

October 6, 2015 9:30AM-12:30PM Central

Hobart Community Center in Festival park

## I. Welcome & Introductions

- Welcome from Tim Kingsland (Stormwater District / MS4 Coordinator, City of Hobart).
- A list of attendees can be provided upon request.

## II. Pertinent Partner Project Updates

- Participants were encouraged to provide topics/suggestions for the all-federal meeting and to suggest projects/ask questions about the Urban Waters Small Grants Program.
  - i. The all-federal meeting, which takes place on an annual basis, is a convening of Urban Waters federal partners that may be unable to make quarterly meetings, but are interested in providing assistance when possible. Some of these federal partners include Corporation for National and Community Service, Economic Development Administration, Department of Transportation, Department of Education, and more (for a full list of participating Urban Waters federal partners and their linkages to the initiative, visit [www.urbanwaters.gov](http://www.urbanwaters.gov)).
  - ii. The Urban Waters Small Grants Program is now open until November 20. **This is a GREAT funding source, with only \$4,000.00 match required (in kind or cash).** For the 2015/2016 grant cycle, EPA seeks to fund projects that address urban runoff pollution through diverse partnerships that produce multiple community benefits, with emphasis on underserved communities. Natalie and some of the federal partners can help you craft a proposal, or review it before submission. If you would like assistance, please contact Natalie early.
- The City of Hobart has some projects they would like to discuss with partners for the Urban Waters Small Grant. Tim Kingsland will be reaching out soon.
- Joe Exl shared that the Urban Waters Small Grant is one of the easier grants to administer. He was awarded funding during the previous funding cycle for his volunteer water quality monitoring program. Joe identified that he would like more volunteers participating in the water quality monitoring program— Hoosier Riverwatch.
- There are many opportunities to expand urban forestry projects in NWI. Natalie submitted an urban forestry project to EPA GLRI last month that, if funded, will sub-award funds to NGOs and municipalities to implement urban forestry green infrastructure in critical areas of watersheds. The US Forest Service urban tree canopy dataset can help partners identify locations for tree plantings. Drew Hart, who is new with the Forest Service, can offer assistance with plantings and has a background in engaging volunteers.
- We asked attendees why some people did not apply for EPA GLRI or other grants. Responses were:
  - i. Administration (complex, not enough capacity in organizations)
  - ii. Timing (working on other grants that are due simultaneously, other obligations since most partners do not have a designated grant writer)
  - iii. Understanding grants (with limited time, it is often difficult to read through a full RFP and know whether or not the grant would be applicable to fund a certain project)
  - iv. Capacity (overall, personnel is limited in all aspects of writing a grant, overseeing, implementing)
- Attendees made suggestions on how to overcome these barriers. Natalie will work on an easy to read table that identifies funding sources, timelines, and match requirements so that partners can look ahead for when a funding source may be coming up, and then plan ahead to apply. The offer still stands that some federal

partners and Natalie can help prepare grants and/or provide administrative assistance. We encourage partners to take advantage of this assistance.

- Partners want to see more activity in the West Branch of the Little Calumet River—engaging partners, updating the watershed management plan and implementing. The watershed needs a champion organization. The Plum Creek-Little Calumet sub-watershed is challenging because it would be a bi-state plan. There is no group at this time leading it. Alliance for the Great Lakes was suggested as a lead. Susan MiHalo is going to bring it to their attention.
- Joe Exl reported that Deep River watershed plan should be done in December. Joe will present draft critical areas at the next watershed meeting. He is using biological data to indicate critical areas. So far, it is showing what one would assume—natural reaches have better water quality than drainage ditches.
- Deep River dam is still a priority project. The USACE is still willing to work on the feasibility study, but \$87,000.00 (non-federal) is needed from a local partner to cost-share. The USACE is supportive of alternative methods if it is cheaper to complete the feasibility study. If the USACE completes the project, 80 acres adjacent to the dam would be restored.
- Contractors are continuing work on the Salt Creek watershed management plan. Portage is the local sponsor. The next step is developing a project list. The USACE is also working in Portage to restore 68 acres near the lakefront.
- Save the Dunes is currently addressing EPA comments on the draft East Branch of the Little Calumet River for its completion.
- Michigan City has a branding initiative—next meeting is Dec. 7. Trail Creek has come up multiple times an asset.
- Michigan City's Cheney Run feasibility study will be presented at the next Trail Creek meeting.
- The Trail Creek watershed's 319 EPA funding is wrapping up in February. The group has put in an application for additional funding.
- Jeorse Park Beach needs additional information for a more complete modeling product. The USACE does not believe the Calumet River is impacting the E. coli counts at the beach. It is possible that the lack of bird inputs and resuspension of solids are not accounted for in modeling. In 2016, the project could be ready to move forward with a local sponsor.

a. Trail Creek Watershed

- Dan, Northwest Indiana Paddling Association (NWIPA), reported that after permit delays, the Michigan City ADA-compliant boat launch with pervious paver-lined access path is being installed and will be dedicated September 26 during the Wilderness Inquiry visit to Michigan City. Partners are encouraged to help spread the word of the event once an announcement has been developed. Dan will share once this becomes available.
- International Coastal Cleanup will take place September 19 in partnership with NIPSCO, Northwest Indiana Steelheaders, Michigan City Parks Dept. and Trail Creek Watershed Partnership. Michigan City Parks Dept.'s new facility at Washington Park should be open at that time.
- There is an opportunity to showcase all International Coastal Cleanup events via one press release across the region if there's interest in collaborating. Natalie will pull together at partner's request.
- Trail Creek Watershed Partnership's current 319 grant coming to a close. Multiple projects have been implemented: rain gardens, cover crops, livestock impact reduction projects, and more. The partnership will be applying for additional 319 funding and will be seeking support letters for those wanting to be involved in future implementation efforts.

III. Urban Tree Canopy Dataset—How this information can help inform watershed work (*Lynne Westphal—USFS*)

- The University of Vermont Spatial Analysis Laboratory is completing an Urban Tree Canopy (UTC+) assessment for Indiana's Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties with funding from the US Forest Service.

UTC first combines land cover data based on LiDAR imagery with local parcel boundary data. The resulting geographic dataset is used to quantify and map tree canopy cover across a region (in this case a county) and parse out how tree canopy is distributed across residential areas, public parks, industrial areas, etc. The final step of a basic UTC analysis includes identifying potential tree planting areas.

- The UTC datasets are publicly available and GIS experts can overlay additional data layers in order to do other types of analysis based on local interests or needs. For example, geographic data layers that depict flood-prone areas or impaired waterways can be added to the UTC data to show where tree planting and other green infrastructure activities can help manage stormwater or prevent contaminated runoff from entering local waterways. Fine-grained soil survey data can be added to help make tree planting and other green infrastructure projects compatible with local conditions.
- Lynne Westphal (USFS) needs your feedback. How do we make this data available? Easiest to read/use? Do we need workshops? Funding to host it? Please contact her by email.

IV. Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission's (NIRPC) Volunteer Monitoring Program (*Joe Exl—NIRPC*)

- The 2013/2014 Urban Waters Small Grant Program awarded \$60,000.00 to the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission to engage community members by establishing a volunteer stream monitoring network in the Little Calumet-Galien sub-basin. The information gathered will be used to support local watershed management planning and implementation efforts and raise awareness of urban water quality issues.
- The Urban Waters Group went outside and visited the monitoring site near Festival Park (Hobart).

V. Wilderness Inquiry Visits in Northwest Indiana (*Geof Benson—Dunes Learning Center; Nicole Messacar—LaPorte County Soil & Water*)

- Over 4500 students in NWI are taking to the water via the Wilderness Inquiry Urban Canoemobile Program. Leading partners include the LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District, Dunes Learning Center, National Park Service, Northwest Indiana Paddling Association, and many more. The events are taking place on the Kankakee, Trail Creek, Lake George, Wolf Lake, and Marquette Lagoons. Each program includes education about the waterway that is being paddled, and what students can do to keep it healthy.
- Following the meeting, attendees were invited to canoe with 6<sup>th</sup> graders from Hobart schools.