSmart week and was asked to do the same for 2016. **A motion was made by George Topoll and seconded by Bill Emerson for the EMPC to recommend a resolution in support of the 2016 SepticSmart week to the Full Commission. With no opposition it, the motion passed.**

### **b. Save the Dunes Landscaping Guide**

Due to unexpected circumstances, the presenters were unable to make the meeting.

## **NIRPC Business:**

### **a. Greenways and Blueways 2020 Update – Kathy Luther, Joe Exl, Sarah Geinosky, NIRPC**

Kathy reviewed the potential scoring criteria created from the July EMPC meeting keypad polling exercise. Discussion was held and many questions asked. Confusion was voiced over the purpose of the scoring. While Kathy intended the scoring to be used to prioritize conservation corridors in the region, some thought the purpose was to use the scoring for funding purposes. A map of region conservation corridors was made available for people to review and identify any missing corridors. The discussion resulted in a determination to convene a small group together to move forward and try to add economic values to the corridors as well.

**Public Comment:** None

### **Announcements:**

- The Canoemobile is coming September 14<sup>th</sup>. They will be in Hammond, Hobart, Gary, Michigan City and Kankakee over a six week span. Over 3,700 kids are already signed up. Volunteers will be needed and emails will be sent asking for help.
- NIRPC's electric vehicle charging stations are up and running and are being used.
- Next month's EMPC will be a Great Lakes Communication Workshop organized by the National Wildlife Federation.
- November's EMPC will be a joint meeting with Urban Waters. It was suggested to have an EPA representative do a presentation regarding drinking water contamination and safety.
- NIRPC was awarded a DNR Lake and River Enhancement grant to do a feasibility study on the Lake Station Dam removal or modification. Public meetings and input will be included. The study will provide the best alternative, a cost estimate and at least 20% design. Hopefully a design completion and build will occur shortly after. An RFP will be going out later in September with the project wrapped up within two years. DNR projects wrap up in a year.
- Additional meeting, event and funding announcements will be forwarded to the Committee by email.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.