

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC AUDITORIUM, PORTAGE, IN

April 4, 2013

Members/Guests Present: Dorreen Carey, Lee Botts, David Shafer, Dennis Rittenmeyer, Dan Plath, Charlotte Read, Susan MiHalo, Leanne Whitesell, Andrew Pelloso, Mark Reshkin, Michael Kuss, Jim Alexander, Michelle Caldwell, Ashley Snyder, Lauren Riga, Natalie Johnson, Deb Backhus, Leslie Dorworth, Mark Bauman, Lynn Westphal, Geof Benson, Alexis Faust, Arber Himaj, Kris Krouse, Daniel Goldfarb, Cassandra Cannon

NIRPC Staff: Kathy Luther, Meredith Stilwell, Joe Exl,

Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

With Chairman Breitzke running late and Vice Chair Hendricks absent from the meeting, past Chair Geof Benson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Approval of March 7, 2013 EMPC Minutes

On motion by Susan MiHalo and second by Charlotte Read the March 7, 2013 EMPC minutes were approved.

NIRPC Business:

a. NIRPC Environmental funding project timelines - TAP

The draft TAP application schedule was reviewed by Kathy Luther. EMPC will be reviewing environmental projects. Most likely the June EMPC meeting will be when those applications will be finalized. Kathy asked for volunteers for the project review committee. The Committee will need to meet to review the applications. June 22nd was chosen as the date for the meeting to review applications.

b. Calumet Authors Group and Millennium Reserve

The state of Illinois and a set of stakeholders are reorganizing the Millennium Reserve planning project and are attempting to collect all the plans. The Calumet Plan Alignment Matrix was given to the Committee and Kathy reviewed the list of plans. Although Illinois focused, Kathy offered to be a point person for the Indiana plans to ensure they are correct and Indiana is correctly represented in the planning. She will update the Marquette Plan information and would like others who have plans in the project to notify her of any updating or changes that should be made. Kathy noted she added watershed management plans to the list of Indiana plans as well. Discussion was held regarding the Lake Michigan Marina and Shoreline Development Commission (LMMSDC) which has a similar mission to assemble all these plans and stated they could possibly be in the discussion and process and possibly work with NIRPC. The Indiana Coastal Program is part of the LMMSDC and the two entities are trying to work together to not duplicate processes. It was suggested that NIRPC is possibly not the right organization to work on this, but the State offices of Indiana and Illinois work together on the initiative and disseminating the information to all the stakeholders. Kathy informed the group that the Illinois Governor's office has given strict timelines and currently all they are asking for is an inventory of plans to bring together the common threads and she would work as a representative on the plan inventory process just to ensure northwest Indiana is properly represented and when the process becomes more political the State enacted committees could take over. As things progress she will report back to the Committee and more will be heard about it at the upcoming Calumet Summit in May. A discussion was held regarding the Heritage Corridor.

Kevin Breitzke joined the meeting during the previous business. At the suggestion of a Committee Member the presentation order was switched.

Presentations:

b. Calumet Regional Initiatives – *Mark Bouman, Field Museum*

Mark introduced himself to the group and indicated the Field Museum is very engaged on both sides of the state line in both environmental and cultural, heritage. Part of the Museum's recent reorganization efforts is to drive more active projects out into the world. Lynn Westphal from the US Forest Service introduced herself. Both she and Mark have been part of the Calumet Initiative work for many years. A feasibility study was completed in 1998 for a bi-State heritage area but did not gain much traction. Currently there are 49 National Heritage Areas across the country and are locally driven projects and are ways to coordinate work. The Calumet Heritage Partnership group was created in the late 90s. As president of the Group, Mark feels it is one possible regional approach to inventorying natural and cultural assets and

collecting them into a coherent program that coordinates way-finding and interpretation. The Partnership held a conference in the fall of 2012 and began to revisit the idea of a National Heritage Area. Mark provided a basic background piece on national heritage areas. A question and answer session was held with discussions involving the inclusion of the heritage trust area in the update of the Marquette Plan and the Calumet map boundaries which are meant to be fuzzy and facilitates further discussion. It was noted the concept was developed around the Heritage Trust Corridor, the Illinois Michigan Canal which was created in the 1970s and questions if the industrial area at the southeast corner of Lake Michigan which crosses the State line would be an appropriate location and would it serve a useful purpose. Mark noted a heritage area is a way to plug in lots of local efforts and stories in a coordinated way. Lynn Westphal revisited the Millennium Reserve Reset Project stating there is genuine interest in wanting it to be bi-state and at the same time can't be declared as such by the Governor from one state. Governor Quinn appointed a new steering committee which includes feds and NGOs which have bi-state connections and can hopefully help facilitate bi-state efforts. It was suggested to change the Millennium Reserve title and create a consistent brand for uniformity. The Calumet Stewardship Initiative, chaired by Kris Krouse, is convening the Calumet Summit taking place May 14–15 in Marquette Park. Feedback from the last summit held in 2010 indicated a desire to do it again, pushing it forward. This year's summit is subtitled "Connecting for Action" and aims to zero in on prioritized projects that will work in a bi-state context.

a. The Stewardship Mapping Project – Lynn Westphal, USFS

Lynn stated she and Mark work closely together and while the Stewardship Mapping Project (Stew-Map) overlaps the Calumet Regional initiatives, it examines what specific civic stewardship is happening throughout the Chicago Wilderness Region. There are many stewardship mapping projects occurring around the country. The Stew-Map assessment project looks at the who, what, where, and why of the entire Chicago Wilderness region, with no group too big or small. Anything that is at all about protecting the environment, including conserving, managing, caring for, monitoring, advocating for on behalf of, and educating the public about local environments can be entered. Includes traditional stewardship work, but also includes many other organizations and groups. An initial database has been created and groups were interviewed. General stewardship activity levels were reviewed with the top five activities being environmental work, education, community improvement, and youth recreation sports. Data discussed by Lynn included the percentage of stewardship effort during the past year, stewardship settings, when were groups founded, and number of regular volunteers. Lynn indicated that when entering data into stew-map you can disclose where you're working. An example of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust data entry was shown. The entries allow for review to see what others are doing online. The northwest Indiana information is thin at this point and more information is wanted. Interviews will be held on how to better use this information and make the database more useful. Ideas can be submitted to Lynn. Analysis of the mapping will indicate where stewardship efforts are happening and where more stewardship could be used. A survey and map can be found at www.stewmap.cnt.org. Datasets from Stew-Map and Green Infrastructure Vision can be tied together. It was pointed out that more coordination is needed and although the information is available there needs to be follow through. Information entered into the database can be exported for grant applications, One Region reports, etc. and can be expanded in whatever way becomes useful.

Announcements:

Kathy announced a letter was received from One Region requesting the EMPC to help identify six priority specific project issues to be address in the next 1-4 years. Kathy noted the indicators report sub-group could possibly come up with a bigger list to bring before the EMPC to select a top six. Anyone can be a come to the sub group meetings.

Upcoming events were announced.

Daniel Goldfarb announced Wildlife Habitat Council has moved from their NIRPC location to the new Shirley Heinze Land Trust site. He thanked NIRPC, especially the environmental department for their great partnership and support.

The next EMPC meeting will be May 2, 2013.

Meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.