

**IDNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program**  
**Coastal Advisory Board Meeting – Public Input Meeting**  
**July 18, 2007 6:15 PM**  
**Draft Minutes**

Dorreen Carey, CAB Chair, opened meeting and welcomed all who attended.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members:** Bill Moran, Mayor Chuck Oberlie, Bruce Woods, Becky Fox, Dorreen Carey, Hala Kuss, Dave Pilz, Frank Seilheimer, Liz McCloskey, Henry Bliss, Bob Daum, Laurie Eberhardt, Paul Labus, Gene Matzat, Gerry Hodges, Jeff Jones, Kay Nelson, Charlotte Read, Spike Peller

**Interested Parties:** Lee Botts, Lawrence Turnquist, Casey Sullivan, Steve West, Carol Cook, Daniel Goldfarb, Derek Nimetz, Dan Plath, Michael Kuss, Lynne Kasee, Steve Davis, John Ervin, Brandt Baughman

**Lake Michigan Coastal Staff present:** Mike Molnar (LMCP Program Director), Jenny Orsburn (LMCP Program Specialist), Joe Exl (LMCP Coastal Nonpoint Coordinator), Susan Melnyk (Special Projects Coordinator), Jenni Newman (Program Assistant)

**OVERVIEW OF PROCESS**

Mike Molnar provided overview. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year for the process of having a public input forum. After meeting this evening, the Coastal Program will sit with the grant committee within the next week or so. At that time, the Advisory Board will go through and vote on the priorities that come out of tonight's meeting for the 2008 grant funding cycle. When the Board opens up for requests for proposals, the proposal will get extra weight if they it meets the priorities set by the Advisory Board. There is a 40 point system and a grant will earn 15 points if one of the priority comments is met. This was done to ensure that each year the grant program is meeting the public needs.

The Board received 5 comment sheets from the public. Each speaker will get 3 minutes for comments.

**FUNDABLE PROGRAMS**

Jenny Orsburn provided overview. The Coastal Program funds 4 (four) main categories of grants. They are A) low-cost construction (restoration, trail enhancements, etc.), B) acquisitions, C) planning/ coordination, and D) education and outreach. What are not funded are infrastructure-type projects (roads, restrooms, parking lots) and permit based activities, and clean-ups.

**PRIORITIES FROM LAST YEAR**

Jenny Orsburn provided overview. Last year the priorities were set to be natural area restoration, natural area preservation, natural area management, and natural resource outreach and awareness.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Lawrence Turnquist – here tonight to represent the horse people and would like to suggest multi-use trails as “horse people” do spend a lot of money.

Carol Cook – Carol is the Plan/ Stewardship Coordinator for the Save the Dunes Conservation Fund and would like to state that she feels the priorities should be (in this order):

- 1) Land acquisition
- 2) Natural areas management with education and outreach programs
- 3) Restoration projects

These are all the guidelines from last year’s grant cycle, but particular fields should be reinforced.

Lee Botts – Urging the Board to seek opportunities to provide more information to increase the general population’s understanding of the nature of the shorelines, factors that will effect the shoreline, public policy issues that local governments are dealing with as far as the Marquette Plan and so on. Recently Lee had an experience in Gary in relation to the conflict over public access to the beach and the lack of understanding of private property owner rights vs. the general public’s rights. A public meeting was held and an expert spoke of the public property processes. The park department has intention to now develop a new shorelines management plan. The audience of that particular meeting consisted of different people than those who always attend the meetings. There is a need to reach those people for goals of protecting the shoreline, etc. Lee does not feel that Coast Week is reaching the general public; it’s the same people in attendance year after year.

Derek Nimetz – Derek is with IDNR. He wants to reiterate what Carol Cook said about the top priority being natural area acquisition for preservation and natural area restoration.

Dan Plath – Dan is new to IDEM. He feels that one area that needs to be focused on is the alien based species and spread of the VHS virus. There is a need to educate boaters to avoid further spreading. This disease is a viral fish disease and has made its way into Lake Michigan. It is known to have infected 31 fish types and a lot is still unknown about the disease. They do know that it came from Europe, moved through the Atlantic, and now has mutated to become the 4<sup>th</sup> version of the disease.

Robert Bokland – Robert passed out visuals to the Board. He is a representative for the DNR Forest Legacy Committee and came tonight to pursue the Coastal Program as an avenue since there has been a drop in funding with the forest legacy. He wants to preserve land and wetlands (indicated on maps as handed out) as there are 2 forest legacies in the Northwest. North of the toll road, located in the Coastal Zone is a critical area to the Trail Creek Watershed. He is advocating funding to purchase the forest land, including Moraine Forests, from land trusts and parks departments for management of the land for conservation easements, universities programs, etc. Currently, there are trails that traverse the Moraine Forest, but none that run the entire length of it. It is possible to create trail-ways along the roads.

John Ervin – John would like for invasive species to become a high priority for this coming year’s grants. He would like to launch a public awareness campaign by obtaining funding to produce a video for public television. The invasive species are threatening natural areas now, but will threaten food sources and people’s livelihoods in the future. John wants to generate partners to become a part of this form of public outreach as it has not been done before. He proposes that the video be 1 hour long, aired on the local television station (or PBS) and regard water and land based invasive species.

Al Walus (statement read by Dorreen Carey) – Citizens are becoming more concerned with improved water quality. However, the key-factor in long-term improvements is the overall interaction of many local projects and interaction with each other. Hydromodification and proposed stream enhancements should be considered for the entire stream of Trail Creek from headwaters to Lake Michigan. Aquatic habitat needs to be considered to expand local capacity and knowledge to achieve an integrated stream bank protection guidelines based on basic hydromodification guidelines. There needs to be specific tools and baseline data available. Al suggests the production of a comprehensive, integrated plan for stream bank protection guidelines.

City of Gary Planning Council (points from the discussion from their meeting stated by Dorreen Carey) – In their meeting the priorities that they proposed are access to natural areas, increased access to natural areas, and recreational opportunities for urban populations. Also integrating shorelines and comprehensive shoreline planning and management from the prospective of Gary, but apply consistently along the entire shoreline so local beach managers can have access to information to help them understand the dynamics of the changing shoreline. Public outreach and awareness on coastal issues are also a priority for the Council.

### **DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD MEMBERS**

- Thank you to the public for joining the meeting.
- Though acquisitions have been good, protecting significant areas in NW Indiana needs to continue to be a priority.
- Invasive species needs to be prioritized.
- There is a program that exists called the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). It has opened up to the invasive species. Even private land owners are becoming concerned. This could be another funding opportunity.
  
- The Forest Legacy Program is federally funded with no match. Can the LMCP assist with forest legacy?
- Per Mike Molnar – For the LMCP to assist with forest legacy, this would have to be a public benefit/ interest component.
- Per Jenny Orsburn – the maps provided by Robert Boklund regarding forest legacy are a great first step as they show a comprehensive area of ambiguous forest. This can show people how much forest is still left in Northwest Indiana.
- Per Charlotte Read - A potential partner could be the DNR to possibly look at initiating a State Forest as part of Northwest Indiana (this could be a goal).

- Activities this year should go towards the private sector as developers need educated with restoration and promotion of preservation. More private citizens and developers need education with invasive species as well.
- Need to work with local nurseries and stores to promote that they discontinue selling invasive species of plants (Meijer has done so).
- Concerning land trusts, does being available to the public allow for funding?
- Per Mike Molnar – it is a matter of public interest. At the federal level, this is the concern that is being addressed. But at the current time, just to say that it is open to the public is not enough.
- Per Mayor Oberlie – general education on protection of the coastal resources/ environment that are incorporated with protection of the land. Create a rewards program that rewards acquisitions that fit into a system based on a points system.
- Talk of educating the stores and connectivity. Rewarding those who put plans together.
- Need to look at non-traditional outreach.
- Discussion of Land Trust and tax incentives for 2007 for land donations. More information can be found at the Save the Dunes website. In agreement that it would be good for the public to be made aware of the incentives for land donations.
- On behalf of IDEM, they would like to see priority go to preservation of wetlands, prevention of invasive species, and education & outreach.
- Suggestion of a “See it, Smell it, Touch it” program as an environmental 2 week program in which there is actually a match change. Also, some programs just need funding to get started, thereafter funding is less crucial. If the percentage changes annually, then funding might get used more (change the program set-up as priority match).
- 12% of the budget was lost in 2007. The 2008 budget cannot be predicted until February of 2008 though the program is a 1:1 match.
- LMCP is not strictly a cash match program. Other types of match are volunteer time, staff time, land donation, and cash.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Grant Process and Timeline** - Jenny Orsburn provided overviews.

July 27, 2007 is the vote date for priorities. Emails should be sent to Jenny Orsburn regarding the CAB priorities. Requests for pre-proposals (RFP) are open from August to September 10, 2007. There will be a special meeting in September to vote on the pre-proposals. Jenny O. is available to assist with grant applications and scores that will be presented to the Technical Team.

All 2007 applications that were sent to NOAA were approved and all of the projects have begun. For 2007, there were 17 projects totaling over \$700,000.

Vote – A small grant application for Porter County was emailed to the Members of the Board. The addition to the grant is that Porter County has agreed to incorporate the Program’s Ecosystem Poster into their plan. Since the Members of the Board are gathered, a vote was taken and a conclusive “aye” vote was established.

**Program Updates** - Mike Molnar provided updates.

Staffing - Jenni Newman has been added to the Lake Michigan Coastal Program staff as the Program Assistant.

Envisioning Workshop – This was a session aimed at gathering input from states and coastal territories to assist NOAA as they go through the reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The CZMA is what gives the Program standing at a federal level. The Coastal Program’s session was at the state level. NOAA is looking at having the legislation prepared this fall and hopefully will introduce the reauthorization of what we do next year (for example, education and outreach needing more focus).

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Coast Week – Mike Molnar provided update. This is the largest event planned by the Coastal Program thus far. The focus of this year’s Coast Week is public access. The event will take place September 8-16, 2007. The 2 big events sponsored by the Coastal Program are Joe Exl’s Coastal Community Development Workshop, which will be offered in 2 (two) sessions. The other event will take place on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in Michigan City. The Denis Sullivan, a 137 foot schooner (a flagship) will be available for free public cruises. 1 (one) cruise will be set aside for RSVP’d dignitaries. There are 50 available slots per cruise and there will be 8-9 cruises available. Sign-ups for the cruises will be at Michigan City at a place not yet determined. Also, there are no additional meetings arranged at this time regarding Coast Week. If one is to be arranged, it will probably be aimed at public relations.

Next CAB Meeting – Mike Molnar provided update. The next CAB meeting is set for September 19, 2007 in Lake County. The meeting will take place at Marquette Park. The meeting will consist of pre-proposals and presentations of Board Member issues.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Wetlands Project – Grantee pulled out of the project, but the money is still there. The study was to be a 2 year study - [inaudible]

309 Request – Per Mike Molnar, the request for the proposal is written up as Section 309 which is an assessment strategy created 1 ½ to 2 years ago. It is an assessment of public access facilities with the Coastal Program areas. The second stage of the proposal is to conduct a survey of the public and their needs for public access. The 3<sup>rd</sup> stage will be to develop a public access management plan. The stage 1 portion (request for the proposal) will be prepared and released.

Signs – Per Mike Molnar, the Coastal Program is still working with INDOT on locations for the “Welcome to the Coastal Zone” signs.

Dignitaries – Per Kay Nelson, she is attempting to get dignitaries to utilize Lake Michigan for their September meeting during Coast Week. She is also attempting to arrange the Northwest delegation to sail the Denis Sullivan together (bring the local and state legislation together).

Watershed meeting – Per Joe Exl, a watershed meeting is taking place at NIRPC on July 23, 2007 in regards to what challenges are coming in the future.

Commission meeting – On July 26, 2007 there is a full commission meeting at NIRPC. This is an open meeting.

**\* ADJOURNMENT \***