

IDNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program

Coastal Advisory Board Meeting

Wednesday May 22, 2013 – 10:00 AM CT

Crown Point Library
122 North Main Street
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

Draft Minutes

Welcome and Introductions – request everyone sign the attendance sheet

Attendees:

Voting Board Members: Christopher Meyers (Crown Point Building and Zoning Admin), Geof Benson (Beverly Shores Town Council), Anthony Copeland (Mayor, East Chicago), Dan Plath (NISOURCE), Craig Phillips (City of Michigan City), Ray Joseph (Porter County Parks), Bob Daum (NPS), Tiffany Tolbert (Indiana Landmarks), Leslie Dorworth (ILIN SG)

Non-Voting Members: Ashley Snyder (Lamp/RAP Coordinator), Kathy Luther (NIRPC), Elizabeth McCloskey (USFWS), Young Choi (Purdue Calumet),

LMCP Staff: Mike Molnar, Maggie Byrne, Breana Sowers, Dorreen Carey, Sergio Mendoza, Derek Nimetz

Public Concern: Gayle MacBride (NWIPA), Mike Ryan (NWI Steelheaders), Carl Wodrich (DNR NRDA), Brenda Brueckheimer (Town of Porter), Gina Darnell (NWIPA),

Board Members Not Present: Frank Seilheimer (City of Michigan City), Christine Livingston (Porter County Convention Recreation Visitor Council), Nicole Barker (Save the Dunes), Kristopher Krouse (Shirley Heinze Land Trust), Bill Moran (USDA NRCS), Joel Schmidt (US Army Corps)

Chair McCloskey Convened the meeting at 10:05 AM CDT

- **Old Business** – Mike Molnar: Awaiting the appointment of 1 more board member. Announcement of new agency director – Cameron Clark. State side bump in funding, Federal side decrease, next advisory board meeting is the Public Input meeting for Coastal Grant priorities for 2014, discussion of shipwreck project in august
Approval of Minutes – December 2012, February 2013 and April 2013
Moved and Seconded. Minutes approved.
- **New Business** - Officer Elections – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary. Onsite nomination process. Nominations: Liz McCloskey – Chair, Tiffany Tolbert – Vice Chair, Chris Meyers – Secretary.

Committee Reports

***Outreach** – Posters for CAM revealed and website is up to date.

***Grants** – *Main Discussion for voting*: Grant Funding wording to reference Trail Construction.

Grant Committee Recommendation -

Trail Construction Funding Policy. It is the current policy to not fund construction of paved trails. There was some discussion on whether or not construction of unpaved trails could or should be funded. It was decided that construction of land-based trails, paved or unpaved, will not be funded. However, trail signage is eligible to be funded. **It was also decided that log jam clearing for water trails is more of a maintenance issue on an already existing trail, rather than a creation or construction of a new trail.** Therefore, log jam clearing will not be eligible for funding for potential water trail projects, but signage would still be eligible for funding. Planning, design, and engineering of trails, will continue to be eligible for LMCP Grant funding. Highlighted Sentence will be removed by agreement of the committee.

Molnar started discussion by highlighting fundable / non-fundable projects per NOAA guidance

- Log Jam Removal by itself is not a fundable activity
- Stream restoration that includes tree removal is fundable under Section 306A
- Section 306A funding requires:
 - o Public Sponsor / Grant Applicant
 - o 20 Year maintenance requirement
 - o Long term restoration plan for project site

Discussion among Board members:

Clarification of Grant Committee intent: LMCP does not intend to change the *policy*, yet would like to be proactive in clarifying the policy, and insert specific language into the grant guidance to make clear exactly what NOAA will fund and not fund. The changes will hopefully aid grant applicants by saving time and confusion during pre-proposal and full proposal submission.

Restoration Projects: Reminder that 20 year maintenance agreement is required for all 306A projects and this is stated, and has always been stated in the existing Grant Agreements as well as the Grants Manual. LMCP does not sponsor the maintenance projects.

Issues:

Dan Plath: How can we use funding in circumstances where log jam removal is absolutely necessary to restore/open waterways; i.e. extreme weather. Plath includes suggestions from himself and community members. He also discusses the methods of woody debris removal and habitat restoration.

Tiffany Tolbert: She reiterates that you can certainly perform log jam removal for your project, but it will need to be funded as a separate project, and CANNOT be included as match as a part of an LMCP grant funded project. Or, the project may be re-designed as a stream restoration project, to stay within NOAA guidelines. Additionally, such projects funded by LMCP would be considered to be “low-cost construction category” 306A projects. Non-profit organizations would NOT be eligible to receive LMCP funding under this category..

Geof Benson: He emphasizes what projects are eligible through LMCP and NOAA and relays if projects don't meet these standards then arguments trying to change these policies are moot.

After this discussion, everyone seems to have a better understanding of the log jam issue, and agrees that that part of the policy be rewritten to be clearer, so that it reflects that log jam modification as part of a stream restoration project is an allowable LMCP grant project.

Bob Daum, et al. questions the ineligibility of constructing unpaved trails, for example, dirt trails through natural areas. .

Geof Benson: Reiterates that all projects funded by NOAA must be ADA compliant, and these trail construction projects are out of the price range of LMCP funding.

Consensus that all trail construction should be ineligible for LMCP grant funding.

Questions from the Public

Gina Darnell – please clarify if log jam *modification* would not be funded. Log jam removal is loosely used. Removal and modification are different things. Would maintenance agreement refer to segments? EAB trees falling into rivers?

Brenda: a lot of positive changes on Calumet, anything we can do to help LMCP to keep rivers clean.

- Voting: Moved by Geof Benson “I move that we advance the grant committee’s verbage with the amendments mentioned by Tiffany, Second by Christopher Meyers.
- Additional comment: Tolbert asks, should we also add “log jam modification as part of a larger restoration project can be funded” or would it add confusion? Board chooses to leave this sentence out.

Discussion of how to properly structure and run the meetings so that it is clear when Public comments should be made, and when Coastal Advisory Board members should be making their comments, and at what point in the meeting the voting on policy should occur.

There are Coastal Awareness Month events scheduled from each area. Posters are available for CAB members to distribute.

Announcements:

Next CAB Meeting – June 19, 2013 – Porter County – NIRPC - 6:30 PM

Topics:

- Coastal Grant Public Input Process
 - Committee Reports
 - Other
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- Additional Comments: CAM events
 - Adjournment – Meeting Adjourned at **11:09 AM CDT**

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING POLICY

Construction of trails will not be funded by the LMCP Grants Program.

- LMCP pass-through grant funds cannot be used to fund construction of **paved trails**. This type of construction is much too expensive for LMCP grant funds to make any significant positive difference in funding these types of projects. Paving trails also has the potential to negatively impact water quality, which would be at odds with the purpose of the Lake Michigan Coastal Program.
- LMCP pass-through grant funds cannot be used to fund **any other land-based trails, paved or un-paved**. NOAA requires that all construction funded by the LMCP be ADA compliant. This is, again, too expensive for LMCP funds to make any significant positive difference in the funding of these types of projects.
- **Log jam removal** is not an allowable activity per NOAA guidelines, so log jam removal cannot be funded. Therefore, log jam removal, for the purpose of creating a water trail, cannot be funded. Log jam modification, as part of a scientific method of stream restoration, can be an allowable project, but is not water trail creation.
- Planning, design, and engineering of trails are eligible for LMCP grant funding.
- Creation and installation of signage for trails is eligible for LMCP grant funding.