



## **CARE Meeting Summary – July 22, 2021**

**Thursday, July 22, 2021, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM CDT**  
**MS Teams Meeting, Held Remotely**

**In Attendance:** Michelle Caldwell, Michael Spinar (IDEM); John Fekete (CARE); Joel Perez-Castaneda (TNC); Leslie Dorworth (IL-IN Sea Grant); Caitie Nigrelli (USEPA); Will Tucker (USFWS); Maureen Turman (NiSource); Dave Lampe (USGS); Kay Nelson (NWI Forum), Carl Wodrich, Emily Stork, Jenny Orsburn, Ashley Sharkey (IDNR)

### **Public Attendees:**

#### **1. Introductions**

John Fekete opened the meeting at approximately 9:03 am and took roll of those in attendance.

#### **2. Cline Avenue Ditch Project Update**

Michael Spinar provided CARE Members with an update on the Cline Avenue Ditch RCRA corrective action. The ditch is located near the northeast corner of the intersection of Gary Avenue and Cline Avenue (Indiana Route 912) in Gary. It flows to the south parallel to Cline Avenue into a subterranean pipe/culvert for approximately ½ miles and discharges into the Grand Calumet River. Discharges of petroleum products into the ditch have been observed for many years and a responsible party is currently implementing a RCRA corrective action expected to address the issue.

The remedial action has been essentially completed, with only the final grading and seeding remaining. That should be completed this week. Final demobilization and re-opening of the Cline Ave ramp is currently scheduled for the week of August 2.

#### **3. 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 described how 23,804 cubic yards was removed in 2020 during the Phase I dredging and discussed how the Phase II dredging is expected to be conducted in 2024. The Phase II work includes areas along the south bank of the IHSC and additional “clean up” of areas dredged in Phase I. It may utilize offsite disposal of the dredged materials in a permitted landfill.



Michael then provided an update regarding the Lake George Middle project. The US Army Corps has effectively completed the project design and construction is projected to begin this fall and continue through the first half of 2022 [*correction: construction should continue through early 2023*]. 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.

Michael also shared that 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 to be completed in 2023. ARCO/BP is currently working to complete the 90 percent design for the sheet pile wall.

John Fekete shared that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a site visit to the Lake George Branch on June 29 and 30.

#### **b. Lake George Branch West**

Michael updated CARE members on the Lake George Branch West project area, which extends from the BP land bridge to Calumet Avenue in Hammond. BP has been working to develop a Great Lakes Legacy Act project application for additional sampling of the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal sediments and invasive species control along the banks in this area. BP's goal is to initiate the work this year.

#### **c. Junction Reaches**

Michael provided an update on the Grand Calumet River Junction Reaches, which 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 modification 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 by mid-2022, with construction to follow in 2023. Construction will likely occur under a separate PA between the ECWMD and USEPA. The ECWMD and its contractor are currently working with stakeholders to finalize the scope for the remedial



design of the Junction Reaches. Most recently, stakeholders met on July 1 to conduct a site visit of the reaches and discuss project logistics.

**d. East Branch Phase II**

Michael shared that USEPA staff continues to work with the Gary Sanitary District to identify potential nonfederal Great Lakes Legacy Act cost share.

**e. Orphan Areas Site Characterization**

Michael shared 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 continues work to develop an initial project scope based on input from the stakeholders.

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

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

Carl Wodrich shared that IDNR is working to respond to comments from USEPA on the Dune and Swale Phase II project application. The agency is working to submit the application within the next week.

Carl also shared updates on various contractors selected to conduct work through the Phase I Dune and Swale grant, which expires this year. TNC's contractor is working to address stands of cattails on the DuPont property. IDNR has selected a contractor with the goal of it commencing work in August. Lake County Parks has also selected a contractor; however, it experienced weather-related delays in terms of deploying to Gibson Woods and Tolleston Ridges.

Emily Stork shared that Roxana Marsh has experienced a proliferation of purple loosestrife with Lake Michigan water levels receding. Biocontrol by beetles was helping to control the infestation.

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

Will Tucker shared that the project partners are currently in the process of planning for the fall burn season. Preparation is in place for units at Beemsterboer, DuPont, Ivanhoe Dune and Swale Nature Preserve, and Ivanhoe South Nature Preserve.

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



Carl reported that IDNR is still working with its contractor to finalize the project design and the agency expects to receive the results from some soil sampling that was conducted soon. The agency is planning to move ahead with the work on the ponds on the eastern portion of the property, with USEPA's Great Lakes National Program Office earmarking funds for the first phase of construction in the FY2021 budget. This first phase would likely consist of bank stabilization work along portions of the north pond, invasives control along the ponds and river, and potentially prescribed burns of dead stands of vegetation.

**d. BUI #14 Removal Target Revision**

Michael reported that IDEM, IDNR, and staff from USEPA's Great Lakes National Program Office met on June 9 to discuss the proposed removal target and IDEM will be moving forward with presenting the removal target to the CARE Committee. IDEM RAP program staff are currently in the process of briefing IDEM senior management on the proposed removal target revision prior to presenting the revision to CARE at the August 26 meeting.

**5. Management Action List Updates**

**a. Beach Closings**

Michael reported that IDEM RAP program staff are in the process of briefing IDEM senior management on the proposed Beach Closings management action list prior to it being formally submitted to GLNPO management for review.

Michelle added that preliminary results from this monitoring season indicate that the East Chicago beaches will not meet the standard required to meet the BUI removal target in 2021. These beaches have been closed to the public during 2021.

**b. Degradation of Aesthetics (BUI #11)**

Michael stated that last week IDEM received additional information from the Indiana Department of Transportation regarding which entities have responsibility for the Old Cline Avenue Bridge and is working to set up a meeting with key stakeholders to provide information that will help refine costs.

**6. Eutrophication and Plankton (BUIs #8 and #13)**

Michael reported that USGS has continued its dissolved oxygen monitoring at 13 AOC sites. The USGS has set up a website, [https://www.usgs.gov/centers/oki-water/science/water-quality-monitoring-and-algal-community-composition-analysis-support?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/oki-water/science/water-quality-monitoring-and-algal-community-composition-analysis-support?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects), to present the data from the monitoring. IDEM met with staff from USGS, IDEM, IDNR, and USFWS staff on June 24 to discuss these



BUIs and begin work to craft management actions to address them. The meeting included a discussion of the work conducted to date, information on the USGS monitoring efforts, and a discussion of the septic system nonpoint source pollution reduction project. IDEM RAP staff have set up a follow-up meeting for August 6.

Dave Lampe added that USGS will begin looking at discontinuing the monitoring efforts within the next few months as the growing season comes to an end.

#### **7. Table Talk**

- Michael reported that IDEM is still in the process of hiring a director for the Northwest Regional Office.
- Kay Nelson and John Fekete reported that they participated in an interview on AOC restoration and revitalization with staff from Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant.
- In response to a question from CARE members, Michael stated that meetings would likely be held remotely on Microsoft Teams during the next few months and clarified which pandemic-related policies were in place for state employees.

#### **8. Public Comment**

- No members of the public were in attendance.

#### **9. Meeting Adjournment**

John Fekete adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:48 am.

**Next Workgroup Meeting:** Thursday, August 26, 2021, 9:00 am – 11:00 am  
Via Microsoft Teams