

Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Partnership



Above: Urban Waters partners collaborate on a variety of projects to restore urban waters and revitalize our communities

Rio Reimagined Onboarding Workshop
October 8, 2020

Northwest Indiana Location



Map of Northwest Indiana watersheds and waterways (Save the Dunes)

Northwest Indiana location

- Original UWFP pilot location
- Co-led by EPA, USFS, and NPS
 - ACOE, Americorps Vista, DOT, EDA, FEMA, FWS, HUD, NOAA, NRCS, USGS
- Over 80 federal, state, and local partners
- Ambassador housed at Purdue Northwest (PNW)



NWI residents and visitors enjoy Lake Michigan at Whihala Beach (Eric Allix Rogers, [Flickr](#)).

Role of the UW Coordinator

- Connect partners to federal opportunities and resources
- Communicate local needs to federal partners
- Encourage collaboration
- E-news, quarterly meetings, learning opportunities
- Connect PNW students and faculty to service-learning and research opportunities

It's easy to join the NWI Urban Waters list!

Just send your email address
by text message:

Text
URBANWATERS
to **22828** to get started.




Message and data rates may apply.

Text to join NWI Urban Waters e-list (Constant Contact)

The NWI Urban Waters Work Plan

- Developed with partner input
- Drafted by Ambassador, reviewed/modified by partners
- Previous year accomplishments
- Key projects that advance UW goals in NWI
 - Some directly initiated by UW
 - Some driven by local partners with UW in support role.




Northwest Indiana (NWI) 2020 Work Plan & 2019 Accomplishments

Executive Summary

Since 2011, the Urban Waters - Northwest Indiana (NWI) Partnership has been working to protect, restore, and revitalize urban waterways in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties. 2019 was a banner year for the Partnership with substantial achievements on key initiatives! Highlights include:

- CommuniTree partners planted over 2,000 trees and engaged 500+ volunteers.
- More than 6,000 students and residents learned about local waterways and natural resources as part of **partners'** watershed education programs, which featured paddling with Canoemobile.
- Local partners secured nearly \$3 million in grants to advance green infrastructure and streambank stabilization projects that will restore urban waters and revitalize communities.
- The Septic System Coordinated Working Group helped train residents to be septic system ambassadors in their neighborhoods and began sampling for a microbial source tracking study.
- Urban Waters partners offered hands-on workshops on paddling safety, tree pruning, and tree care and helped to pilot the Master Watershed Steward Program.



NWI Urban Waters partners are collaborating on a variety of initiatives to protect and restore local waterways.

Developed with input from NWI Urban Waters partners, this work plan highlights key projects that advance Urban Waters goals in NWI. Some projects are directly initiated by Urban Waters, and many others are driven by local partners with Urban Waters playing a supporting role. This work plan also identifies tasks for moving existing and new initiatives forward in 2020. Contact Jennifer Birchfield at jbirchfield@pnw.edu with suggestions or requests for assistance.

COVID-19 Update

This work plan was developed before COVID-19 and associated social distancing. As such, planned projects requiring in-person gatherings or work crews may be modified or delayed.

1 June 5, 2020

The 2020 NWI Urban Waters work plan. Available at www.epa.gov/urbanwaters



USFS demonstrates proper tree planting



USGS equipment at Gary City Hall rain garden



Students learn about water safety with NPS at a ParkKids event (NPS).



Jeorse Park beach restoration ground-breaking (Elizabeth Concepcion, Chicago District USACE)

Public Accessibility



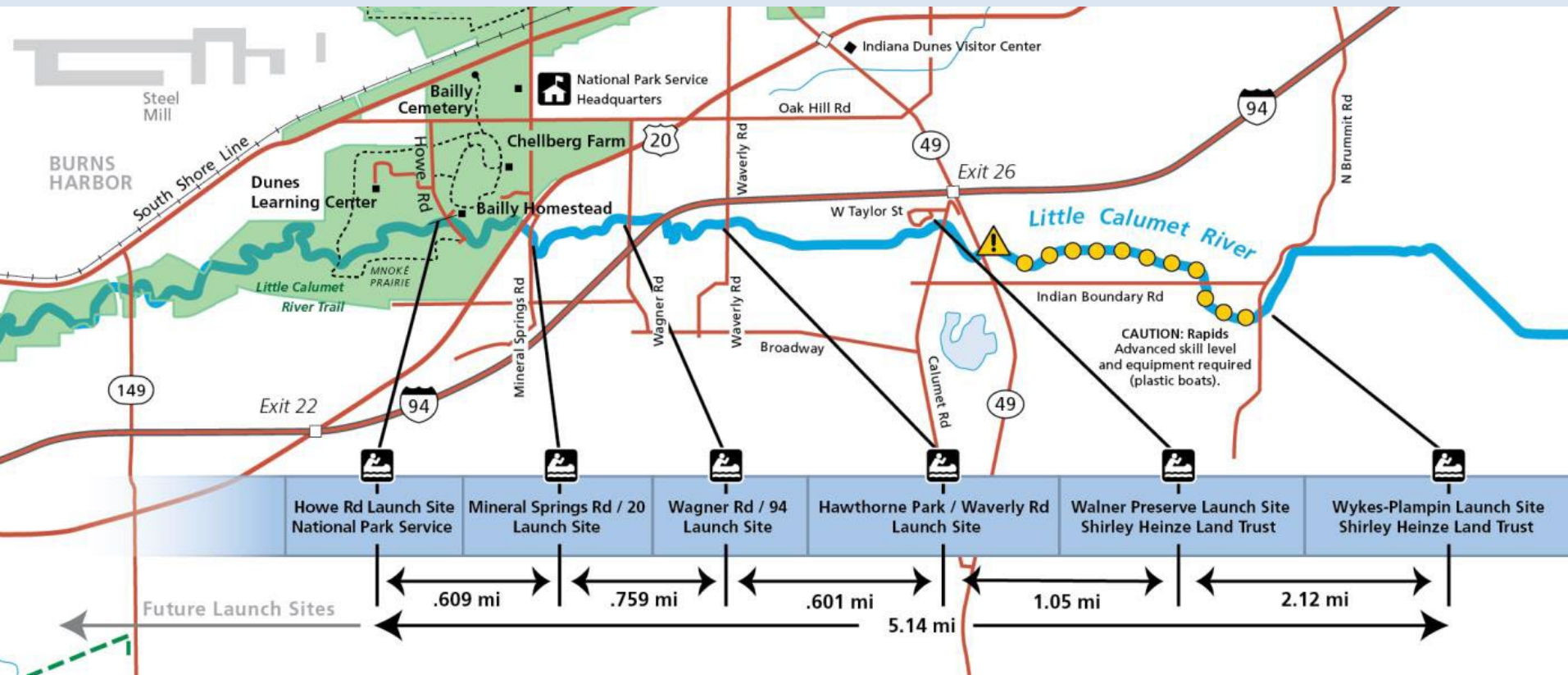
Construction of the ADA launch on Trail Creek – the first in the state - in 2015 (Trail Creek Watershed Partnership)



ADA-compliant launch installed at Veteran's Park on Deep River in Lake Station in 2018 (Dunes Learning Center)

Since 2011 eight canoe/kayak launches have been installed on five waterways across NWI, six of which are ADA-compliant!

Public Accessibility



Little Calumet River East Branch Water Trail (NPS)

Jeorse Park

- Grand Calumet Area of Concern beach
- Once considered the most polluted beach in the country with up to 70% closure rate
- USGS microbial source tracking
- ACOE/Michigan State U. model of breakwater modification
- ACOE habitat restoration at Jeorse Park Beach
- Indiana DEM gull deterrent program and other BMPs with EPA support



Habitat restoration at Jeorse Park Beach

Watershed Education

- In 2012, LaPorte County SWCD first hosted Wilderness Inquiry's "Canoemobile"
- In 2019 over 6,000 participated in education and paddling events
- Partners host educational stations
- Partial funding from NPS and 5 Star-Urban Waters grant in 2019



Students paddle on local waterways throughout Northwest Indiana (Dunes Learning Center)



USEPA Biologist, Peg Donnelley helps students assess Trail Creek water quality

CommuniTree

- Outgrowth of an Urban Waters partner request for urban forestry support
- Alliance of businesses, not-for-profits, universities, and government agencies working to create a more diverse, healthy, and sustainable urban forest across northwest Indiana.

Since 2016, CommuniTree partners have

- Planted nearly 6,000 Trees
- Engaged over 2,000 volunteers
- Trained 20 youth in urban forestry
- Worked with over 40 communities
- Held 10 trainings on forestry topics



Tree recipients practice tree planting (NIRPC)



CommuniTree logo developed with NIPSCO



NIPRC-administered CommuniTree grants



SCA Tree Team planting, maintenance, and engagement with help from USFS



Wildlife Habitat Council plantings with industry (WHC)

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