

URBANWATERS

A Partnership for Restoring Urban Waterways and Revitalizing Communities

Spotlight on Success

CommuniTree Kicks off with Planting in East Chicago

In celebration of Arbor Day, an enthusiastic group of supporters successfully launched the [CommuniTree](#) program at Washington Park in East Chicago on April 26. After an opening ceremony and tree planting demonstration, representatives from government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and private companies planted 30 native trees throughout the park with the help of volunteers and the SCA CommuniTree team.



Above: The SCA tree team demonstrates tree planting methods to SCA interns and other volunteers.

CommuniTree grew out of a conversation during an Urban Waters meeting about the need for tree planting resources in northwest Indiana. Led by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, CommuniTree is pleased to have support from local industry and a wide range of public and non-profit partners. The program plans to plant over 3,000 native trees across the region in 2017. Read a [Chicago Tribune article](#) covering the event.

EPA Final Update on US Steel - Portage Chromium Release

Beaches Open and Plant Operations Resumed

U.S. Steel has reported to EPA its estimate that 298 pounds of hexavalent chromium were released during the April 11th spill. EPA's water testing showed no hexavalent chromium impacts to the Burns Waterway or Lake Michigan with all results from water samples showing hexavalent chromium below EPA's method detection limit of 1 part per billion.



Above: EPA monitors after spill.

EPA monitored the U.S. Steel line-by-line startup process and did not detect any additional hexavalent chromium from the outfall. U.S. Steel has resumed full operations. The National Park Service has reopened its neighboring beaches and Indiana American Water worked with IDEM to reopen their Ogden Dunes drinking water intake. The National Park Service will oversee a long term sampling and monitoring plan. EPA will work with NPS to develop and implement this monitoring protocol.

For more information, visit [EPA's web page for the incident](#). For press inquiries,

Urban Waters Meetings Held in April

Presentations on Lead at Joint Urban Waters - EMPC Meeting



Above: Photo of tapwater.

The Northwest Indiana Urban Waters partners met in conjunction with the NIRPC Environmental Management Policy Committee on April 6, 2017. Thank you to partners Peg Donnelly of USEPA and Michael Kuss of the Sanitary District of Michigan City for great presentations on lead in drinking water. Download the [draft minutes](#).

Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Federal Partners Meet

On April 24, the Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Federal Partners met in Chicago to discuss each agency's current and planned projects and identify opportunities for involvement in the Partnership. The meeting included 16 participants representing Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, National Park Service, Senator Donnelly's office, US Economic Development Administration, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Forest Service, and US Geological Survey. The group discussed current and upcoming projects impacting Northwest Indiana's urban waters.

Upcoming Local Events

Hansen Park Work Day and Paddle Earth Day Celebration

Join the Michigan City High School Wolves Environmental Restoration Team to celebrate the inaugural year of their service learning group. Assist in their work day, enjoy a picnic lunch, and experience a voyager canoe paddle. Bring gloves, dress for restoration field work and paddling!

Hansen Park, Michigan City, IN

Tuesday, May 2, 1:00-3:30pm

River Rally 2017 River Conference

River Rally, hosted annually by River network, is a national conference that focuses on education, inspiration, and celebration with the river and water community.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

May 8-11, 2017

[>More information and Register<](#)

Tour of Shirley Heinze Nature Preserves All-Day Bus Tour

Tour multiple Nature Preserves. Shirley Heinze staff, board members, and guest speakers will provide insights on land conservation and the ecology, geology, and history of Northwest Indiana.

Saturday, May 13, 8am-3:30pm

[>More Information and Sign Up<](#)

Spring Ephemerals Hike Educational Hike at Ambler Flatwoods

Join Shirley Heinze Land Trust for an educational hike to learn about Spring Ephemerals at Ambler Flatwoods Preserve in Michigan City. The hike is one of many educational hikes offered in 2017.

Saturday, May 20, 9am-12pm

[>More Information and Sign Up<](#)

Funding Opportunities

Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Cost-Share Grant

US Forest Service has funding to support national urban forestry studies or projects on non-federal public land that have a national, regional, or multi-state coverage. Local or individual state urban forestry projects are not eligible.

Applications due May 24, 2017

>[More Information](#)<

Cooperative Training in Aquatic Toxicology & Ecosystem Research

Apply to enter into a cooperative agreement that will provide training opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral trainees at EPA's Mid-Continent Ecology Division research facilities.

Applications due May 16

>[More Information](#)<

319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grants

IDEM is seeking applications for projects that will reduce nonpoint source (NPS) pollution in Indiana's lakes, rivers, and streams through Clean Water Act Section 319 NPS Management Program grant funds.

Notice of Intent emails due June 1, 2017

> [More Information](#)<

Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced funding to acquire, restore, and enhance wetlands in coastal states through competitive matching grants to state agencies.

Applications due June 30

>[More Information](#)<

FWS Coastal Program

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced funding to provide direct technical assistance and financial assistance to coastal communities and landowners to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat on public and private lands.

Applications due September 30

>[More Information](#)<

2018 Clean Water Indiana Grant

Soil and Water Conservation Districts may apply to the 2018 Clean Water Indiana Grant Program to support competitive proposals for multi-year projects which address the state priorities in the State Soil Conservation Board's Business Plan.

Applications due September 15

>[More Information](#)<

Items of Interest

[Stormwater Finance Webinar Series](#)

[Coastal Program](#)

Seeks Public Input

EPA's Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center is hosting a stormwater finance webinar series in collaboration with the Water Environment Federation.

- May 11th, 2-3:00 pm EST- D.C. Water's Environmental Impact Bond (EIB)
- May 23rd, 2-3:00 pm EST- DC's Stormwater Retention Credit Program

>[More Information and Register](#)<

The Lake Michigan Coastal Program (LMCP) is seeking public input on funding priorities for the 2018 funding cycle of the Coastal Grants Program. Suggestions can be submitted directly to [Maggie Byrne](#), LMCP Grants Specialist or through a [survey on the LMCP Grants website](#).

Input will be accepted through May 19.

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program

Apply to be considered for RTCA technical assistance with your locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation project. Contact the RTCA by the end of May to discuss your project, before formally applying by June 30th.

>[More Information](#)<

Report on Economic Impact of Investing in Water Infrastructure

The Value of Water Campaign, through the U.S. Water Alliance, released an [economic impact report](#) analyzing investments in the nation's water infrastructure and how it affects economic growth and employment. The analysis discusses the benefits of investing and the risk of inaction.

EPA releases Route to Resilience Tool

EPA is releasing the Route to Resilience (RtoR) tool that will help small and medium sized drinking water and wastewater utilities learn more about becoming resilient to all hazards. The interactive desktop application guides utilities through 5 steps along the Route to Resilience -- Assess, Plan, Train, Respond, and Recover -- and provides utilities with a custom report that highlights products and tools that will help utilities on their path to resilience.

>[Download the RtoR tool](#)<

Silver Jackets Flood Risk Management Webinars

Silver Jackets teams in states across the country bring together state, federal, tribal and local agencies to learn from one another and apply their knowledge to reduce the risk of flooding and other natural disasters in the US and enhance response and recovery efforts. This webinar series will introduce new and existing Silver Jackets partners and their programs and initiatives.

>[More Information](#)<

Naturally Resilient Communities Tool

Naturally Resilient Communities is a partnership of NGOs, including the Nature Conservancy, the American Planning Association, and others. The new tool allows communities to incorporate nature-based solutions in local planning, zoning, and regulations and build projects to help reduce their exposure to flood and erosion impacts.

>[Access the tool](#)<

Trees in Urban Stormwater Management

As many cities explore green infrastructure to manage stormwater at its source, the reliable use of trees for stormwater control depends on improved understanding of how, and to what extent, trees interact with stormwater.

[Learn more and read a peer-reviewed article on the topic.](#)

The Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Partnership focuses on the Lake Michigan watershed in Lake, LaPorte and Porter Counties, Indiana.

Urban Waters works to connect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and state and local partners. The goals are to improve the Nation's water systems and to promote their economic, environmental and social benefits.