



CARE Meeting Summary – June 24, 2021

Thursday, June 24, 2021, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM CDT
MS Teams Meeting, Held Remotely

In Attendance: Jim Bailey, Michelle Caldwell, Michael Spinar (IDEM); John Fekete (CARE); Joel Perez-Castaneda, Susan MiHalo (TNC); Leslie Dorworth (IL-IN Sea Grant); Caitie Nigrelli (USEPA); Will Tucker (USFWS); Maureen Turman (NiSource); Paul Buszka, Dave Lampe (USGS); Ashley Overton (City of Gary), Kay Nelson (NWI Forum), Jenny Orsburn, Ashley Sharkey, Sheri Moor (IDNR)

Public Attendees: None

1. Introductions

John Fekete opened the meeting at approximately 9:02 am and took roll of those in attendance.

2. Great Lakes Legacy Act State SEP Opportunity

Michael Spinar provided a presentation on a Great Lakes Legacy Act Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) opportunity developed by IDEM. Maureen Turman inquired as to whether the SEP Information Sheet could be shared or if it was posted to the IDEM website. Michael stated that he would check into the matter.

3. Sediment Working Group Update

Michael reported that a second AOC Sediment Work Group meeting was held June 8. Staff from USEPA, USACE, IDEM, IDNR joined past and current Great Lakes Legacy Act nonfederal sponsors to review the status of all the major sediment initiatives within the AOC. Attendees asked a number of questions and the overall takeaway for many in the group was a real appreciation for the sheer amount of work and progress occurring throughout the waterways. A follow-up meeting was tentatively planned for fall of this year.

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

a. Lake George Branch Middle & East

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

Michael shared that there were no major updates for the East Portion. The USACE contractor removed 23,804 cubic yards in 2020 during the Phase I dredging. The Phase II dredging, which includes areas along the south bank of the IHSC and additional



“clean up” of areas dredged in Phase I, is expected to be conducted in 2024. It may 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. Construction is projected to begin this fall and continue through the first half of 2022. The project will consist of placement of a cap within the canal, active mats at the ECI West Tank Farm property, and ecosystem restoration along the northern bank and the wetland shelf along the southern bank near Lake Mary.

In the meantime, ARCO/BP continues its source control work on the South Tank Farm parcels at the former ECI refinery site. This includes additional pipeline decommissioning efforts due to be completed this year and installation of a sheet pile wall along the boundary of the STF parcel with the Lake George Canal. ARCO/BP is currently working to complete the 90 percent design for the sheet pile wall.

b. Junction Reaches

Michael reported that the Junction Reaches include 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 entered into a contract with TetraTech to complete the remedial design for the project in May. The ECWMD anticipates that the remedial design will be completed in mid-2022, with construction to follow in 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 and has been participating in a series of meetings with key stakeholders to do so.

c. Orphan Areas Site Characterization

Michael stated that 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 is underway. An initial planning meeting occurred June 3. The USACE is currently working to develop an initial project scope based on input from the stakeholders.



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

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

Joel Perez-Castaneda updated the group on the status of the on the ground work. He stated that the water level of the Grand Calumet River has been lower in recent month, which has exposed mudflats along the river. Field crews have observed both native species and purple loosestrife colonizing these newly exposed areas. Lake County Parks is utilizing contractors to help out with the field crews this year. Those crews have done one pass through most of the project sites.

Michael added that the project is ending following this growing season and that IDNR is working to submit a final project proposal for USEPA approval.

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

Will Tucker advised that there are no major updates to this project, as it is currently the off season for prescribed burns.

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

Lynn Riddle did not have any updates to provide on this project. Michael stated that the project was still in the design phase.

d. BUI #14 Removal Target Revision

Michael shared that IDEM, IDNR, and staff from USEPA's Great Lakes National Program Office met on June 9 to discuss the removal target. GLNPO management is currently evaluating the information provided during the meeting internally.

6. Management Action List Updates

a. Beach Closings

Michael reported that IDEM made minor formatting changes to the management action letter following the review by the CARE Committee and submitted it earlier in week of June 21 for a low-level review. The next steps, once the review is complete, will be to submit it for review by IDEM and GLNPO senior management.



b. Degradation of Aesthetics (BUI #11)

Michael stated that IDEM is awaiting additional information from the Indiana Department of Transportation, which will inform the cost estimates in the management action list. This information is anticipated by the end of the month.

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

Michael shared that IDEM has reached out to potential candidates to participate in a workgroup to develop a management action list for this BUI. The kick-off meeting for this effort is scheduled for the afternoon of June 24. In addition, USGS continues dissolved oxygen monitoring at various sites throughout the AOC.

Dave Lampe then provided an update on the USGS dissolved oxygen (DO) monitoring. He shared that 14 sondes have been deployed conducting continuous monitoring of DO levels, with several YSI sondes collecting complementary chlorophyll data. USGS is hoping to develop a webpage with just the links from the AOC DO sampling. The USGS technician redeployed the sonde located at Industrial Highway to minimize oil-related impacts in this unremediated stretch of the river. There was also a zero DO value noted at Indianapolis Boulevard that was unconnected to algal blooms. John Fekete inquired as to which side of the bridge the monitor was on, due to its proximity to the East Chicago wastewater treatment plant. Dave said he would check back with the USGS technician for additional information.

8. CARE Meeting Scheduling Follow-up

Michael reminded CARE members that, at the May 2021 CARE Meeting, members decided to continue to hold CARE Meetings in the mornings, from 9 am until 11 am Central Time on the fourth Thursday of the month, going forward. He then informed members that he had checked around following the meeting and many facilities at which we have had meetings previously, such as Purdue Northwest, are still not fully open and allowing outside groups to hold meetings. CARE members elected to hold the July meeting remotely, via Teams, and evaluate the meeting format on a month-to-month basis.

9. Table Talk

There were no table talk items brought up by CARE members.

10. Public Comment

No members of the public were in attendance.

11. Meeting Adjournment

John Fekete adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:44 am.



Next Workgroup Meeting: Thursday, July 22, 2021, 9-11 am
Via Microsoft Teams