

## Urban Waters Federal Partnership Meeting Minutes

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013

### NPS Headquarters

#### Attendees:

Cathy Martin (Save the Dunes), Kasie Tenbarger (Purdue Water Institute), Ashley Snyder (IDEM), Mike Milatovic (MCSAN), Sue Claussen (MCSAN), Gina Darnell (NWIPA), Katie Rizer (Coffee Creek Watershed Conservancy), Danielle Potts (EPA), Jenny Delumo (EPA), Jim Van der Kloot (EPA), Michelle Caldwell (IDEM), Amanda Lahners (LaPorte County Health Dept.), Jessica Zimmerman (SCA), Lauren Riga (City of Gary), Gia Wagner (NPS), Leslie Dorworth (IL-IN Sea Grant), Scott Kuchta (LaPorte Co. SWCD/Trail Creek Watershed), Caitie McCoy (IL-IN Sea Grant/GLNPO), Charles Morris (NPS), Lynda Lancaster (NPS), Lynne Westphal (USFS), Natalie Johnson (Urban Waters)

#### Project Area Updates & Needs:

The partnership spent ~15-20 minutes per watershed/location providing insight on what priority projects they would like to focus on for short term-long term.

#### I. Trail Creek Watershed Priorities

1. Karwick Park remediated and open for public use
  - Would like to incorporate a trail head with shelter as well as bike/picnic area
2. Constructed wetland at Cheney Run, upstream from Karwick, for improved water quality
3. Septic systems (LaPorte County)
  - Identify septic system locations
  - Create ordinance for point of sale
  - County to outlaw dry wells
4. Upstream trailhead improvement for paddling launch
  - Already first ADA accessible site is being implemented at Hansen Park, would like to see additional launch spot further upstream
5. Trail Creek Watershed 319 Grant
  - Technical assistance provided by partners

#### Other Notes:

- Karwick Nature Park—is looking for responsible parties for cleanup. Currently MCSAN is working with IDEM to establish a plan (early stages). Also in the process of determining how to fund cleanup.
- Wetland—a feasibility study needs to be completed. This is not able to be funded through 319 EPA funding.
- LaPorte County septic systems—The county is looking for funding opportunities to map undocumented septic tanks. One of the obstacles they are also facing is how to get onto properties.

#### II. East Branch of the Little Calumet & Salt Creek

1. Funding for East Branch EA (estimated cost of \$25,000-\$75,000)
  - NPS Regional office may have funding
  - USFS may have funding
2. East Branch Watershed Plan
  - Flooding upstream in agricultural lands. There is pressure to open up areas – flushing water vs. opening river. Drainage board cooperation is needed as well as working with farmers (sustainable practices).
3. Creation of 16 mile paddling opportunity of Little Calumet from Heron Rookery to Lake Michigan.
  - Creation of a publicly owned greenway

- Dependent on the outcome of the EA
4. Develop wetlands on Ag sites that are flooding
    - Work with farmers on BMP for agricultural lands-- not farming to the edge of the water
  5. Dealing with the effects of the EAB on the Little Calumet
    - Studies being done by USFS in three communities
    - USFS will establish DED resistant trees in Coffee Creek Watershed in Fall
  6. Salt Creek Water Trail – funding needed for water trail development

**Other Notes:**

- Potential steps in wetland development—a suggestion was made to ask Shirley Heinze if they manage conservation easements on the Little Calumet.
- Another suggestion was made to see photographic analysis of impacts on watershed from ash die outs.
- Currently, there is flooding occurring downstream of Heron Rookery. There is interest from NPS in restoring the natural ecology of area from, but coordination is needed with drainage board.
- Water safety interest from NPS – Kayakers/Swimmers in the water are not understanding natural risks and hazards. NPS would like to improve education of general water safety in rivers and on Lake Michigan.
- Unified Water Quality Strategy needed for the area—there are fragmented sites that need to be unified through organizations and efforts. There are current efforts with Valparaiso University and Indiana University Northwest that would be beneficial if linked to others.
- Coffee Creek – Education is needed for a company coming in on sustainable building and construction (i.e. conventional parking lot issues).
- USACE is doing invasive removal and restoring riparian habitat in East Branch on Shirley Heinze Property.

**III. Grand Cal**

1. Complete dredging and capping of river and harbor
2. Reduction of CSOs
3. Identify where homes have stormwater going into the sanitary sewer
4. Jeorse Park to be contamination free— increase flow, ultimately reducing bacteria
5. Restoration efforts to continue – needing funding for long term restoration and planning for invasive species encroachment
6. Green demolition approaches and green infrastructure on vacant lots
7. Funding for Miller Woods restoration
8. Public outreach and education on what can and cannot happen on the Grand Cal as its cleaned up (safety concerns)

**Other Notes:**

- SCA is installing BMPs to reduce storm water runoff (Miller) and implementing rain barrels and rain gardens throughout the city.
- Hammond is removing 3 CSOs.
- Obstacles – Engineering department has funding to put in green infrastructure projects; however these are usually not maintained after projects are put in.
- USACE proposal has received high marks for habitat restoration to be done at Jeorse Park Beach.

**IV. Deep River**

1. Dam Project in Lake Station – needs modification and updating. Safety issues: warning system before the dam.

2. Paddling signage and promotion of Deep River and Lake George as a paddling destination
3. Cleanup of water bottles floating in river

**Other Notes:**

- USACE is restoring 80 plus acres of habitat to be restored in dam project.
- Mayor (Lake Station) wants to be more active in Deep River restoration.

**V. Mapping**

1. Inventory of water trails to be completed by NWIPA
  - Include info useful to UW Mapping project and others
2. UW map will provide service to different groups to create interactive map for paddlers, general public, organizations

**Other Notes:**

- IDEM has okayed putting every CSO point on the Urban Waters map. This tool will be used to know where outfalls are in respect to recreation and will be released at the end of this summer.
- NWIPA will be working with UW on the mapping project. They will also be watching for new invasive species along waterways and GPSing where they are.

**VI. Other**

1. Outreach, involve communities in volunteer efforts
2. How can the park engage with partner organizations with funding limitations? Can offer other resources outside of funding.

**Upcoming Grant Opportunities**

Lynne provided information on the National and Urban Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC) Cost-share grant opportunity. For more information in participating in the development of a proposal on green infrastructure, contact Lynne Westphal ([lwestphal@fs.fed.us](mailto:lwestphal@fs.fed.us)).

**NUCFAC**

1. Formal advisory council to USDA with an annual pot of funding
2. FY12 and 13 projects have been delayed one year, but FY 14 funding opportunities are out now
3. Green infrastructure interests in NUCFAC
4. Requirements of NUCFAC
  - Must have national relevance: This could be achieved through partnerships with other urban water organizations. Nation-wide urban water organizations collaborating together provides opportunity for nationwide relevance. Or creating models that can be applied to projects in the future can be an opportunity for nationwide relevance.
5. Potential project ideas: Green infrastructure benefits using Coffee Creek as example
  - Research Coffee Creek data – what the area looked like before green infrastructure implementation; how the area has seen beneficial impacts via green infrastructure implementation

**Backgrounder Development**

The group was asked to develop the new backgrounder for NWI. Priorities for the next year were set during the previous discussion. The group listed various successes as a result of the partnership:

- Working with the USACE (Gene Fleming)
- Brummit restoration (USACE)
- EAB studies
- What is happening outside of the NPS that informs the NPS
- Ambassador position providing assistance
- Connecting universities to projects
- Connecting NPS to projects
- Monitoring of Great Marsh of *E. coli* and metals
- Connecting 130 students to GLNPO
- Jeorse Park Momentum
- Removal of invasive on E. Branch
- Getting public on water through NWIPA events

### Grand Calumet AOC Update and Video

1. Caitie McCoy shared a video on AOC outreach with the group. Those who know of other places where the video may be used should contact Caitie McCoy
  - Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Qc2drk-sO8>
  - Wisconsin Sea Grant [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puA0G1\\_TJB0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puA0G1_TJB0)
  - For a hard copy [http://www.iisgcp.org/catalog/products\\_cr.html](http://www.iisgcp.org/catalog/products_cr.html)
2. Caitie has offered tour of AOC work for upcoming meeting
3. Sea Grant videos about general water use

### Other Business

1. Kasie Tenbarge with the Purdue Water Institute introduced Purdue's interest in forming a Water Board. The group is looking to further connect themselves with research needs in NWI
2. 11 new locations named (see PowerPoint)
3. Table toppers—if your organization is interested in using an Urban Waters table topper to designate your group as part of the partnership, we will have some printed for the next meeting and available for distribution to those who are interested
4. The NWI Website has been released: [urbanwaters.gov/nwi](http://urbanwaters.gov/nwi). There is still much updating that needs to be done to the site. If you would like to contribute any information, please contact Natalie Johnson.
5. Please feel free to use Natalie and the federal partners for coordination or projects and or grant writing assistance!