Call Participants: John Quail, John Dickert, Kay Nelson, Robert Wakeman and Sheyda Eshnaashari.
NIRPC Staff: Kathy Luther and Joe Exl.

Discussion Items:

June 11th In-Person Meeting:

NIRPC reported that the ACCRC relocated their June 12th meeting to Ann Arbor, Michigan, due to a lack of government rate hotel rooms in Chicago that week. Kathy Luther and other members on the Steering Committee reported challenging schedule conflicts that week as well. The Steering Committee decided to cancel the meeting and discussed rescheduling an in-person meeting. The Committee thought it might be beneficial to schedule the next meeting around the timing of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE's) Chief's Report regarding Brandon Road. Kathy indicated she would try to find out more information on the timing for that. Failing that, she could send a doodle poll to the full group or just the Steering Committee. *(At least one member of the general CAWS group has responded to the meeting cancellation with a request for an in-person meeting focusing on the work plan.)*

Steering Committee Call Schedule:

A doodle poll for scheduling an established recurring time slot for Steering Committee calls was sent to the Steering Committee. Based on the seven people who responded, the calls will take place on the third Tuesday of the month at 8:00 a.m. central time, beginning June 18, 2019. NIRPC will send out calendar invites for these calls to the group as soon as possible. NIRPC agreed that the meetings would be cancelled if there was no business to conduct.

Correspondence:

At the previous meeting, Kathy indicated she had only received feedback from Molly Flannagan and Bob Newport on the three draft letters agreed upon in December.   The Committee decided the letter to Governor Pritzker, requesting that Brandon Road local share for Preliminary Engineering and Design be included, was the most time-sensitive and agreed to address first. Kathy sent the letter to the Steering Committee again with a one week turn around time for feedback. Upon receiving the feedback, and working to merge the various edits, the Governor's office issued a press release indicating the state agreed to sponsor the PED (Pre-Construction Engineering and Design) phase of the project, while remaining concerned about the major cost increase in the latest project estimation. NIRPC inquired if the letter was still necessary. It remained unclear to all on the call as to what exactly Illinois' commitment was and whether it was monetary or in-kind.   The group decided that rather than try to agree on a joint letter, NIRPC would instead create a letter template for each member organization to consider. The content would include a Thank You to the Governor for moving the project forward by agreeing to sponsor the PED, and encouraging him to continue working with the ACOE and the other states to secure match funding for the entire project.

NIRPC will also recirculate the other two letters; one to the ACOE regarding the project in general, and one to the Illinois EPA regarding environmental assessment of the Brandon Road extended channel site for comment, with a hard date for feedback sent out as a calendar appointment.

Progress on NIRPC Transfer:

Kathy sent the group the link to the CAWS page that NIRPC has created on its website. https://www.nirpc.org/invasive-species-and-the-chicago-area-waterway-system/. NIRPC encourages all Steering Committee members to provide feedback as to whether there is other information they would like to see on the site, or page links to other resources.

We have created the CAWS and the Steering Committee lists in Constant Contact, our communication management system which helps us to maintain our public records properly. *(Subsequent feedback from Matt indicated that some members are not getting the messages. We will be following up with some test messaging and gmail messages to see who is not getting these and work with them to resolve any problems or issues. Sometimes email messaging systems are caught in spam filters or firewalls through specific IT departments and / or their Internet Service Providers (ISP's). There are instructions to correct these problems in various different systems and will be sent to the CAWS community.*