

**Environmental Management Policy Committee**  
Lake Michigan Room  
August 3, 2023  
Minutes

Bill Emerson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance were Bill Emerson (Lake County), Reggie Korthals (MS4), Ryan Lisek (DCI), Robert Forester Kouts), Kay Nelson (Forum), Brenda Scott-Henry (Gary), Kevin Brietzke, Jan Bapst, Joe Exl (DNR), Jenny Orsburn (DNR), Susan MiHalo, Nancy Molnar and Daina Dumbrys.

NIRPC staff present were Kathy Luther, Jennifer Birchfield, Kevin Polette, and Flor Baum.

The meeting minutes of May 4, 2023 were approved on motion by Reggie Korthals and second by Robert Forester.

**Public Comments**

No public comments were submitted.

**NWI Region Resilience Effort to Obtain Wildlife Habitat Certification for Northwest Indiana**

Kathy Sipple (NWIRR) spoke on the resilience effort to obtain wildlife habitat certification for NWI. Municipalities are encouraged to be involved by certifying parks, buildings, schools, and other public areas. Residents are also encouraged to certify their own homes too. To achieve certification through the National Wildlife's Community Wildlife Habitat program, you must create or restore wildlife habitat and do education and outreach. Four of the basic wildlife needs are as follows: food, water, cover, and places to raise young. Online certification is available at [www.nwf.org/certify](http://www.nwf.org/certify).

**Climate Change Primer for Gary Resiliency Workshops**

Isioma Nwayor presented on the Climate Trend Primer for the Gary Resiliency Workshops. A climate trend primer provides an overview of key climate trends and typically presents information of long-term patterns, changes, and shifts in climate variables. The purpose is to help individuals, organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders understand the current state of climate and its direction. Climate change was discussed, and global averages of surface temperatures were presented. Emissions scenarios were also presented for low, moderate, and very high scenarios. It is assumed that by the end of the century, very high future emissions will render CO2 emissions three times higher than present. Energy through fossil fuels use will further increase. Indiana's average surface temperature has increased .1 degrees F per decade from 1895 to 2016. Climate change in Indiana could lead to reduced water and air quality, a loss of species (Karner Blue butterfly), and an increase in heavy rainfall that may cause potential flooding. Climate change in Indiana could also lead to record-breaking heat waves, an increased demand for cooling, delayed fall freeze, shorter winters, and decreased productivity of crops. Flooding impacts may increase death and injuries, loss of properties, homelessness, and disruption of services. Areas within NWI may run the risk of wildfires. Wildfires degrade air quality, destroy property, and has long-term environmental changes. The City of Gary surpasses 5% of days where the air quality fails to meet the particulate matter standard of 2.5 which impacts reduced visibility, respiratory issues, allergies, and irritation. Data collection on more climate vulnerabilities has been gathered for Gary using community surveys, stakeholders workshops, and geospatial data. A workshop is slated in October to create a resiliency plan.

## **Climate Action Plan Framework Status Update Presentation**

Kathy spoke on the Climate Action NWI (CAN) update. NIRPC's goal and commitment is to develop a regional framework for Climate Action (CA) with science-based carbon reduction targets for communities to build their CA plans around. CAN is a multi-stakeholder effort that encourages long-term action, engagement and implementation of local climate action places including the following:

- NWI Regional Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory
- NWI Regional Climate Action Framework
- NWI Regional Climate Resilience Plan (CAP)

A 2017 baseline for CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions was established for Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties, totaling 54.5M tons. 54.9% CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions come from industrial energy, 24.7% is from industrial processes and fugitive, 8.7% is from transportation and mobile, commercial energy contributes 5.2%, and residential energy is at 5.9%. It is estimated that between 2016-2019, trees and forests removed a net 442,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. The Framework coordinates local efforts to achieve a regional goal of 63.4% reduction in 2017 GHG emissions levels by 2030 and a carbon neutral region, or net zero by 2050. NIRPC completed a Business-as-Usual emissions forecast. Planning assumptions for growth in population on vehicle miles traveled were aligned with land use, housing, and travel demand portions of NWI 2050+. By 2050, future GHG emissions would increase to 58M tons.

NIRPC staff continues to work on developing community typologies and strategies. A local CAP support plan and performance metrics are also being developed. NIRPC staff is working on an internal/stakeholder draft regional CAP (RCAP) framework that will be released for public comment. Once finalized, the NWI RCAP will be presented to the Commission for adoption by the end of 2023.

Comments can be emailed to [nirpc@nirpc.org](mailto:nirpc@nirpc.org), or call 219-763-6060.

### **Reports from Planning Partners**

Ryan Lisek (DCI) reported on events and programs with Drive Clean Indiana. For more information, please visit <https://drivecleanindiana.org/>.

Announcements were made.

The next EMPC meeting is slated for November 2, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the NIRPC offices.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:11 a.m.