

Coastal Advisory Board Meeting

Wednesday December 19, 2012 – 10:00 AM CT

Porter County - Sunset Hill County Park Interpretive Center, 775 Meridian, Valparaiso, IN

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members Present: Liz McCloskey (USFWS); Tiffany Tolbert (Indiana Landmarks); Nicole Barker (Save the Dunes); Bob Daum (Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore); Walter Lenckos (Porter County Parks & Rec); Ashley Snyder (IDEM); Dan Plath (Industry & Business/NIPSCO); Christine Livingstone (Porter County Tourism); Robert Thompson (Porter County); Frank Seilheimer (Michigan City Forester)

Board Members Absent: Greg Lyman (Town of Beverly Shores); Kathy Luther (NIRPC); Dana Liss (Lake County Citizen); Kris Krouse (SHLT); Bill Moran (USDA NRCS); Christopher Meyers (Crown Point); Young Choi (Universities); Joel Schmidt (US Army Corps); Leslie Dorworth (IL/IN Sea Grant)

Additional Attendees: Leanne Whitesell (IDEM); Michelle Caldwell (IDEM)

Lake Michigan Coastal Program Staff Present: Mike Molnar (LMCP Program Manager), Sergio Mendoza (Coastal Resource Planner), Maggie Byrne (Grant Specialist), Derek Nimetz (Coastal Restoration Ecologist), Breana Sowers (LMCP Operations Manager)

The meeting was called to order by Liz McCloskey at Approximately 10:15 AM. Meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions – Liz McCloskey invited the current CAB members to introduce themselves and describe their position within the Board. LMCP staff was re-introduced, including the new Operations Manager, Breana Sowers. Announcement of new position opening – Special Projects Coordinator.

New Business – This CAB meeting was organized to relay the accomplishments and changes of the LMCP over the 2012 year. Staff members were asked to compile materials and examples for presentation.

General Program Overview – Mike Molnar, Program Manager

Discussion Points:

- How the LMCP is organized – the different areas, issues, laws, and resources of concern. Our goals and vision for the program. Main program areas of focus.
- How NOAA allots money – State and Federal financial layouts. Baseline used in the past, the amount (\$288,000) from errors or unfinished projects.

- New/Ongoing Projects – Visiting our original mission and purpose. Re-designing our strategic plan. The Shipwreck project and website.
- Project Management – CELCP, Lake Michigan Biodiversity Project.
- Shipwrecks – Moving into Phase II, website is up and running with historical photos, videos and information.
- Outreach – the October unveiling of the new Dune & Swale poster. Reminder of Coastal Awareness month and call for relevant projects – funding deadlines

TAPP and Special Projects Overview - Sergio Mendoza, Coastal Resource Planner

Discussion Points:

- Overview of the different communities interested in Proposed Green Infrastructure/Natural Resource Plan. (See Power Point for break-down)
- Overview of possible issues while integrating plans – funding, disinterest, lack of staff or resources.
- Summary of the Green Infrastructure Workshop – who attended, positive potential, future support.
- Updates to the website – outreach materials, workshop resources.

Grant Updates and Overview - Maggie Byrne, Grants Specialist

Discussion Topics:

- New workshops for Grantees – teaching grantees how to apply and manage their projects. Full proposal workshops - how many attended; expectations for future grantees.
- Meetings with CAB Grant Committee – 6 meetings, several hours each on perfecting the review process, gaining transparency.
- \$1.2 million requested, only \$650,000 is available. Amid three different grant cycles – remaining funds to be used, call for additional
- Need to acquire a lot more projects to use the bounty of money. Need Back-up projects.
- Available Grant Funds – how much has been requested, how we decide the amount to give, questions on how we can attract more projects for leftover funding. *\$ 245,893 total Unobligated Funds.
- Changes in the Grant proposal process – New forms created, how we plan to streamline, possibility of a new database.

Ecological Projects - Derek Nimetz, Coastal Restoration Ecologist

Discussion Topics:

- Description of what is involved in his job – call for people to use him as a resource for grant advising - relating to invasive plants, landscaping, native gardens, etc.
- Project management - PNA inspections, plant monitoring, Nature Preserve management.

- Outreach Hikes – Prairie Savanna Field Day, Dunes Prairie – highlighted the preservation and plants of the area. Land Trust Hike – Rare species. Gibson Woods (poster unveiling) – Highlight small rare orchid on trail.
- Restoration – Pine Station, Hoosier Prairie.
- Distribution of Eastern Coastal Plains in Indiana
- Growth Management for Invasive Shrubs - Burned 5 different locations in NW Indiana.
- Miscellaneous species seen around the property – butterflies, snakes.
- Project visitations with Maggie Byrne – assessing how successful former projects have been. Plans to visit more in the future for follow-up or progress reports.

*Committee Questions to Derek

CAB members expressed appreciation LMCP staff efforts.

Committee Reports –

Grants Committee:

- Meeting Overviews – Reviews of Pre-proposals, Discussion of changes and concerns about the grant process.
- Issue – discussion of grant wording/misunderstanding about LMCP funding for trails – but not trail construction. (Brick and Mortar) Would like this to be further clarified in the Grants Manual. Motion for this change to ‘be considered’. Competition of funding for trail improvement or creation – problems of partnering with other funding entities.
- Additional Discussion on this issue – signage, types of trails that are able to be funded, the original purpose of the program (to fill in some of the gaps for improvements that still comply with the laws the program abides by.).

Outreach Committee:

- Coastal Awareness Month (CAM)- Call for project proposals, requirements, and amount of applications already submitted.

CELCP Committee

- Congressional funding pending for Superstorm Sandy Relief
- CELCP may receive funds as part of hazard avoidance funding

Announcements –

○ Next CAB Meeting - February 20, 2013 – LaPorte County – 10:00 AM

Topics:

- CAB Membership – Nominations and open positions.
- Committee Reports
- Public announcements about illegal septic drainage in the coastal region.
Update on community litigation.

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM. Porter County Parks Staff took interested CAB members of a wagon tour of the park.