



CARE Meeting Summary – May 27, 2021

Thursday, May 27, 2021, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM CDT
MS Teams Meeting, Held Remotely

In Attendance: John Fekete (CARE); Michael Spinar, Michelle Caldwell, Anne Remek (IDEM); Joel Perez-Castaneda (TNC); Caitie Nigrelli, Sara Westergaard (USEPA); Jenny Orsburn, Lynn Riddle, Ashley Sharkey, Emily Stork, Carl Wodrich (IDNR); Dan Sparks (USFWS); Maureen Turman (NiSource); Meredith Nevers (USGS); Fernando Treviño (ECWMD); Kay Nelson (NWI Forum); Leslie Dorworth (IL-IN Sea Grant)

Public Attendees: Carolyn Marsh, Susan MiHalo, Paul Labus

1. Introductions

John Fekete opened the meeting at approximately 9:04 am and took roll of those in attendance.

2. Beach Closings Management Action Letter Review

Michael Spinar provided an overview of the proposed management action list for the beach closings beneficial use impairment (BUI) and solicited comments or questions from CARE members regarding the document. There were no comments in regards to the presentation.

3. BUI #14 Removal Target Review

Michael informed CARE members that this removal target would not be discussed during the May CARE Workgroup Meeting as IDEM and U.S. EPA have decided that additional agency review of the target is necessary. Michael shared that IDEM still plans to formally present and discuss the draft removal target at the June 24 meeting.

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

a. Lake George Branch Middle & East

Michael reminded the group that the East Portion extends from Indianapolis Boulevard to the CSX railroad bridge in East Chicago, with the Middle Portion extending from that point west to the BP land bridge in Hammond.

Michael shared that there were no major updates for the East Portion. 23,804 cubic yards of contaminated sediment was removed in 2020 during the Phase I dredging. The Phase II dredging along the south bank of the IHSC is expected to be conducted in 2024 and will likely utilize offsite disposal of the dredged materials in a permitted landfill.



The US Army Corps has effectively completed the project design for the Lake George Middle project and is now working to procure a contractor for the project. Construction is still projected to begin this year and continue through the first half of 2022. In the meantime, ARCO/BP continues its source control work on the South and West Tank Farm parcels at the former ECI refinery site. That work is expected to extend from the middle of this year through 2023.

b. East Branch, Phase II

Michael shared that there were no major updates regarding the East Branch Phase II project, which includes the dredging and capping 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. EPA staff continues to work with the Gary Sanitary District to identify potential nonfederal Great Lakes Legacy Act cost share.

c. Junction Reach

Michael reminded the group that the Junction Reach includes the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal south of Columbus Drive and the Grand Calumet River between Indianapolis Boulevard and Kennedy Avenue.

The remedial design, including permitting, will be part of the fourth modification to the existing Legacy Act Project Agreement (PA) under which the original feasibility study and design work for the East Chicago waterways was included and which includes the Lake George Middle and East remedial action. That PA has been signed by the East Chicago Waterway Management District and is now being reviewed by the other parties to the agreement.

The ECWMD anticipates that the remedial design will be ready at some point in 2022, with construction to follow in late 2022 through most of 2023. Implementation will likely occur under a separate PA. The ECWMD is currently developing the scope for the final remedial design of the junction reaches.

Fernando Treviño shared that the ECWMD has now entered into a contract with TetraTech to refine the project design. The District anticipates that there will be significant cost savings due to the contractor's past experience with, and knowledge of, the waterways. The ECWMD anticipates the remedial design will be completed in the first half of 2022.

d. Orphan Areas Site Characterization

Michael shared that GLNPO continues work to begin the planning process needed to conduct a site characterization of areas which lie outside, but adjacent to, Reaches 8



and 9 of the Congressionally authorized channel of the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal. An initial planning meeting is scheduled for the first week of June and the work is still scheduled for completion during 2021.

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

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

Carl Wodrich reported that IDNR submitted a draft workplan to U.S. EPA to continue habitat restoration activities under habitat management action #1 on 394 acres out of the 924 acres included in the current project (Dune and Swale). Carl received comments and suggested edits from EPA and has provided a revised workplan to the agency for a follow-up review. The goal is to get the final grant application submitted in the first half of June.

Carl also reported that monitoring would occur this growing season under the existing Dune and Swale project. This would assess the status of the roughly 50 percent of assessment units not monitored during 2020.

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

Will Tucker from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who oversees this project, was not available to provide an update. IDEM and IDNR representatives were not aware of any significant updates, particularly since the prescribed burn season has now passed.

c. Management Action #5 – Pine Station Ponds and Oxbow

Carl reported that there were no significant updates to this management action. IDNR is still working with its contractor to finalize the design for the ponds at the east end of the Pine Station Nature Preserve. IDNR staff plan to meet with the contractor to discuss the project during the first week of June.

6. Other Management Action List/BUI Updates

a. Degradation of Aesthetics (BUI #11)

Michael reported that IDEM has made significant revisions to the management action list based on comments from U.S. EPA in May and is working on additional coordination and cost refinement efforts prior to submitting the list for CARE Committee review.

b. Eutrophication and Plankton (BUIs #8 and #13)



Michael reported that IDEM has reached out to potential candidates to participate in a workgroup to develop a management action list for this BUI. The agency is working to schedule a kick-off meeting for the second half of June.

7. June CARE Meeting Scheduling

Michael reminded CARE Members that he had requested that the April and May CARE Workgroup meetings be scheduled to occur between 9 am and 11 am Central Time (10 am to noon Eastern Time), instead of the traditional 1 pm to 3 pm Central/2 pm to 4 pm Eastern time slot, due to a conflict. For upcoming meetings, he inquired whether there were any concerns from CARE members with returning to the afternoon time slot. Based on the feedback from CARE members, it was decided to leave the meetings at the 9 am Central (10 am Eastern) time slot.

Michael then went on to solicit feedback from CARE members about the format of future meetings – specifically whether they should be held in person, remotely, or as a hybrid of the two. CARE members expressed a general preference for hybrid-style meetings. Maureen Turman stated that she felt that those types of meetings improve attendance. John Fekete suggested that Michael consult with potential venues to see what type of restrictions on meetings might be in place. Michael agreed to do so and report back to the group.

There was also a discussion of the specific situations which apply to various members regarding in person meetings.

8. Table Talk

There were no items brought forth during table talk.

9. Public Comment

Ms. Carolyn Marsh made several comments regarding public participation in RAP Program activities and work products; the history, ownership, and the nature of recreational uses at the Hammond beaches; the use, effectiveness, and fairness of Eagle Eye structural deterrents at the Whiting beaches; and the distribution of birds at the Hammond and Whiting beaches.

10. Meeting Adjournment

John Fekete adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:08 am.

Next Workgroup Meeting: Thursday, June 24, 2021, 9:00 am – 11:00 am
Via Microsoft Teams