

URBANWATERS

A Partnership Restoring Urban Waters, Revitalizing Communities

October 27, 2017

9:30 AM – 11:30 PM Central

Hammond Civic Center, 5825 Sohl Ave., Hammond IN 46320

I. Welcome and introductions

Mark Heintz, City of Hammond welcomed the group and made remarks on the City's parks participation in the CommuniTree partnership.

In attendance: Mark Heintz, Hammond Parks Department; Jennifer Birchfield, Urban Waters; Lynda Lancaster, National Park Service; Elizabeth McCloskey, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Cathy Martin, Save the Dunes; Peg Donnelly, US Environmental Protection Agency; Jim Semelka, Graf Tree Care and Illinois Arborist Association; Katherine Moore Powell, The Field Museum; Rich Underkofler, Town of Highland; Lynne Westphal, US Forest Service (USFS); Tim Kingsland, City of Hobart; Drew Hart, USFS; Alysandra Rodriguez, Greening Youth Foundation; BreShaun Spikes, Student Conservation Association (SCA); Tristen Meyers, SCA; Christopher Santana, SCA; David Muller, SCA; Cherie Fisher, USFS; Deb Backhus, Lake Michigan Coastal Program

II. Urban Waters updates

– *Jen Birchfield, NWI Urban Waters Coordinator*

Jen provided updates on the Sammies People's Choice Award, Canoemobile, and the opening of the East Branch Little Calumet River water trail. The group discussed these items and Lynne presented certificates to Jen Birchfield and Natalie Johnson (accepted by Cathy on her behalf). Jen presented information on funding opportunities, including the Healthy Watersheds Consortium and others, and upcoming events. Jen also requested internship needs from partners as Purdue Northwest is seeking projects for paid student internships. Jen announced the tentative date (1/27/18) for the next partnership meeting, which will guide the 2018 work plan, and encouraged partners to participate and provide input.

III. Little Calumet River East Branch Public Use and Habitat Enhancement

– *Cathy Martin, Program Manager, Save the Dunes*

IV. Partner updates and announcements

– *Group*

Drew Hart gave an update on the CommuniTree program and that NIRPC has been granted GLRI funds for a next round of the program. At least 10 communities have received trees. 1,000 trees are being planted this year. Indiana University Northwest students have been coming to volunteer plantings. Jess Voght of DePaul University is working to develop a baseline and evaluation criteria for the program. SCA is a finalist for a ChiCal grant.

Tim Kingsland said that the City of Hobart planted trees at a new gun range for their police department through CommuniTree. The City is finishing a tree inventory and management plan. They have planted 800 plants in a rain garden through NIRPC's 319 grant and have a GLRI grant in the design phase for green infrastructure. Tim thanked the partnership for assistance.

Rich Underkofler said the City of Highland has a coastal grant for a tree inventory and management plan. They received a lot of public comments and are making final revisions. Elementary school students helped to plant trees Highland received through the CommuniTree Program.

Deb Backhus said the coastal program has a 319 grant to inventory septic systems near streams and conduct source tracking focused on 20 neighborhoods. The work will start in January and they will have a steering committee. They also have a 309 grant to update the National Wetlands inventory and for functional analysis.

Katherine Moore Powell said the Field Museum wants to get more involved in Urban Waters. They are working on a climate change adaption plan.

Liz McCloskey said that ACOE, USFWS, IDNR, and IDEM are working together on a Little Calumet flood control and mitigation at Hobart Marsh.

Jim Semelk described the urban forestry work his company has done with the City of Highland, including creating a GIS application.

Peg Donnelly said that the 5 Star and Urban Waters grant RFP will be released soon. EPA is not putting out a smaller Urban Waters grant RFP at this time. Peg noted that after the Grand Calumet River AOC seminar, participants referred to a need for a central posting place for environmental and permit information. There is also a need for community emergency planning as well as a list of potential supplemental environmental projects in different areas. Rich asked about lead in East Chicago drinking water and indicated that a grant proposal is being sought to purchase filters for residents (Jen later sent Rich Peg's contact information and an EPA lead fact sheet).

Lynda Lancaster discussed the progress on changing the National Lakeshore's name to Indiana Dunes National Park and provided updates on the OneDOI Initiative.

Kathy Martin indicated that Save the Dunes received trees for Hobart Marsh through CommuniTree and SCA crews are working on river clearing and at the oak savannah in the National Lakeshore.

12:00 After the meeting the SCA team led participants in planting trees at Hammond Civic Center.

Thanks you to our presenters and to City of Hammond Parks and Recreation
for use of meeting space.