April 1, 2013

Mark a Ratner
Lawrence B. Dumas Distinguished University Professor
ISEN Co-director

David C. Dunand
James N. Margie Krebs Professor
Materials Science and Applied Science

Dear Professors Ratner and Dunand:

I am very happy to provide a final report on the Loeb/Geiger Environmental Law Clinic project to cover the contamination mapping and website development for the DePue Superfund site. With ISEN's support, the project successfully developed the interactive mapping and website, which are currently being used in advocacy and for learning by the residents of DePue.

In late 2010, the clinic began representing the Village of DePue, which is located about 110 miles south-west of Chicago. In 1999, virtually all of DePue, including a beautiful 500 acre lake in the center of the town and all of the town's residential and other properties, was declared a Superfund site. The village is badly contaminated with heavy metals as a result of almost a century of zinc smelting and other industrial operations. Although Illinois EPA began prosecuting the Responsible Parties (ExxonMobil and Viacom/CBS) more than 15 years ago, very little progress has been made on clean up and there is serious concern about the scope of remediation that will be required and the ongoing health of the residents of DePue. In addition to now being a very low income town, the residents of DePue are majority-minority (largely Hispanic and Laotian) and the site also presents important environmental justice issues. The clinic is representing DePue in its efforts to ensure a fair and adequate clean up and appropriate attention to the health of the residents.

Although numerous tests and reports were prepared on the contamination of DePue over the past 17 years, no single source existed reporting or visually showing the extent of the contamination or areas of high levels of contamination. In coordination with Professor Franz Geiger and Groundswell Educational Films, we proposed a project to create an interactive map that shows the precise locations and levels of each of the contaminants at the DePue site and provides information comparing the
contamination levels to health standards and explaining the potential health risks.

Professor Geiger's lab, under the direction of graduate student Sarah Gomez (Saslow), engaged four undergraduate students to sort through and analyze thousands of pages of reports and testing data. The students created a data base that was then used by Groundswell Educational Films to create the interactive mapping and also the website. ISEN support of this project funded the work by Groundswell, including development of the site architecture, graphics, user interfaces, the mapping, and visual/video content.

The website - wwwcleanupdepue.com - was launched in September 2012. The clinic has used the website extensively in advocacy activities with state agencies and the media. It has also been a tremendous educational tool and benefit to the residents of DePue. Working on creating and advocating with the website has also been a very strong learning experience for clinic students.

We hope in the future to develop broader learning tools around the map and website that will be used for education for Illinois students. This will involve development of a curriculum and learning plans.

We are extremely appreciative of ISEN's support of this project. This could not have been accomplished without ISEN's support.

Sincerely,

Nancy Loeb

Nancy C. Loeb
Director, Environmental Advocacy Clinic
Bluhm Legal Clinic
Northwestern University School of Law
375 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611-3069
Tel: 312-503-0052
E-Mail: n-loeb@northwestern.edu