

**St. Marys River Bi-National Public Advisory Council (BPAC)
Meeting Minutes**

Place: CIS Center, LSSU
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

When: February 7, 2012
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

1. Call to order/introductions

Present: Greg Zimmerman, Michelle Selzer, Donald Marles, Mike Ripley, Barb Keller, Corey Jerome, Catherine Taddo, Gary Leith, Nancy Griffin, Marilyn Burton, Dave Samp, Klaas Oswald, Lorelei Premo, Crystal Bole, Mike McCarthy, Amanda Bosak

Regrets: Paula Antunes, Corrina Barrett

Guests: Steve Pennington Tetra Tech, James Schardt & John Perrecone US EPA GLNPO, Melissa Straffer O'Connell LSSU, Katie Williams UW-Milwaukee, Kory Groetsch & Michelle Bruneau DMCH

2. Approval of minutes

Deferred.

3. Office Reports

- BPAC Student Mike McCarthy is planning the Environmental Summit for Friday March 16th and Saturday March 17th. There is a subcommittee formed, Amanda, Crystal and Lorelei working with Mike and Greg to plan the children's activity day Friday and the Summit Saturday.
- LSSU & the Biology Department is hosting Ecological Integrity & Human Health speaker. Greg will send out the information for members to attend.
- Algoma Highlands Conservancy is trying to acquire Gros Cap property and requested a letter of support from BPAC. Greg circulated this email last week and there was no indication of opposition so the letter of support has been sent.
- The Sault Area Watershed Group focusing on Ashmun Creek this year and there will be a technical meeting March 16th for locals.

4. Agency Updates

Attached.

Little Rapids Update:

RFP have come in and a vendor is currently being selected for the Environmental Assessment. BPAC will be informed when feasibility study is complete providing the cost, a timeline, public information sessions, etc.

Habitat Restoration Grants:

EPA has RFP coming up, not as AOC program, but RFPs will show EPA where funding should be allocated this year for key projects.

Sustain Our Great Lakes is currently accepting applications for grant funding. Not AOC specific funding opportunities. The grant is broken up into 2 funding categories.

5. Memberships

Dave Samp - motioned by Mike Ripley & 2nd by Marilyn all in favor passed
Nancy Griffin - motioned by Cory & 2nd by Dave Samp all in favor passed

6. New Business

- John Perrecone US EPA GLNPO announced that St. Marys River has been chosen as one of focal AOCs for funding. Funding can be used for major restoration project to achieve maximum improvement of BUIs such as sediment contamination. CSOs eliminated, update septic or sewage, habitat restoration, etc. What is the most 'feasible' project that GLNPOs funding can be used towards.
- BPAC members are concerned about corners being cut in RAPs due to feasibility. The US side of the St. Marys River cannot be delisted if the Canadian side of the river is not ready and able to delist. Brainstorm some ideas and submit RFP for the St. Marys River grant funding opportunity.
- Steve Pennington of Tetrattech (consultant with the Corps' Western Lake Huron study) will talk about a document they prepared for the Corps regarding St. Marys River restoration. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) is seeking a coastal project to fund to improve water quality, Saginaw Bay and Chippewa East Mackinaw are the two areas chosen. Steve has come to the BPAC meeting to gather local input on how those funds could be best used in regards to the St. Marys River AOC. ACE is looking to use the funding on projects that help move AOCs closer to delisting. The issue is that the St. Marys River has one habitat restoration project currently underway and no other restoration projects ready to get started.
- Offering to help write factsheets to assist with writing applications to GLRI funds. These project factsheets will act as a marketing tool as well as list goals and specific objectives. Steve provided a handout which listed the top 5 projects for delisting St. Marys River. ACE will cover the first \$100,000 then match additional funding requests 50:50.
- Katie is a Geography student from the University of Milwaukee. She is working on stakeholder engagement within the Environmental Government. She is focusing on 2 areas, Duluth and Sault Ste. Marie, both of which have AOCs. Her PhD thesis is focusing on national and international levels and stakeholders, what they say versus what they actually do.

7. Presentation

- Kory Groetsch and Michelle Bruneau of the Michigan Department of Community Health will be presenting on their GLRI fish consumption/tumor BUI grant & provided examples of marketing and promotional items to create awareness for fish consumption in our area.
- Comments and feedback are due by March 7th and can be submitted to Michelle by email: bruneaum@michigan.gov or 517-335-8984. She will email the presentation upon request.

8. Public Comments

None.

9. Next Meeting

TBA

10. Adjourn

Four Agency Report to the St. Marys River BPAC Meeting
February 7th, 2012
Cisler Center – Lake Superior State University (Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan)

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

- * The draft DEQ Stage 2 document was provided to the BPAC via Greg Zimmerman on July 28. The DEQ is looking to finalize the Stage 2 by the end of the calendar year. Please provide comments to Michelle Selzer by December 15, 2011.
- * The AOC Program statewide assessments for Aesthetics, Beach Closings, Dredging, and Bird & Animal Deformities BUIs are currently being implemented.
- * Aesthetics – John Riley, the AOC project lead for the Aesthetics assessment, conducted the first of two site visits for the year. The second site visit will be conducted during, or just following, a wet-weather event with a targeted assessment planned for the north shore of Sugar Island. This monitoring visit will be coordinated with Chippewa County Health Dept.
- * Beach Closings – the desktop analysis will be conducted during the month of December. The focus of the assessment is related to the first tier of the state's restoration criteria tied to whether or not an AOC waterbody is attaining Water Quality Standards for E. coli.
- * Dredging – the SMR did not meet the first tier restoration criteria related to disposal methods and whether or not the Corps dredge material can be used for beach nourishment and open water disposal (this does not mean that is the disposal option for the material, it is just the threshold assessment criteria). Thus, the SMR will be assessed using the second tier of the state's restoration criteria that involves conducting a comparison of the AOC data with a non-AOC port/site. The tentative site selected for the SMR is the Whitefish Point state dock.
- * Bird & Animal Deformities – no update could be obtained. Current understanding is that the assessment is being coordinated with the Canadian assessment that was taking place this year on the river.
- * DEQ recently shared a draft concept paper related to roles and responsibilities in Michigan's AOC Program. The idea is to develop an annual work plan for each AOC that will help guide the PAC and AOC coordinator activities.
- * Action Item for BPAC consideration: As a way to meet the proposed 12/31/11 deadline, Michelle would like to propose that a technical team of BPAC members schedule a series of conference calls over the month of December to help develop the draft work plan. Can use the DEQ Stage 2 BUI tracking table as a reference. If BPAC agrees, please provide Michelle with the names of tech committee and she will set calls with the group.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA)

- * As of November 15, the St. Marys River Former MGP site Legacy Act sediment cleanup is complete. Approximately 24,000 cubic yards of PAH contaminated sediments were removed during this two-phase dredging project. The non-federal sponsor, Consumers Energy, provided the 40% cost share match. This remediation project addresses the last known remaining sediment hot spot on the U.S. side of the St. Marys River bi-national AOC.

Environment Canada (EC) and Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE)

* The deadline for applications to Environment Canada's Great Lakes Sustainability Fund for 2012/13 was January 30th 2012. Submissions exceeded the available funding of \$2.9M by more than \$1.5M. For the St Marys River AOC the only new application received was from the City of Sault Marie, for a 3 year stormwater management and monitoring project. Environment Canada staff will review all applications and make recommendations on projects for funds in March.

EC/MOE Sediment Technical Team [includes other stakeholders]

The Innovation Centre is currently managing four projects related to the Canadian portion of the St. Marys River AOC, jointly funded by the Ministry of the Environment and Environment Canada. Collectively, these studies are intended to provide the Sediment Management Technical Team with the information required to create an effective sediment remediation and/or management strategy. This includes:

- * A geotechnical assessment of contaminated sediment in the area East of Bellevue Marine Park for which fieldwork was carried out the week of December 6th, 2012. The purpose of this field and lab investigation, led by M.R.Wright and Associates, was to determine the geotechnical and geochemical properties of the sediment with depth.
- * Dr. Krishnappan (a former Environment Canada Scientist working now as an independent consultant) was contracted to further assess the stability of contaminated sediments within the construct of the St. Marys River fate and transport model. The purpose of this supplementary modeling exercise was to ensure that short-term (daily) high-flow events that could potentially disrupt the sediment were not being overlooked. This project has been completed and submitted to SSMIC for review.
- * A new contract was also issued to ENVIRON to make additional revisions to the Conceptual Site Model (CSM) as requested by the Sediment Management Technical Team. The CSM is a document that provides a comprehensive overview of the sources of contaminants, migration pathways, human and/or ecological receptors, exposure pathways, and the linkages that exist among these varied components.
- * A contract has been issued to an independent consultant to format archived data from Environment Canada. Once the formatting has been completed, the bathymetry, chemistry profiles (total PAHs, total iron, and chromium), sediment bearing strength, and associated sediment horizons will be made into GIS maps with appropriate layers.