

Save the Date for the April Northwest Indiana (NWI) Urban Waters Partnership Meeting

**NWI Urban Waters
Partnership Meeting**
Thursday, April 20, 2023
9:30-11:30am CDT

Join the Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 923 6848 7778

Passcode: 630183

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**Please bring updates & announcements to
share with partners at the meeting!**

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Introductions
3. Partner Presentation: "Lake Michigan Coastal Hazards and Coastal Community Resilience," Joe Exl & Jenny Orsburn, Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake Michigan Coastal Program
4. Partner Presentation: "The Gem of Chicago Wilderness: Ecology and Restoration of the Greatest (a Great) Ecological Region of the U.S.," Dr. Spencer Cortwright, Indiana University Northwest
5. Partner Updates & Announcements

Questions? Please reach out to [Victoria Wittig](#),
the Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Ambassador.

Save the Dates for the next two 2023 NWI Urban Waters Partnership Meetings

Thursday, July 20, 9:30-11:30am CDT location TBD

Thursday, October 19, 9:30-11:30am CST location TBD

Survey Request: Preferred Format for NWI Urban Waters Partnership Meetings

We want to hear from you! The NWI Urban Waters Core Team is exploring moving back to an in-person meeting format for quarterly meetings of the NWI Urban Waters Partnership and we want to know works best for our partners. Please complete a <1 minute survey to share your preferences for in-person, hybrid or virtual meeting formats.

You may complete the survey directly through the Survey Monkey Link [here](#). We look forward to hearing from you!

A Fond Farewell & Sincere Thanks to Cherie Fisher, a Founding Member of the NWI Urban Waters Partnership



From left to right: Victoria Wittig, Cherie Fisher, Maria Sadowski, Nathanael Pilla, and Laura Reilly on a post-meeting walk at Miller Woods in the Indiana Dunes National Park in Fall of 2022.

Photo Courtesy of Laura Brennan.

Dear Northwest Indiana Urban Waters friends,

I am writing to share the news that after 20 years as a Social Scientist with the US Forest Service, I am moving on to a new position. I will soon be a Science Delivery Specialist, working directly with about 100 Forest Service scientists who are spread across a 20-state area. Within the Forest Service it is a relatively small move to a new team, but it means that I have to step away from partnership work, the most engaging and rewarding part of my current job. So, this is a fond and wistful farewell.

I have been with the Northwest Indiana Urban Waters partnership since the very beginning, in some ways since before the very beginning. In May 2011, a handful of people from various federal agencies got together at the Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk and brainstormed a list of state, local, and nonprofit organizations doing waterway-related work in the region. We invited every one of those organizations to the very first partnership meeting at NIRPC in July 2011.

Early on, those of us at federal agencies committed to doing more listening than talking at Urban Waters meetings. We asked the state and local partners to define the footprint of the partnership; after much discussion, the tributaries and sub-watersheds feeding Lake Michigan in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties were selected. We asked people to bring their updates, ideas, and challenges to all meetings and to share them freely.

Urban Waters has always been open to all who want to learn about water-related projects, big and small, going on in the region. Under the continuing leadership of Peg Donnelly (USEPA), Drew Hart (US Forest Service), and Dan Plath (NPS), and the guidance of uber-capable Ambassador Victoria Wittig, the partnership will continue to serve as a convener and catalyst to collaborative work in the coming years.

I will stay on the Urban Waters mailing list and follow news of the partnership from afar. I am proud of all that the Northwest Indiana Urban Waters partnership has accomplished and I wish you all the very best. Please stay in touch if you are inclined to. My email will be the same (cherie.l.fisher@usda.gov).

Cherie

US Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program Notice of Funding Opportunity

In early April, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service will announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Urban and Community Forestry Program. Under the Inflation Reduction Act, the Urban and Community Forestry Program received a historic \$1.5 billion to support urban tree-planting, urban forest planning and management, and related activities, particularly in disadvantaged communities. You are invited to a briefing on **Wednesday, March 29 at 2:00pm CDT** to learn more about the upcoming funding opportunity and how to apply.

Speakers:

- John Podesta, Senior Advisor to the President for Clean Energy Innovation and Implementation
- Jaelith Hall Rivera, Deputy Chief of State, Private and Tribal Forestry, USDA's Forest Service
- Beatra Wilson, Assistant Director of Urban and Community Forestry, State, Private and Tribal Forestry Deputy Chief Area, USDA's Forest Service

Submit questions and register in advance for this briefing [here](#).

Funding Opportunities

The Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Partnership may be able to provide assistance to advance your initiatives by exploring grant opportunities, building partnerships, and helping you develop competitive proposals. Email [Victoria Wittig](mailto:Victoria.Wittig@usda.gov) to discuss your projects and ways we can help.

[Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects](#)

This funding supports projects focused on environmental benefits that have been developed as part of a collaborative process to increase the reliability of water resources. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes additional authority for the Bureau of Reclamation to provide funding for multi-benefit projects that improve watershed health. To learn more about eligibility and how to apply, click [here](#).

*Applications due March 28, 2023

*Funding available: \$3 million per project

[Indiana American Water Environmental Grant Program](#)

The Environmental Grant Program offers funding for innovative, community-based environmental projects that improve, restore or protect the watersheds, surface water and groundwater supplies in our local communities. To qualify, a proposed project must be: 1. Located within an American Water service area, 2. Be completed between May and November of the grant funding year, 3. Be a new or innovative community initiative, or serve as significant expansion to an existing program. View the program brochure [here](#). View the application form [here](#).

*Applications due March 31, 2023
*Award Maximum: \$10,000

[Legacy Foundation Transform Lake County Grants](#)

Transform Lake County Grants will continue to support our communities with a sharpened focus on the most pressing challenges our community is facing today: systemic racism and racial injustice and the underinvestment and lack of infrastructure in under-resourced and marginalized communities across Lake County. Register for an account to apply [here](#).

*Applications due April 1, 2023
*Award Range: \$2,000-35,000

[NIPSCO Environmental Action Grants](#)

Each spring, NIPSCO supports environmental restoration and education projects throughout NWI that have a direct impact in the NIPSCO service area. Grants are available for 501(c)3 or other non-profit organizations who are invited to submit a grant request through NIPSCO's online request portal [here](#).

*Applications due April 7, 2023
*Award Range: \$500-5,000

[US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving \(EJCPS\) Cooperative Agreement Program](#)

The EPA's EJCPS Program provides funding for projects that address local environmental and/or public health issues in their community. The Program assists recipients in building collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to develop solutions at the local level. View the Request for Applications [here](#). View recent applicant webinars [here](#).

*Applications due April 10, 2023

[US EPA Environmental Justice Government-to-Government \(EJG2G\) Program](#)

The EJG2G Program works to support and/or create model state activities that lead to measurable environmental or public health results in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms and risks. These models should leverage or utilize existing resources or assets of state agencies to develop key tools and processes that integrate environmental justice considerations into state governments and government programs. View the Request for Applications [here](#). View recent applicant webinars [here](#).

*Applications due April 10, 2023

[National Fish and Wildlife Foundation \(NFWF\) Coastal Resilience Fund](#)

The National Coastal Resilience Fund will make investments in planning, design, and implementation of natural and nature-based solutions. The goal is to enhance protections for coastal communities from the impacts of storms, floods, and other natural coastal hazards and to improve habitats for fish and wildlife. View the Request for Proposals [here](#). View recent applicant webinar [here](#).

*Pre-proposals due April 12, 2023
*Full proposals due June 28, 2023
*Match not required, but encouraged
*Award Range by Project Category:
Community Capacity Building and Planning, Site Assessment and Preliminary Design, and Final Design and Permitting: \$100,000-1,000,000
Restoration Implementation Projects:
\$1,000,000 to \$10,000,000.

[NFWF America The Beautiful Challenge](#)

NFWF is soliciting proposals through the America the Beautiful Challenge program. The program is dedicated to funding landscape-scale conservation and restoration projects that implement existing conservation plans across the nation. Via the Request for Proposals [here](#). View recent applicant webinar [here](#).

*Pre-proposals due April 20, 2023
*Full Proposals due July 20, 2023

*Award Range by Project Categories, such as:
Implementation Grants: \$1-5 million
Planning Grants: \$200,000-2 million

[Great Lakes Commission, Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program \(GLSNRP\)](#)

The GLSNRP provides grants to reduce nutrients and sediments entering the Great Lakes. This year's program will continue to help local partners take action to reduce nutrient loads from agricultural watersheds, eroding shorelines and streambanks in the Great Lakes basin. Register for the applicant webinar [here](#).

*Applications due April 21, 2023

*Funding available: \$300,000 over four years

[The Network for Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund](#)

The purpose of the Catalyst Fund is to accelerate the pace and practice of landscape conservation and stewardship across the United States. The Fund makes strategic investments in strengthening the collaborative capacity of place-based, community-grounded Landscape Conservation Partnerships. Read the Request for Proposals [here](#). Register for the Applicant Webinar [here](#).

*Applications due April 21, 2023

*Applicant Webinar: March 28, 1:00 CDT

[US EPA Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking \(EJ TCGM\) Program](#)

This new, innovative program will fund up to 11 entities to serve as "Grantmakers" to community-based projects that reduce pollution. Selected "Grantmakers," such as Minority Serving Institutions, will develop an efficient, simplified process so that organizations that historically have faced barriers to receiving funding can more seamlessly apply for grants that address environmental harms and risks. Learn more [here](#).

*Applications due May 31, 2023

[US EPA Pollution Prevention \(P2\) Grants](#)

EPA will soon announce two new P2 grant opportunities funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: 1. Environmental Justice in Communities and 2. Environmental Justice Through Safer and More Sustainable Products. EPA is providing notice of these grant opportunities in advance so potential applicants can make the necessary preparations to submit high-quality applications. To learn more about these grants and receive notifications when they are available, click [here](#).

*Applications due Spring 2023

Partner Opportunities & Resources

[Advancing Watershed Protection Through Land Conservation: A Guide for Land Trusts](#)

Many land trusts have recognized the fundamental connection between land and water and are actively working to protect rivers, lakes, and other waters. Undertaking such water-related activities can offer several benefits to land trusts - as laid out in this guide - which includes a comprehensive list of federal funding opportunities from the EPA.

[Request for Information: Framing the National Nature Assessment](#)

The US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) is seeking input from the public to help inform the framing, development, and use of the National Nature Assessment. Comments are due March 31, 2023. More information can be found [here](#).

[Urban Forest Educators Symposium](#)

The Urban Forest Educators Symposium will be hosted in a hybrid format April 11-14, 2023. Professionals and practitioners in urban forestry are invited to share best practices and create guidelines for shared pedagogical approaches for teaching urban forestry

related topics.

[2023 National Brownfields Training Conference](#)

The National Brownfields Training Conference will be held from August 8-11, 2023, in Detroit. It is the largest event in the nation focused on environmental revitalization and economic redevelopment.

[EPA Water Infrastructure Technical Assistance Website](#)

As part of EPA's efforts to implement the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Water Infrastructure Technical Assistance website has been updated. Updates focus on new and existing EPA water and technical assistance programs.

[EPA Water Finance Clearinghouse](#)

The Water Finance Clearinghouse is a web-based portal to help communities locate information and resources that will assist in making informed decisions for their drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure needs.

[EPA Webinar on Green Infrastructure and the MS4 Permit: A Compendium of Case Studies](#)

In many states, the MS4 permit acts as a regulatory driver to encourage or require implementation of green infrastructure in MS4 communities. For this webinar, speakers whose permits featured in the Compendium will take a deep dive into their MS4 permit requirements and local green infrastructure projects.

[Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\) Guidebook](#)

The IRA provides grant programs, loan programs and other investments for clean energy and climate action. Billions of dollars of federal funding has been specifically allocated to "Harnessing Nature-Based Solutions and Climate-Smart Agriculture to Deliver Economic, Climate, and Resilience Benefits," as outlined on page 129. Download the IRA Guidebook [here](#).

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

NWI Urban Waters | Northwest Indiana, Lake, Porter, & LaPorte Counties, IN 46360

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