



CARE Meeting Summary – February 25, 2021

Thursday, February 25, 2021, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM CST

MS Teams Meeting, Held Remotely

In Attendance: John Fekete (CARE); Michael Spinar, Michelle Caldwell, Jim Bailey, Paul McMurray, Anne Remek (IDEM); Carl Wodrich, Jenny Orsburn, Emily Stork (IDNR); Dan Sparks, Will Tucker (USFWS); Amber Sample, Caitie Nigrelli (U.S. EPA); Fernando Trevino (ECWMD); Paul Labus (TNC); Ashley Overton (City of Gary); Jen Birchfield (NWI Urban Waters); Maureen Turman (NiSource)

Public Attendees: None

1. Introductions

John Fekete opened the meeting at approximately 1:02 pm and took roll of those in attendance.

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

a. Lake George Branch Middle & East

Michael Spinar reminded the CARE members 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 went on to state that there have been no major updates to share regarding the Lake George Middle and East Project. As he reported previously, the contractor for the US Army Corps has completed the first phase of the dredging of the East Project area, with the initial estimated volume dredged 20,000 cubic yards. The second phase of the dredging, along the south bank of the IHSC, is currently expected to be conducted during most of 2023 and 2024. This phase of the dredging will likely utilize offsite disposal of the dredged materials in a permitted landfill.

The US Army Corps continues to work to complete the 90 percent project design for the Lake George Middle project. Construction is still projected to begin in the spring of 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. Sheet pile wall for STF 90% BODR by this summer.

b. East Branch, Phase II

Michael reminded CARE members that the 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.

Michael shared that there are no major updates on this project area; U.S. 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 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.

Michael shared that U.S. EPA, IDEM, and the East Chicago Waterway Management District continue to work to complete the identification of additional non-federal cost share needed to complete the Grand Calumet River and Indiana Harbor Ship Canal project areas concurrently. The District is also continuing work to amend the existing Great Lakes Legacy Act Project Agreement or develop a new one to allow for completion of the design and project implementation. If all goes according to plan, the project design would be completed in 2021 and the project itself would be conducted during most of 2022 and into early 2023. Fernando Treviño added that the East Chicago Waterway Management District believes it has most of the cost share needed for this project.

d. BUI #7 Removal Target

Michael provided an update on the Restrictions on Dredging Activities BUI to CARE members. In consultation with U.S. EPA and the U.S. Army Corps, the IDEM RAP program is crafting a revised removal target for BUI #7 and expects to vet to draft the removal target before the full CARE Committee for input in April or May 2021.

John inquired whether CARE members have given any thought to how the South Shore Development through East Chicago might impact the restored properties. CARE members did not specifically respond to John's question but asked him for more details on where he found the information. John recalled that map that was recently shared at a public presentation this past week. The map includes the Roxana Marsh and the Junction reach areas.

In response to a follow-up question from John, Carl explained that there are a number of property owners in the vicinity of Roxana Marsh, including IDNR, NIPSCO, and the Indiana Toll Road/INDOT.



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

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

Carl Wodrich updated CARE members that the Dune and Swale project partners are now in the process of preparing to conduct the 2021 growing season work. Both TNC and IDNR have hired their growing season staff. Emily Stork added that the crews have been facing numerous challenges conducting work in light of the recent bitterly cold and snowy conditions, but the weather has greatly improved this week.

Carl stated that IDNR is working to complete a grant application/workplan for Phase II of the project, with the goal to submit it to U.S. EPA by April 1.

b. Management Action #3 – Lake George Branch Wetlands Restoration

Carl stated that, since the GLRI-funded project is wrapping up, there is not much of an update from the January CARE meeting. IDNR is in the process of paying the final invoice submitted by the contractor, Davey Resource Group, and preparing the final report to U.S. EPA by the end of March. The project will be transitioning to long-term management. IDNR is working to get a scope of work out for bid so that a contractor can be selected and begin conducting the maintenance operations beginning this spring.

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

Will Tucker updated CARE members that three of the four amendments to extend the project end date to December 31, 2022 have now been completed. These include the cooperative agreements with IDNR, The Nature Conservancy, and Shirley Heinze Land Trust. The Lake County Parks agreement is still in process but is expected to be completed and executed soon.

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

Carl explained that there were no major updates for CARE members on this project. IDNR is still working to get a design finalized. Once that step is completed the agency will work to obtain the required permits and submit a funding request to U.S. EPA for construction.

e. BUI #14 Removal Target

Michael stated that IDEM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IDNR, and The Nature Conservancy continue work to revise BUI #14 Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat. The latest draft was submitted for review by the working group this week and contains changes to the instream habitat index portion of the removal target. He rated the overall



target as 90 percent complete and shared that IDEM RAP staff have a goal of vetting the revised target before the full CARE Committee at the March meeting.

4. Management Action List Update

a. Beach Closings

Michael stated that IDEM has been working to incorporate initial feedback from U.S. EPA within the Beach Closings Management Action List. The goal is to provide a revised draft to the CARE Committee for review during the March CARE Meeting.

b. Degradation of Aesthetics

Michael stated that IDEM has also been developing a framework for a Degradation of Aesthetics Management Action List. IDEM has a goal of providing an initial draft to U.S. EPA for comment by March 31 and a fully developed draft for CARE Committee review in the first half of 2021.

5. USS Lead OU2 Update

Michael provided an update to CARE members on Operable Unit 2 of the USS Lead Superfund site. Operable Unit 2 is the designated name for the former USS Lead facility and the groundwater (underground water) beneath the entire USS Lead site, including the residential neighborhood. U.S. EPA is overseeing the environmental investigation at OU2 conducted by the parties potentially responsible for the contamination under a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent.

As part of the Remedial Investigation (RI), contractors working on behalf of the PRPs installed groundwater monitoring wells in the residential neighborhoods in November and December 2018. Groundwater monitoring wells in the residential neighborhood and at the former industrial facility were sampled every three months starting in December 2018. Soil sampling was conducted in the non-excavated wetlands on the southern half of the former USS Lead facility, and tissue samples from plants and invertebrate (no backbone) animals were collected as part of an ecological assessment in May and June 2019. Data from 2018 and 2019 sampling efforts were compiled and presented in a draft Remedial Investigation Report submitted to EPA in January 2020.

EPA and IDEM have required the PRPs to conduct additional site investigation work to complete the RI. EPA and IDEM have approved the Field Sampling Plan Addendum for this work and the PRP's consultants are currently in the process of scheduling that additional investigation work within OU2.

Once the RI is complete, a Feasibility Study (FS) will be conducted by the PRPs in which possible remedial alternatives to address the site risks identified in the RI are evaluated. This will lead to a preferred remedy that is documented in a Proposed Plan, which will be made available for public comment, and finally to the selected remedy that will be documented in the Record of Decision (ROD).



Several CARE members inquired as to when documents would be available for public view. Caitie Nigrelli stated that she is working with Kristen Isom to learn more information about the plans for the site and would follow up.

6. Outreach/Education Updates

Michael shared that IDEM, IDNR, TNC, and Lake County Parks are discussing hosting a set of small-group tours of the AOC restoration areas to showcase the AOC restoration areas. Currently, the partners are discussing dates, locations, and logistics.

John inquired as to the timetable for the tours. Michael replied that it was anticipated that the tours would be held at some point in the spring or summer of this year.

7. Table Talk

Nothing was shared by CARE members.

8. Public Comment

No members of the public were in attendance.

9. Meeting Adjournment

John Fekete adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:33 pm.

Next Workgroup Meeting: Thursday, March 25, 2021, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Tentatively a Microsoft Teams Meeting