



## **CARE Meeting Summary – May 28, 2020**

**Thursday, May 28, 2020, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM CDT**  
**Microsoft Teams Live Event, Held Remotely**

**In Attendance:** Michelle Caldwell, Michael Spinar, Anne Remek, Jim Bailey (IDEM); John Fekete (CARE Co-chair); Paul Labus (TNC); Jenny Orsburn, Carl Wodrich, Emily Stork (IDNR); Maureen Turman (NiSource); Will Tucker (USFWS); Cherie Fisher (USFS); Kristen Isom (USEPA); Fernando Treviño (City of East Chicago); Brenda Scott Henry (City of Gary)

**Public Attendees:** Unknown (At least six CARE Members were signed in as attendees and have been listed above.)

### **1. Introductions:**

Michael opened the meeting at approximately 1:05 pm and took roll of those in attendance.

### **2. February 2020 CARE Meeting Summary**

- **Is there any discussion regarding, or are any changes needed to, the February 2020 CARE Workgroup Summary?**

Michael invited comments or suggested changes to the February CARE Workgroup meeting summary. No comments were received.

### **3. Sediment Management Actions (BUIs #1-2, #4-7) Update**

#### **a. Dredging of Navigational Channel**

Michael provided CARE members with an update on this reach. The contractor for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects to resume dredging in July 2020. As a reminder, this includes both the work to clear the dredging backlog of the Congressionally-authorized federal navigation channel and the dredging of selected berthing areas outside the federal channel at the request of local property owners. All dredged materials will be deposited in the Indiana Harbor Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) in East Chicago. A total of 150,000 to 200,000 cubic yards is anticipated for removal during this dredging season.

The Army Corps estimates that the remaining sediment backlog will be cleared with this year's dredging. Thereafter, a three-year hiatus in dredging activities is planned through 2023 to allow for the CDF's dikes to be raised 11 feet, which will nearly double its capacity to 4.8 million cubic yards from the current 2.7 million cubic yards. The Army Corps has received incremental funding to begin this project and currently expects to award a contract for the construction in September 2020.



Routine maintenance dredging of the federal channel is expected to commence in 2024 following the dike raise. The additional capacity of the CDF will be utilized to store sediments dredged over the next 30 years (through approximately 2053).

**b. Lake George Branch Middle & East**

Michael provided CARE members with an update on this reach. The East Portion extends from Indianapolis Boulevard in East Chicago to the CSX railroad bridge. Approximately 40 percent of the Lake George East project area is within the federal navigation channel. The Middle Portion extends from the CSX bridge to the BP land bridge.

The Great Lakes Legacy Act Project Agreement between EPA and the non-federal sponsors (the East Chicago Waterway Management District, Atlantic Richfield Co., and BP) has been approved and the US Army Corps is currently working to complete the project design for the canal. In the meantime, ARCO/BP has begun source control work on the South and West Tank Farm parcels at the former ECI refinery site and has already removed numerous pipelines from the South Tank Farm.

ARCO/BP's contractor is currently working to complete the 30 percent design by the end of May 2020 and is anticipated to complete the 90 percent design by the end of 2021. A barrier wall system is being designed for the South Tank Farm to minimize migration of contaminants into the canal, while providing bank stabilization to support dredging of the East project area. Construction is currently anticipated for 2023. A bank stabilization system is being designed for the West Tank Farm to tie into the planned cap in the Middle project area. Construction is anticipated to occur from late 2021 through mid-2022.

Because this source control work will not be completed prior to the end of the 2020 dredging season, the Army Corps will not be able to dredge along the South Tank Farm prior to initiating the CDF dike raise. The Army Corps has proposed splitting the dredging into two phases, with the first phase consisting of disposal of the majority into the CDF and the smaller second phase consisting of more costly off-site disposal.

The first phase dredging is anticipated to occur this year, with capping of the middle portion to begin in mid-2021 and continue through the first half of 2022; completion of BP's source control measures at the West and South Tank Farms to conclude in 2022 and 2023, respectively; the CDF dike raise to be completed in late 2023; and the second phase dredging of the East project area to occur in 2023 or 2024.

**c. East Branch, Phase II**

Michael provided CARE members with an update on this reach. East Branch Phase II includes the dredging and capping of 2.5 miles of the East Branch of the Grand



Calumet River between Cline Avenue and the US Steel Reach in Gary, as well as closure of the Ralston Street Lagoon in Gary.

The 30% Remedial Design for this project has been completed. EPA staff continue to work with the Gary Sanitary District to determine whether additional work may be credited as non-federal match. The agency is not currently aware of any additional non-federal sponsors that may be found to support the remedial portion of the project. It is therefore currently unknown whether sufficient nonfederal match will be available to proceed into the project phase.

**d. Junction Reach**

Michael provided CARE members with an update on this reach. The Junction Reach includes approximately 1.5 miles of the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal south of Columbus Drive and approximately 1.4 miles of the Grand Calumet River between Indianapolis Boulevard and Kennedy Avenue. It is currently anticipated that only containment will be utilized for the portion of the Grand Calumet River from the Junction to Kennedy Avenue. Both removal and containment are anticipated for the remainder of the project area.

A 70% design of the Junction Reach was completed in 2015, with the report being released in early 2016. EPA, IDEM, and the East Chicago Waterway Management District are still working to identify additional non-federal cost share needed to complete the Grand Calumet River and Indiana Harbor Ship Canal project areas concurrently. If all goes according to plan, the project design would be completed in 2021 and the project itself, conducted during most of 2022 and into early 2023.

**e. BUI #7 Removal Target Update**

Michael reported that IDEM continues to work to revise the removal target for BUI #7: Restrictions on Dredging Activities. Once the draft target has been further refined, it will be vetted through the CARE Committee. IDEM currently plans to complete revision of this BUI removal target in 2020.

**4. Habitat Management Actions (BUI #3 & BUI #14) Update**

**a. Management Action #1 – Dune, Swale, and Riverine Restoration**

Michael reported that IDEM received the no-cost time extension necessary to complete this work on May 11. This extends the project work through September 30, 2021. IDNR plans to submit a proposal for additional funding necessary to complete the work early next year.

Carl Wodrich reported that IDNR planned to have the new numbers in hand to amend the agreements between IDEM and IDNR and IDEM and Lake County Parks within the



next day or two. Emily Stork reported that the field crews were trained remotely and began restoration efforts last week. A considerable number of procedures have needed to be rearranged in order to accommodate social distancing requirements.

**b. Management Action #2 – River Corridor Establishment**

Michael reported that the Gary-Chicago International Airport Authority signed the access agreement for the parcels in the vicinity of the Gary Airport at its February 12 board meeting. IDEM and IDNR are evaluating this management action in light of continued high lake levels. This evaluation is anticipated to be completed in the next month or so.

**c. Management Action #3 – Lake George Branch Wetlands Restoration**

Carl reported that the grant extension and supplemental funding have been approved by USEPA for this project and that funding was added to Conservation Land Stewardship (CLS), which was acquired by Davey Resource Group. The same project manager is working with IDNR, which has provided consistency during the transition.

The first herbicide application of the 2020 growing season was applied last week. Davey is under contract until November, and the plan is to wrap up restoration work in October and complete the final inspection and final reporting thereafter.

**d. Management Action #4 – Prescribed Fire Plan/Contractual Burns**

Will Tucker reported that IDNR was able to get two burns in this spring for a total of eight. The interagency agreement that funds the work expires September 30, 2021. The pace of the burns conducted to-date is not sufficient to get burns in at all properties before the funding expires. USFWS is working to get a two-year extension request in to allow additional burns to be completed with the available funding.

**e. Management Action #5 – Pine Station Ponds and Oxbow**

Carl reported that the contract with TetraTech for the design was executed on May 26. Carl and Emily have a meeting to discuss the project work with the contractor in two weeks.

**f. Early Detections**

Emily provided an update that no early detection species have been detected.

**g. BUI #3 and BUI #14 Removal Targets**

IDEM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and IDNR continue work to revise BUI #14 Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Currently separate fish and wildlife habitat



workgroups have convened to draft proposed revisions. It is currently anticipated that the revisions will be vetted before the full CARE Committee in the first quarter of 2021.

## 5. Aesthetics (BUI #11) Update

IDEM RAP Program staff continues to monitor remedial and Great Lakes Legacy Act Projects anticipated to address aesthetics issues noted during previous rounds of monitoring and anticipate having a robust update for CARE Members during the winter of 2020-2021.

## 6. Beach Closures (BUI #10) Presentation

See Michelle Caldwell's [presentation](#).

## 7. BUI #8 and #13 Update

Michael reported that a discussion took place on April 23 to address questions raised during the February 27 CARE Workgroup Meeting presentation on plankton. Michael then provided a recap of the questions from the February meeting and responses shared during the April discussion, which included:

- Questions as to whether areas of clearer water and high pH might be due to weathering of slag deposits.
  - There are many areas of slag deposits in northwest Indiana; however, in many cases, the highest values of pH were not associated with particularly clear water. Therefore, IDEM does not currently believe that slag deposits were a major contributing factor to high pH at these sites. IDEM is in the process of evaluating additional monitoring that would likely shed light on whether the dissolved oxygen swings are photosynthetically driven.
- Did the pH probe autocorrect for temperature and pH?
  - The registered pH of a sample decreases substantially with temperature. This effect impacts high pH solutions more than low pH ones. The pH probe autocorrects the pH during the calibration process. During calibration, the pH meter detects the temperature measured by the temperature sensor or probe as well as the potential (mV) measured by the pH electrode. The pH meter then assigns the correct value of the pH buffer based on the measured temperature. In the April 23 meeting, Michael incorrectly stated that the pH was always corrected to a value reported at 25 degrees C. This is not the case. Therefore, Michael will ensure that pH and temperature are reported together in future report outs.
- What is the depth at which samples were collected?
  - Samples were collected from about 1 meter below the surface
- What is the state standard or average for specific conductivity and turbidity?
  - Conductivity:



- According to Purdue University's [Monitoring Water in Indiana: Choices for Nonpoint Source and Other Watershed Projects](#), IDEM Fixed Station Data between 1990 and 2010 indicated a median value of 630 umho/cm in the Central Corn Belt Plains Ecoregion, with an interquartile range of 514 to 786 umho/cm.
- 327 IAC 2-1.5-8 sets a standard for dissolved solids in public or industrial water supplies to not exceed 750 mg/L. 327 IAC 2-1-6 states that "a specific conductance of one thousand two hundred (1,200) micromhos per centimeter (at twenty-five (25) degrees Celsius) may be considered equivalent to a dissolved solids concentration of seven hundred fifty (750) milligrams per liter.
- Turbidity:
  - According to Purdue University's [Monitoring Water in Indiana: Choices for Nonpoint Source and Other Watershed Projects](#), IDEM Fixed Station Data between 1990 and 2010 indicated a median value of 15 NTU, with an interquartile range of 7.9 to 35.6 NTU.
  - EPA's proposed nutrient criteria for turbidity in the Central Corn Belt Plans Ecoregion is less than or equal to 14 NTU.
- In addition, there was a discussion of appropriate reference sites that might be used to compare the conditions of the riverine and lacustrine sites. Additional data analysis is needed to determine reference sites.

## 8. Outreach/Education Activities

Outreach and education activities have been sharply curtained by measures instituted to address the Covid-19 pandemic. IDEM RAP Programs staff were able to present information on our Lake Michigan Programs, including the RAP Program, to several hundred IDEM staff on May 6. This provided a valuable opportunity to provide information to staff who might not have been familiar with these programs. Michael stated that the RAP program would appreciate any suggestions CARE Members might have for better engaging members of the public on RAP issues in this era of physical distancing.

Carl suggested that CARE and IDEM reach out to INDR state parks interpretive staff, who are developing a number of remote outreach and education presentations.

## 9. Table Talk

There were no items brought forth by CARE members for table talk.

## 10. Public Comment

As described earlier, the meeting format did not allow for distinguishing attendee comments left by CARE members from those left by members of the public. The following comments were addressed at this point in the meeting:



- One attendee asked whether Michelle’s presentation would be posted. Michael confirmed that it would be posted to the IDEM CARE webpage.
- Brenda Scott Henry asked if the meetings are recorded. If so, she offered to add a link to the website for public viewing. Michael responded that the meetings were not recorded, but that a detailed meeting summary will be posted to the IDEM CARE webpage following the meeting.

## **11. Meeting Adjournment**

Michael adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:12 pm.

**Next Workgroup Meeting:** Thursday, June 25, 2020, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  
Tentatively a Microsoft Teams Meeting