

Four Agency Report to the St. Marys River BPAC Meeting

September 26, 2012

BT 202, Essar Convergence Centre, Sault Ste. Marie, ON

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

- The DEQ and Chippewa County Health Department recently received a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant to improve water quality through the construction of stormwater Best Management Practices (e.g. rain gardens, bioswales, native plantings, etc.) at Sherman Park and Four Mile beaches.
- The Little Rapids Restoration team held a conference call on September 21st to discuss several design options and the performance, costs, and anticipated restoration achieved by these different design options.

Ontario Ministry of the Environment

- In June 2012, the Minister of the Environment introduced the Great Lakes Protection Act in the Ontario legislature; information on the proposed act, draft Great Lakes Strategy and the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund (this year's deadline is October 12) can be found at http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/subject/great_lakes/index.htm
- The Ministry of the Environment has announced the list of watersheds that are eligible for funding under the Community Environment Fund; applications for funding will be accepted until November 7, 2012. For information, please visit http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/funding/community_environment_fund/STDPROD_088926.html (note: funds are available for the Goulais River watershed).
- BPAC members can feel free to contact Michelle McChristie with any comments or questions about the proposed legislation, draft strategy or above-mentioned funding programs.
- The sedimentation rate study for the area East of Bellevue Marine Park currently being undertaken by the Canadian Centre for Inland Waters in partnership with the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (with funding provided by the MOE) is progressing well. A presentation on the completed work will be made to BPAC on or before August 31st 2013.

Environment Canada

- **Assessment of wildlife deformities and reproduction BUI in St. Marys River AOC River:**
This summer Environment Canada biologists finished their fieldwork in the St. Marys River AOC and non-AOC control site (to discern between local effects specific to the AOC). They have begun analyzing the data. The completed report is expected in Summer 2013, and the project lead will be happy to present and discuss the findings with BPAC. The project is an assessment of the status of aquatic wildlife in the Canadian section of the St. Marys River AOC to provide insights into the status of the beneficial use impairment (BUI). Top predator fish-eating colonial waterbird species (herring gull and common tern) were selected to study the health effects associated with contaminants in the aquatic environment, and involved fieldwork/sampling in 2011 and 2012. Population trends in colonial waterbirds nesting within the AOC were also assessed.
- **Assessment of wildlife populations and habitat BUI in St. Marys River AOC River:**
Marsh bird surveys have been completed for five sites (3 within the AOC and 2 outside). Eight wetlands within the AOC and four wetlands outside the AOC were chosen for a site reconnaissance survey. This summer, preliminary data on water quality was collected at all 12 sites and submerged aquatic vegetation data was collected at 10 sites (2 sites within the AOC were not suitable for this type of survey). An additional four wetlands within the AOC were visited but not surveyed. A report will be prepared describing the sites surveyed and will be available in mid-2013. A presentation and discussion of the

findings with BPAC is welcomed. The project seeks to advance the understanding of the condition of wildlife habitat and selected wildlife communities and provide guidance on the status (impaired/not impaired) of the beneficial use impairment (BUI) within the AOC.