

**St. Marys River Binational Public Advisory Council
Minutes of Meeting**

Place: Roberta Bondar Place
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Time: Wednesday, October 9, 2002

Binational Public Advisory Council Members Present

John Bain - Ontario
Barb Keller - Michigan
Donald Marles - Ontario
Mike Ripley - Michigan
Al Wright - Ontario
Greg Zimmerman - Michigan (BPAC Chair)

Guests

Art Ostaszewski - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Bill Scharf - Michigan State University
Rod Stewart - Ontario Ministry of the Environment

Regrets

Kara Flannigan - Ontario
Jennifer Manville - USEPA

1) Introduction and Welcome

Dr. Greg Zimmerman, as the new Chair of the St. Marys River BPAC, welcomed those present.

2) Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Corrections to the Minutes of the previous meeting:

Page 2: the spelling of Shannon Besler be changed to Shannon Becker
Page 2: the spelling of Professor Ron Shot be changed to Professor Ron Schott

Moved by: Dr. Barb Keller
Seconded by: Mr. Mike Ripley

That the minutes of the meeting of Monday, May 6, 2002, be approved as amended.
Carried.

3) BPAC Updates

a. BPAC Office

Environmental Summit

Greg Zimmerman reported that the September Environmental Summit was successful. However, he hoped for increased attendance at future summits, and particularly from the LSSU student body. One of the ways of doing that would be to encourage LSSU professors to give some academic credit to students who attend the Summit. Greg also indicated that LSSU did an excellent job of advertising the Summit. He would like to ensure that the Summit is continued and promoted in the future.

Art Ostaszewski said representation from Algoma Steel and the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, was much appreciated. He complimented the speakers and the presentation materials.

Mike Ripley wished to encourage the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to participate. He suggested that someone from the City's Recreation Department or Planning Department would be extremely valuable as a participant in the RAP process.

BPAC CD

Copies of the CD produced by the BPAC Office students are now available. Members were asked to supply locations where these CD's might be distributed.

Michelle Ribant, Intermediate School District Science and Mathematics Coordinator for the Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, School Board, would be a good contact to encourage the use of the CD within the Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, school system.

BPAC Website

The site is now operating at: www.lssu.edu/bpac

Greg Zimmerman encouraged all members to view the website and report back to him on any suggestions for improvement. He is hoping to include greater use of links.

Funding for BPAC Office

There is no current funding for the Office. New sources of funding for hiring a student are being sought. The BPAC Office is fully equipped, and it would be good to have a student actively involved. Mike Ripley and Art Ostaszewski will research possible sources for funding.

b. LSSU Project Funding

Greg Zimmerman noted that Barb Keller was successful in securing a Great Lakes National Program Office grant and will be able to proceed with acquiring the specialized equipment needed to undertake chemical assessments of the St. Marys River sediments.

Sites to be examined will be identified through GPS coordinates. Results of the assessments will be posted on the LSSU website, and will be copied to the BPAC Office.

c. City of Sault Ste. Marie East End Sewage Treatment Plant

Greg Zimmerman reported that the City is committed to upgrading the East End Sewage Treatment Plant. Improvements in the sewage distribution system draining to the plant are being undertaken. Most evident is the overflow holding tank project under construction at Bellevue Park.

Rod Stewart said that the project is proceeding on schedule. Don Elliott, an Engineer with the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, made a presentation at the Environmental Summit describing the project components.

4) Agency Updates

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

Art Ostaszewski reported that his agency has undergone reorganization and the number of divisions has been reduced from 9 to 6. He is now located in the Surface Water Quality Assessment Section of the Water Division. The Remedial Action Plan Unit has been combined with the Inland Lakes Unit. He expected that the funding for his section would be maintained.

US EPA Region 5

Greg Zimmerman provided a notice for a public meeting to be held on October 23, 2002, at Lincoln Elementary School, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, regarding Cannelton Inc. Superfund Site. This information was submitted by Jennifer Manville.

EPA will hold a public meeting followed by an availability session to discuss a proposed partial delisting, and plans for the five-year review of the Cannelton Inc. Superfund Site. Representatives from the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality also will make presentations at the public meeting. Potential future uses of the Site and redevelopment will be discussed. The availability sessions will allow people to discuss specific concerns. Representatives from Phelps Dodge, the

current property owner, will be present to answer questions. The public meeting will be held from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and the availability session from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Ontario Ministry of Environment

Rod Stewart reported on the following items.

Air Quality Monitors: Raw data shows a limited amount of particulate matter is entering Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, sites from Ontario.

Algoma Steel: The Company has gunned (coated) No. 7 blast furnace, which will reduce the amount of particulate matter being emitted. It will also extend the time before the blast furnace needs to be rebricked.

City of Sault Ste. Marie: The City has expanded its recycling program through the use of yellow boxes and green bags. Paper and cardboard will be recycled through the yellow boxes. As an experiment in some sections of the city, green bags can be used for wet, compostable material, which will be mixed with yard and leaf waste at the landfill site.

Provincial SWAT team: The Ministry of the Environment has developed a SWAT Team to examine specific industries. In Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, the provincial team has recently investigated auto-repainting and refinishing businesses. The SWAT Team has laid charges, tickets, and orders for infractions.

Ontario Air Quality Index Alerts: Rod Stewart reported that an alert was identified for the Sault Ste. Marie area in August. The alert was due to ozone and particulate matter. Sources were identified from the US Mid-West (Detroit). As a result, local industries, such as St. Marys Paper and Algoma Steel, voluntarily reduced their local emissions. Mike Ripley stated that the US Government will support coal fired energy plants, and environmentalists are very concerned about the impact of these new plants on global air quality.

5) New Business

Report on Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, Hazardous Wastes

Greg Zimmerman and Barb Keller noted that Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, provides household hazardous waste recycling. There are 3 opportunities throughout the year for residents to bring in hazardous waste material. Barb Keller reported that there will be a building dedicated to this at the city's landfill site. The four participants in the grant application to obtain funding for this initiative were the State of Michigan, Lake Superior State University, the City of Sault Ste. Marie, and the Council for the Recycling Center. Barb Keller was the main author in preparing the grant application.

Great Lakes' Heritage Coast

Mike Ripley was invited to attend a review session for the Great Lakes' Heritage Coast, and reported on a new draft strategy developed by consultants hired by the Ontario Government. Many of those invited to the review were concerned about implications on their activities. For example, local members of the Prospectors' and Developers' Association were concerned about proposed restrictions on mining, prospecting, and development within the planning area. Rod Stewart will also be involved because he is the Ministry of Environment representative who will provide comment on the draft strategies being produced.

Binational Program Kiosk

Mike Ripley made a presentation to the Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Tourism Solution Council about free educational content available from the Binational Program Office for the development of interpretive kiosks in the Great Lakes' Basin. The Binational Program is particularly interested in finding potential partners in the Eastern Lake Superior area. The kiosks will incorporate inter-active interpretive displays. The Binational Program is interested in distributing its geographical information system (GIS) content for habitat around the Lake Superior Basin. The recipient would be responsible for applying for funding to cover the costs of the computer, the software and construction of the kiosk. They are able to add to the content to reflect local interests. The Tourism Solution Council is interested in participating in the hopes of having a new outlet for providing further tourism information in the area.

State Public Advisory Councils (SPAC)

Mike Ripley explained that the Michigan SPAC has developed a training program for marketing PAC mission statements. The Michigan SPAC has been instrumental in promoting a Great Lakes Heritage Bill that is presently going through Congress. This bill, if successful, will provide \$50 million per year for five years, to be applied to PAC initiatives.

St. Marys Paper Company Tour

Mike Ripley participated in a tour of the St. Marys Paper mill. This tour was sponsored by the Upper Lakes Environmental Research Network (ULERN). The tour dealt with the use of residual wastes (bio-solids). One potential product is created by mixing bio-solids produced from the mill with kaolinite. The resulting product is used to cover land fills and this application can be permitted through a Ministry of Environment Certificate of Approval. Mike was interested in the possibility of this waste being used to cover the steel plant's slag piles which would fulfill one of the recommendations of the RAP.

Rod Stewart explained that the product is good for capping land fills, but there are a significant number of people in Ontario who are opposed to bio-solid applications. The opposition originates from the potential for pathogens and the possibility of raw sewage being mixed in. Rod stated that the St. Marys Paper bio-solids may have brighteners

incorporated in them. There appears to be a significant variability in content and environmental quality.

6) Implementing the Stage II Report

Greg Zimmerman indicated that approvals for the Stage II Report have been provided by both Federal Governments, the Ontario Ministry of Environment, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, as signers to the Four Party Agreement. Greg asked those present whether the St. Marys River BPAC should have an event acknowledging the Stage II Report acceptance. Don Marles had spoken to John Marsden of Environment Canada. Don felt that there should be some form of public event/celebration. It was acknowledged that the details for specific implementation projects will be part of an implementation annex that will be developed following the release of the Stage II document.

Moved by: Don Marles
Seconded by: Barb Keller

That Greg Zimmerman, as Chair of the St. Marys BPAC, write a letter to John Marsden, indicating that the release of the Stage II RAP Report should occur in Sault Ste. Marie, and that BPAC be involved.

Carried.

7) Next Year's Projects and Grant Opportunities

- Friends of the St. Marys River: John Bain reported that the Friends is a locally incorporated body that could solicit funding for moving on the implementation of annex items. He said that the Friends are taking part in a new project funded by the Great Lakes Heritage Coast (Ministry of Natural Resources). \$25,000 will be available to develop interpretive signage at strategic locations along the St. Marys River.
- St. Marys Marine Center: John Bain reported that the Marine Center will be based on a heritage river theme and the Norgoma will be the themed attraction. He said a feasibility study has been produced and the report showed that the Marine Center can be sustained without ongoing government funding. He further reported that he is putting together a funding package for the Center's development and operations.
- BPAC Office: Greg Zimmerman indicated that BPAC members should identify potential funding opportunities to support BPAC's role in promoting public education outreach. Art Ostaszewski stated that there might be funding through the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission for habitat restoration works. He also said he would be happy to work with the Friends of the St. Marys River on binational projects. Mike Ripley noted that it would be good for BPAC to develop shelf projects to be prioritized for applying to funding sources that become available in

the future. He felt that projects could be implemented by other partners such as universities, municipalities, and the Friends of the St. Marys River. Art Ostaszewski said it was important to have shelf projects because funding opportunities tend to come up quickly and have short time frames for making submissions. Further, he felt that the better prepared you are with shelf projects, the better the application would likely be. Greg Zimmerman felt that this would be the ideal situation for BPAC to be in. As an example, he cited a successful application for the Ashman Creek Bio-Reserve Proposal which had been a shelf project.

Mike produced a pamphlet now being distributed as part of a program to educate citizens on the consequences of burning household garbage which adds to the deposition of contaminants in our region. Studies are showing that burning of garbage is one of the main sources of dioxin in the Lake Superior basin. A collaborative project might be to have the Friends of the St. Marys River apply for funding to purchase the educational material then to have student workers from the BPAC Office help in distribution. An example of why such education is needed in our area is a sign near the Sault Ontario airport which contains a picture of a burn barrel and the words "Construct and Use Your Incinerators Properly".

Art Ostaszewski recommended that BPAC have a workshop to develop shelf project proposals. He said that there is a Canadian "Green Site" website that identifies funding opportunities in Canada. Mike Ripley felt that the first priority would be to get the BPAC office funded once again. Barb Keller concurred, indicating that LSSU students are a potential resource and they also need thesis topics. These provide an excellent opportunity for BPAC required research.

8) Next Meeting

Greg Zimmerman indicated that the next meeting will be in the format of a workshop to develop project proposals. The agenda will also include reviewing and accepting the Stage II RAP report.

Date: Monday, November 18, 2002.

Place: Lake Superior State University

9) Adjournment

Greg Zimmerman adjourned the meeting at 9 p.m.