

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC- Lake Michigan Room

February 1, 2018

Members/Guests: Geof Benson, Sarah Nimetz, Katherine Moore Powell, Will Farrellbegg, Cathy Martin, Reggie Korthals, Collin Simek, Jennifer Birchfield, Lauri Keagle, Bill Emerson, Jr., Susan Mihalo, Sheryl Doers, Tim Kingsland, Elizabeth McCloskey, George Malis, Jennifer Gadzala Dwayne Polarek, Toni Norkus, Deb Backhus, Bill Carter, Rachelle Ceaser, George Topoll, Maggie Byrneck, Kay Nelson.

NIRPC Staff: Kathy Luther, Rachel Veronesi, Gabrielle Biciunas, Meredith Stilwell and Mary Thorne.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

Approval of September 7, 2017 EMPC Minutes

On motion by Will Farrellbegg and a second by Reggie Korthals, the December 7, 2017 EMPC meeting minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Presentations:

Indiana Dunes Climate Change Adaptation Planning and Outreach – *Katherine Moore Powell, Field Museum of Natural History*

Cathy Martin, Save the Dunes provided background on the project. The Indiana Dunes Ecosystem Alliance partnership was formed to identify conservation priority projection project areas. Targets identified were dune and swale, savanna, prairie, wetland and forest and threats to each were also identified as invasives, fragmentation, development, disturbances, limited protection resources and climate change.

Katherine Powell described the adaptation planning steps for identifying climate stressors, vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies. Workshops and webinars were held and field work was done. Current stressors identified were earlier springs, increased warming and precipitation trends and the loss of the Karner blue butterfly in 2012. Future trends show that the growing season will be 1 month longer; 33-45 more days above 90, 14-22% increase in precipitation and 24-36 fewer days of snow cover. These will result in plant heat zone increasing to zone 7, an increase in runoff, less shelf ice and changing lake levels to Lake Michigan. Vulnerabilities identified included a big change in air temperatures and slower less change in soil temperatures which can adversely affect insects and birds. Invasive issues are worsening, there is increased habitat fragmentation. Adaptation strategies identified include improving landscape connectivity and changing how fire is used as a management tool. Outreach activities will be identified.

NIRPC Business: Kathy Luther gave an update on the 2020 Greenways + Blueways Plan. It is going out for public comment today. Go to the website for more information or to leave a comment at <http://www.nirpc.org/2018/02/01/30-day-public-comment-period-on-new-documents-amendments/>.

Public Comment: No comments were offered.

Announcements

- a) Geof Benson announced the passing of Dr. Mark Reshkin. The family has asked if you have any memories of him to share, please email Kay Nelson @knelson@nwiforum.org.
- b) Geof Benson announced that Lee Botts is celebrating her 90th birthday this month.
- c) Kay Nelson announced legislative updates. Senator Charbonneau has a water task force bill which calls for water-interest agencies provide any information to this task force. Senator Charbonneau has another bill on regional sewer districts and waste water infrastructure. Representative Wolkins on water cleanup (1233) is moving forward. Senator Tallian introduced a bill regarding sand. All house and senate bills must go through a third reading and has been assigned to Environmental Affairs.
- d) Kay Nelson said the VW Trust Fund board is hosting open house meetings around the state. One will be held at NIRPC on February 6 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Contact Shawn Seals at (317) 233-0425 or sseals@idem.gov for more information.
- e) Reggie Korthals said the senator from Elkhart has introduced HB 1096, construction requirements of MS4 operators which passed out of the House on the third reading on Monday.
- f) Kathy Luther said South Shore Clean Cities Annual Meeting is on February 20 at the Blue Chip Event Center in Michigan City. Registration is open.
- g) Hobart used CMAQ funds to construct a new CNG maintenance garage and fillings stations and produced a video about it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ag_alyoXReg
- h) Carl Lisek has revived his radio show. *Green Fleet Radio* is now on Lake Shore Public Radio and Rachel Veronesi is the guest next Wednesday at 9 a.m.
- i) NISWAG, the Northwest Indiana Storm Water Advisory Group, consisting of all MS4 permitted communities and they are sponsoring a workshop for contractors in either Lake or Porter Counties on February 27 at 7 p.m. at Porter County Expo in Valparaiso. Contact Reggie Korthals for more information.
- j) Gabrielle Biciunas announced the Northwest Indiana Food Council is hosting the second annual Food Expo Discovery (FED) on February 23 at County Line Orchard. An email will be sent today with more information.

The next meeting of the Environmental Management Policy Committee will be held on March 1, 2018 at 9 a.m.

On a motion by George Topoll and a second by Will Farrellbegg, Geof Benson adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at 219-763-6060 or mthorne@nirpc.org should you wish to receive a copy of it.