

February 2009



Photo credit: Mike Molnar

Shorelines

A Publication of the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program

Lake Michigan Coastal Program Update

By Mike Molnar, IDNR LMCP

Well it has been another busy couple of months for the Lake Michigan Coastal Program, new staff, new projects, and new opportunities. Back in 2006 our Federal Program Review recommended we evaluate our existing staff capacity and consider expanding our roster of talented staff. During the past six years our program focused on getting as much funding out the door as possible. During the past few years we received an increase in the number of Coastal Grant requests for planning assistance coinciding with the development of the Marquette Plan. We lack the resources to fund all these individual projects, but can develop a local technical assistance program that meets the need. Thus, in December 2008 the LMCP welcomed Sergio Mendoza on board as our first ever Coastal Resource Planner. The Coastal Grants program once again set a new record for number of applications and funding requests. This is a reflection of the need for funding to put projects on the ground, and the staff support provided in developing great project applications. In 2005-2006 the LMCP developed the Section 309 Assessment and Implementation Strategy. This document identified a number of ways that the Coastal Program could be strengthened while at the same time provide technical resources to state and local partners. The first project completed from this strategy was the Public Access Facilities Inventory update completed in October 2008. Phase 2 of this project is currently to bid and will involve a public needs assessment of access to coastal resources.

The LMCP is currently drafting the scope of work for a much needed Underwater Archaeological Management Plan. Events over the past few years reveal a need for more comprehensive planning and outreach associated with our underwater history. This plan will include resource assessment, protection, and possible tourism benefits.

We recognize one of the main things that makes all of this possible is our Federal budget. As of this time our Federal partners at NOAA are operating on a continuing resolution – last years budget numbers extended thru March of this year. As such, we do not know what our Federal funding level for 2009 is as of this time. Our funding level will not impact the level of service that the LMCP is known for, it may however, require us to more closely review some of our outreach activities and pass through awards.

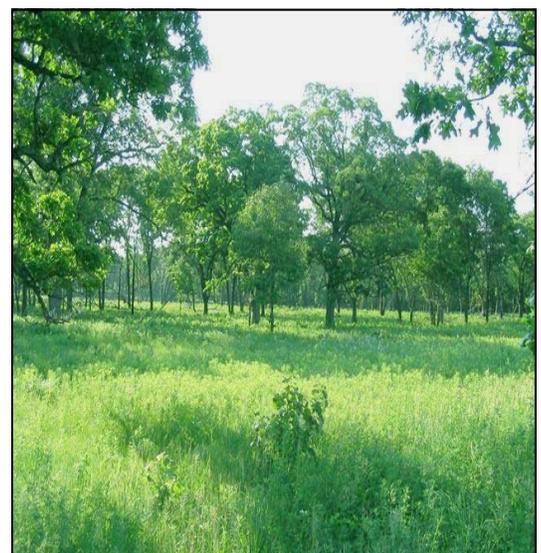
We will keep you informed of any project updates or opportunities as they arise.

Dunes Prairie Nature Preserve Dedication

By Ben Eddy, IDNR Division of Nature Preserves, Protection Director

In November, the Indiana Natural Resources Commission approved the dedication of the Dunes Prairie Nature Preserve: 58 acres of the globally-significant black oak (*Quercus velutina*) savannah habitat contained within the boundaries of the Indiana Dunes State Park.

In pre-settlement times, this part of the state experienced frequent wildfires, so much so that plants indigenous to the area such as the Goat's Rue (*Tephrosia virginia*) and the towering black oak are "fire adapted"-- meaning these plants require fire to thrive. Native Americans in the area, understanding the relationship between fire and regeneration, conducted burns to promote productivity among the plants on which they depended. However, decades of fire suppression left the black oak savannah habitat overrun by invasive and non-native plants. To remedy this decline, the DNR Division of Nature Preserves has implemented a course of regular prescribed burns and the removal of invasive species. Restoration efforts have proved the area to be amazingly resilient; populations of native wildflowers and grasses have surged. This Preserve now contains a healthy example of a rapidly disappearing ecosystem.



Dunes Prairie Nature Preserve is open to the public and accessible via County Rd 25 E. The Preserve is approximately 1/2 mile south of the parking area on the west side of the road and can be experienced by hiking trail 3.

Restoration of West Branch Grand Calumet River Moves Forward:

By Jim Smith, Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Indiana Natural Resource Trustees (Indiana Department Environmental Management, Indiana Department Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bloomington Field Office) and U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office Move Forward with Sediment Remediation of West Branch Grand Calumet River.

On October 21, 2008, Governor Mitch Daniels, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Indiana Departments of Environmental Management (IDEM) and Natural Resources (IDNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Hammond announced a joint \$33.1 million effort to continue restoration of the Grand Calumet River area. The dredging project will remove contaminated sediment in a 1.1-mile segment of the west branch of the river. State, local and federal agencies are collaborating to remediate the contaminated sediment that has long been in the river. This clean up will improve the health of the aquatic ecosystem leading to increased use of the Grand Calumet River and quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Project funding resulted from application submitted to Great Lakes National Program Office by IDEM and Hammond Sanitary District in April 2006.

The plan calls for the clean-up of 91,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from a 1.1 mile stretch of the river between Columbia and Hohman Avenues in Hammond by Great Lakes National Program Office (Figure 1). Work will be coordinated with a combined sewer overflow removal by the Hammond Sanitary District that will also result in removal of approximately 20,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment being removed from the river. The Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA) will provide \$21.5 million, with the remaining \$11.6 million coming from a fund managed by the Indiana Natural Resource Trustees. The non-federal sponsors to this agreement are state trustees, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, who are authorized to use non-federal restoration funds from the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program to restore natural resources injured by environmental contaminants.



Figure 1. WBGCR project area.

In May, 2008, IDEM and IDNR submitted a joint proposal to GLNPO for a second WBGCR contaminated sediment remediation project on the west branch Grand Calumet River. The proposed project would be a continuation of the river's restoration, covering the area between Columbia Avenue and Indianapolis Boulevard (see Figure 2). This project plans to remove approximately 143,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the river and 123,000 yards from adjacent wetlands; approximately 25 acres of riverine wetlands will be restored. The Trustees are currently negotiating a project agreement for the design of this second GLLA project.

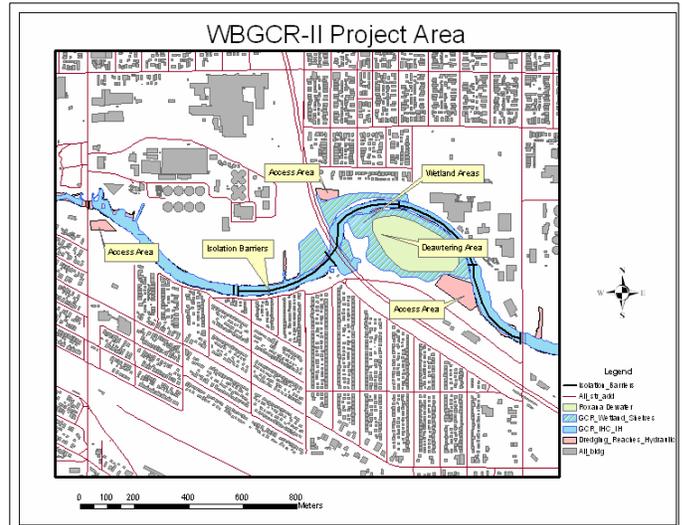


Figure 2. Roxana Marsh GLLA project area.

The Grand Calumet River is located in Lake County in northwestern Indiana, at the southern end of Lake Michigan. The area represents one of the most heavily industrialized areas in the United States and at the same time serves as a very important area for migrating birds in the spring and fall of each year. Wetlands associated with the Grand Calumet River provide resting, feeding and nesting areas for hundreds of bird species. Sediments of the WBGCR have serious detrimental effects on fish and wildlife resources, causing beneficial use impairments in the Grand Calumet River Area of Concern and resulting in ecological and human health concerns. Currently only very pollution tolerant aquatic invertebrates and fish can be found in the river. The fish are not safe for consumption by fish-eating wildlife species (e.g., herons, kingfishers and mink) or by humans. There is currently a group five (do not eat) fish consumption advisory in place for the Grand Calumet River.

The goal of the Grand Calumet dredging projects is to address the effects of sediment contamination in the West Branch of the Grand Calumet River, specifically for the restoration of natural resources that have been injured within the area of concern. Congress passed and the president signed the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002 to address the problem of contaminated sediment in American areas of concern on the Great Lakes.

More information about this and other Great Lakes Legacy Act projects is available at: <http://epa.gov/glla>.

For additional information or questions about the WBGCR remediation projects contact:

Dr. Jim Smith at 317-232-3451 (jsmith@idem.in.gov) or Carl Wodrich at 317-232-1291 (cwodrich@dnr.in.gov).

2009 Grants Update:

By Jenny Orsburn, IDNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program, Program Specialist

The Coastal Grants Program received 22 applications requesting \$983,748.00 in federal matching funds for the 2009 funding cycle. The Department of Natural Resources will forward 16 proposals on to NOAA for Federal Review and approval. The total request for funding is \$635,232.00, with an equal local match commitment, for a total investment of \$1,270,464.00 in the Lake Michigan coastal area. Due to the limited funding and increased competition for these funds, the Coastal Program has conditionally approved four proposals resulting in a reduction in funding request and approved an additional two projects for funding with de-obligated funds from previous grant cycles.

Recommended for funding are six habitat restoration projects, two public access improvements, four education and outreach projects, one planning and two land acquisition projects.

Purdue University

Concurrent fine-scale mapping of nearshore water quality and larval fish dynamics:
Insights to potential climate change impacts on fish recruitment \$99,127

Town of Dune Acres

Dune Acres Cowles Bog Restoration \$15,000

Lake County Parks and Recreation Department

Gibson Woods State Dedicated Nature Preserve:
Restoration & Invasive Species Removal \$20,000

Save the Dunes Conservation Fund

Natural Resource Management Training \$67,500

LaPorte County Board of Commissioners

LaPorte County Regulatory Update \$82,640

Department of Natural Resources – Division of Nature Preserves

Bur Oak Savanna Protection \$150,000

Prairie and Marsh Restoration, Norco Tract, Hoosier Prairie \$30,000

Pine Station South Savanna Restoration \$20,000

Calumet Prairie Typha Control \$13,500

Department of Natural Resources – Division of State Parks

Indiana Dunes State Park Biodiversity Restoration \$7,715

Four projects will receive conditional approval:

Scherwood Park Environmental Enhancement Plan – Schererville Parks and Recreation

Original Request: \$54,500 **Conditional Award:** \$30,000

Porter County Ecology Trail – Porter County Convention Recreation Visitor Commission

Original Request: \$100,000 **Conditional Award:** \$75,000

What's In My Backyard – Raising Awareness of Northwest Indiana Parks – Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center

Original Request: \$25,554 **Conditional Award:** \$12,750

Introductory Geographic Information Systems Education in the NW Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Region – Indiana University Northwest

Original Request: \$24,000 **Conditional Award:** \$12,000

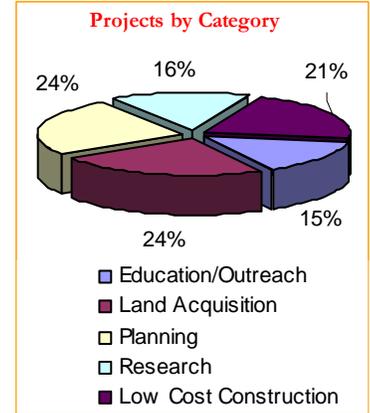
Two projects were approved for de-obligated funds:

Lake County Parks and Recreation

Appleton Acquisition at Oak Ridge County Park \$30,000

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

Native Landscaping Demonstration Project \$12,500



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Moving Marquette Forward: A Vision for Lakeshore Reinvestment

By Mike Molnar, DNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program, Program Manager

Have you ever wondered: How do we get everyone together for this plan?...People love a large shared vision – this fits with a statement made by the creator of The Plan of Chicago, Daniel H. Burnham in 1910: *Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir people's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that your children and grandchildren are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.*

In late 2003 and again in 2005 the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program provided funding for the development of the *Marquette Plan*. The idea behind this funding was to create a "Regional" Plan for the Indiana shoreline. The plan had three main principles: 1) Continuous multipurpose trail along the shoreline from Illinois border to Michigan (45 miles), 2) Increase Public Access to shoreline to 75%, and 3) Require a minimum 200 foot set back for any new non-water dependent development.

Since the completion of Marquette II the LMCP has been working with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) and Regional Development Authority (RDA) on a framework to ensure the continued implementation of the Marquette Plan. Over the past several months the RDA convened a working group of multiple stakeholders for input on this process. Each of

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Birding in the Region

By Brad Bumgardner, IDNR Indiana Dunes State Park Naturalist

Northwest Indiana is blessed with many natural and cultural resources. The dunes hold some of the greatest biodiversity found in the entire Midwest, and arguably the entire country, while footprints remain from a rich early settler's history. From these early years, one constant has remained; the amazing bird diversity that lives and migrates through the Calumet region. This diversity continues today to make Northwest Indiana and the Indiana Dunes the birding capital of Indiana.

In Ken Brocks *Birds of the Indiana Dunes*, Brock mentions that, "without a doubt the presence of Lake Michigan affects the movement and distribution of birdlife in the Dunes more than any other single factor. The shores of this enormous lake provide leading lines that control flight paths of migrants, and the vast open waters draw legions of transitory and winter birds." And what a birding location we have! Whether it's the funneling of migrating waterfowl, the back dunes full of spring songbirds, or the special rarities drawn to the lakeshore, there is literally something for every type of birder, beginner or advanced.

Many casual birders enjoy a trip to the Dunes for its convenient location. The Indiana Dunes are just a stones throw from Chicago and an easy day trip from many other Midwestern cities. By far the best time of year for birding is the spring and fall. During these times, it is easy to run into other birders enjoying the many trails in the dunes, searching for warblers, vireos, and flycatchers. Many birders take advantage of the great birding. Fewer, however, take advantage of the birding opportunities that exist year round. When the north winds are blowing and the dunes are covered in snow, rare birds lurk at local feeders, snow covered pine stands, and on desolate beaches.

Any birder, whether casual feeder watcher or diehard, can keep up to date on recent bird sightings and take advantage of the local birding community by subscribing to IN-BIRD. IN-BIRD is a state wide Indiana birding list-serv. Those subscribed this winter have enjoyed great sightings of rare birds along the lakeshore, such as Harlequin Ducks, Snowy Owls, Spotted Towhees, Varied Thrushes, and White-winged Crossbills.

You say it's still too cold to bird outside? It may be unbelievable to think that the spring migration is only weeks away! March 1st marks the official start of the spring hawk migration in Northwest Indiana. Those first warming days with south winds bring the first hawks north, soaring on the thermals for the breeding ground. Find a high perch in the afternoon, and it's not unusual to see dozens, if not hundreds of hawks moving north, banking left or right as they approach the lake. Without the warmer thermals, hawks avoid the lake, and literally pile up on the lakeshore. The existence of spring hawk flights was first documented in the 1950s by Raymond Grow and Virginia Reuter-Skiold, who recorded flight information near Baileytown. Since then, hawk counts of over 800 birds have been logged on single days in the last decade. A real sight for raptor enthusiasts!

Whatever your birding desire, take advantage of the great bird watching opportunities in Northwest Indiana. Bird walks and field trips are offered by many organizations in the region. Indiana Dunes State Park offers hikes every month, and special field trips are offered by the Northwest Indiana Migratory Bird Association.

Happy birding on the trail!

To Learn More:

IN-Bird List Serv:

Indiana Dunes State Park Birding Programs:

Northwest Indiana Migratory Bird Association:

<http://tinyurl.com/inbird>

www.interpretiveservices.in.gov

<http://nimbabirds.googlepages.com>



Photo by John Cassady

Varied Thrush

(Continued from page 3 - Moving Marquette)

the three main entities have an interest in promoting the plan and each has a unique suite of skills to contribute to the cause – RDA has the funding for large scale project implementation (Lake and Porter Counties), NIRPC the staff to update the plan and incorporate the concepts into the larger Comprehensive Regional Plan 2040, and the LMCP has financial and technical assistance capacity to assist local communities.

Since the Completion of Phase II the Indiana LMCP has undertaken two steps to Move Marquette Forward:

- 1) Provide grant funding to local communities to further develop components of the plan – development of sub-area plans, and updating comprehensive plans and overlay districts to reflect Marquette/Smart growth principles
- 2) Hired full time Coastal Resource Planner position. Position oversees the Local Technical Assistance Program. Free planning assistance to local communities to support Marquette implementation.

The LMCP is proud to be a part of this larger initiative and will continue to provide support to help Move Marquette Forward. Stay tuned for future updates.

Calendar of Events

Regional Development Authority

February 26, 2009 - 6:30PM - Porter County Administration Center, Valparaiso
Overview of the NW Indiana RDA and shoreline development - RSVP to
Ms. Jillian Huber by 2/20 - (219) 644-3500 or jahuber@rda.in.gov

Regional Development Authority Board Meetings: www.rda.in.gov

March 17, 2009 - 10AM - Location TBA
April 28, 2009 - 10AM - Portage Lakefront Park, Park Pavilion
May 19, 2009 - 10AM - City of Hammond, TBA

National Parks Second Century Commission Public input forum

March 4, 2009 - 2:30PM-5:30PM - Chicago Cultural Center
www.VisionForTheParks.org

Calumet Issue of Chicago Wilderness Special Reception

March 16, 2009 - 5:30PM-7:30PM - Hammond Marina
RSVP is limited to 2 people/ organization. Event is sponsored by the Gaylord and
Dorothy Donnelley Foundation - (312) 977-2700 - Liz McCorry

Calumet Stewardship Initiative

April 7, 2009 - 10AM-12PM - Hegewisch Library, 3048 E. 130th Street, Chicago, IL
Presentation of the Challenges & the Future of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore -
Sponsored by Chicago Dept. of Environment & the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore -
RSVP: John Attere (312) 744-9136 or jerry.attere@CityOfChicago.org

LMCP Coastal Advisory Board

March 25, 2009 - Board member nominations due
April 15, 2009 - 6:15PM- 8:15PM CST - Meeting - Lake County location TBA
June 15, 2009 - 6:15PM-8:15PM CST - Meeting - Porter County location TBA

The purpose of the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program is to enhance the State's role in planning for and managing natural and cultural resources in the coastal region and to support partnerships between federal, state and local agencies and organizations.

*Additional Information Regarding the Lake Michigan Coastal Program and Upcoming Events can be found at:
www.in.gov/dnr/lakemich*