



## **CARE Meeting Summary – May 26, 2022**

**Thursday, May 26, 2022, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM CDT**  
**MS Teams Meeting, Held Remotely**

### **In Attendance:**

John Fekete (CARE); Michael Spinar, Michelle Caldwell, Jim Bailey, Halee Griffey, Anne Remek, Bob Lugar, Paul McMurray (IDEM); Susan MiHalo (TNC); Steve Barker (NiSource); Jennifer Birchfield (NIRPC); Carl Wodrich, Lynn Riddle (IDNR); Dan Sparks, Will Tucker (USFWS); Leslie Dorworth (IL-IN Sea Grant); Fernando Treviño (ECWMD); Betsy Maher (Save the Dunes); Victoria Wittig (NWI Urban Waters)

### **Public Attendees:**

Ms. Carolyn Marsh

### **1. Introductions**

John Fekete opened the meeting at approximately 9:02 am. Michael Spinar took roll of those in attendance at Mr. Fekete's request.

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

#### **a. Lake George Branch Middle & East**

Mr. Spinar provided an update on the Lake George Canal East Portion, which is located near the Confined Disposal Facility in East Chicago. The U.S. Army Corps has received funding to complete design work for the Phase II dredging of Lake George Canal East. Design work is currently expected to be completed in 2023, with dredging conducted in 2024. The Army Corps recently developed a draft sampling plan as part of the design and is working to respond to stakeholder feedback.

In the meantime, ARCO/BP has completed a draft 90 percent design for construction of a sheet pile wall along the northern boundary of the ECI South Tank Farm property and responded to comments from the project team. ARCO/BP held a public meeting on the draft 90 percent design following the ECWMD meeting of May 19. The sheet pile work, along with the habitat restoration work is expected to be completed in 2024. Fernando Treviño added that the final 90 percent design is expected to be completed by the end of June. He also stated that the project fact sheet, presentation, and draft design have been posted to the [ECWMD website](#).

Mr. Spinar then provided an update on the Lake George Middle Project, which extends west to the BP land bridge. Construction on the project began in March 2022 and is expected to continue through 2023. The project consists of placement of an engineered 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. The contractor is nearing completion of the West Tank Farm bank stabilization work. It has completed placement of the active mats and is currently regrading the banks. The contractor has also started placing the sand stabilization layer in the canal.

In addition, Mr. Spinar reminded members that ARCO/BP completed pipeline decommissioning efforts at the West Tank Farm property last summer and has completed repairs to the tide gate structure at the land bridge on its property as part of the project. Vegetation work is planned for this spring.

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

Mr. Spinar provided an update on the Lake George Branch West project area, which extends from the BP land bridge to Calumet Avenue in Hammond. The Great Lakes Legacy Act Project Agreement between BP Products North America, Inc. and U.S. EPA is for Feasibility Study, Remedial Design, and invasive species control and includes sampling of the Lake George West project area. BP is still validating sampling data collected in October 2021, with the goal of completing feasibility study work by the end of this year. Project implementation is currently projected to begin in 2024.

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

Mr. Spinar provided an update on the Grand Calumet River Junction Reaches Project. The Junction Reaches project is divided into three sections: the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal south of Columbus Drive (otherwise known as Junction North), the West Branch of the Grand Calumet River between Indianapolis Boulevard and the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal (known as Junction West), and the East Branch of the Grand Calumet River between the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal and Kennedy Avenue (known as Junction East).

In response to input from project stakeholders, the East Chicago Waterway Management District and U.S. EPA are adopting a phased approach to the project. Phase 1, which will consist of dredging and capping the Junction West area and dredging portions of the Junction North, will likely be constructed in 2023. Phase 2, which will likely consist of capping the Junction North and Junction East areas, is currently planned for construction in 2024. In addition, the project team is evaluating the feasibility of incorporating habitat restoration activities on adjacent wetlands.

The East Chicago Waterway Management District's contractor, TetraTech, is working to develop the final design, based on stakeholder input. The District submitted a Great Lakes Legacy Act project proposal on March 9 and U.S. EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office subsequently convened a Technical Review Committee Meeting on April 1 to review the project. The ECWMD received comments from the review



committee on April 27 and is working to respond to them. Once any issues are addressed to GLNPO's satisfaction, the District will evaluate whether to sign a project agreement with EPA for implementation of the project. Ms. Treviño added that the ECWMD is reviewing a draft PA from EPA and has a goal of having a final signed PA in place by August.

**d. East Branch Phase II**

Mr. Spinar updated CARE members on the East Branch Phase II project, which includes the dredging and capping of the East Branch of the Grand Calumet River in the vicinity of the Gary Airport, as well as closure of the Ralston Street Lagoon.

EPA staff continue to work with the Gary Sanitary District to identify potential nonfederal Great Lakes Legacy Act cost share required to complete the project. Design is currently scheduled to begin in the fall of this year.

In response to a question from Susan MiHalo, Michael characterized the progress on the cost share identification as promising but that a final determination would be incumbent on U.S. EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**e. Orphan Areas Site Characterization**

Mr. Spinar reminded the group that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is conducting this 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. The study area is roughly bounded by Canal Steet to the south and Dickey Road to the north. These areas have not been well studied, nor have sediment remediation activities occurred. The site characterization seeks to evaluate the risk of recontamination these so-called "Orphan Areas" might pose to the federal channel.

Mr. Spinar stated that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed a draft scope of work and sampling plan for the site characterization in late March and is currently responding to feedback from the project team. A revised scope of work is expected in early June.

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

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

Carl Wodrich provided an update on the Dune and Swale Phase II Project. He stated that IDNR, TNC, and Lake County Parks have been staffing up to begin the growing season. Ms. MiHalo added that TNC has hired four seasonal employees and is conducting joint training with IDNR and Lake County Parks. Next month, the crew members will receive training on early detection species.



Mr. Wodrich then reported that IDNR will be working to execute a contract for monitoring of the various properties included in the Dune and Swale Phase II project later this summer. IDNR currently believes that this summer's monitoring will be conducted in house, with monitoring in 2023 and 2024 conducted largely by the contractor.

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

Will Tucker stated that there were no updates to this item, as the spring burn season has ended. Upon a question from Mr. Spinar, Mr. Tucker shared that the project ends December 31, 2022.

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

Mr. Wodrich updated CARE members that IDNR was developing a supplemental workplan for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Pine Station Ponds project and is working to develop a contract for the early Phase 1 invasives control around the ponds.

**4. Eutrophication BUI Update**

Mr. Spinar reported that USGS plans to conduct additional monitoring in 2022 to assist in developing a path forward for addressing the *Eutrophication and Undesirable Algae* BUI. Specifically, this will consist of the collection of continuous water-quality data at six sites, regular visual inspections of site conditions, collection and analysis of monthly and storm event water quality samples for various nutrient-related parameters, and analysis work. Mr. Spinar reported that he believes USGS was identifying field staff up and installing monitoring equipment and that monitoring should be online sometime in June.

**5. Table Talk**

No items were raised by CARE Members during Table Talk.

**6. Public Comment**

Ms. Carolyn Marsh raised concerns that Canada geese being hit while crossing Calumet Avenue in Hammond might lead to scavenging bald eagles being killed as well. She also requested information on air monitoring in the vicinity of Cleveland Cliffs, following a recent explosion. Mr. Spinar directed Ms. Marsh to the IDEM Complaints Coordinator for information not found on the IDEM website.

**7. Meeting Adjournment**

John Fekete adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:38 am.



**Next Workgroup Meeting:** Thursday, June 23, 2022 at 9 AM Central Time Via Microsoft Teams