

# St. Marys River Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) Meeting Minutes

**Place:** Ontario/Michigan Room, Cisler Center, LSSU  
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

**When:** September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

## 1. Call to order/introductions

**Members:** Don Marles, Mike Ripley, Klaas Oswald, Alexis Schefka, Emily Martin, Nancy Griffin, Sheri Glowinski, Mary Rossiter, Chris Graham

**Agency Reps:** Corrina Barrett (AU), Carrie Ginou (AU), Kristina Denison (Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation District), Kira Fry (MOE)

**Guests:** Jessica Wesolek (LSSU), Brian Wesolek (Bay Mills Indian Community), Jason Bertrim (Q 104)

**Regrets:** Paula Antunes, Barb Keller, Jim Dukes, Marilyn Burton, Lorelei Premo, Crystal Bole

## 2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014 - minutes approved and adopted.

## 3. Business arising from previous minutes

- The Canadian Delisting Criteria have made it through the last round of edits. Corrina shared the updated criteria with the BPAC on September 8, 2014. Please provide comments back to Corrina by the end of the month. The Implementation Committee hopes to finalize the criteria once BPAC has had the chance to read and comment on the latest version.
- BPAC to discuss: The Provincial Planning Statement (made under the Ontario Planning Act) that was amended in April 2014.
  - The Provincial Planning Statement, 2014 is issued under section 3 of the Planning Act. The Statement has policies that set out the government's land use vision for how to settle the landscape, create the built environment, and manage the land and resources over the long term to achieve liveable and resilient communities. The Planning Act sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario and describes how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them.
  - The Provincial Planning Statement was amended in April 2014, and a new section was included (Section 2.1.5 (f)) which provides protection for Coastal Wetlands. The definition in the PPS 2014 of "Coastal wetland": means a) any wetland that is located on one of the Great Lakes or their connecting channels (Lake St. Clair, St. Marys, St. Clair, Detroit, Niagara and St. Lawrence Rivers); or b) any other wetland that is on a tributary to any of the above-specified water bodies and lies, either wholly or in part, downstream of a line located 2 kilometres upstream of the 1:100 year floodline (plus wave run-up) of the large water body to which the tributary is connected.
  - The 2014 amendment and its lead-up are:
    - “2.1.4 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
      - a) significant wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E1; and
      - b) significant coastal wetlands.”
    - “2.1.5 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
      - f) coastal wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E1 that are not subject to policy 2.1.4 (b) unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological

functions.”

- Development is allowed on these coastal wetlands IF the proponent can demonstrate that there will be no negative impacts. This is great news and strong protection for both coastal wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat within the AOC, but also throughout the Great Lakes.
- Klaas mentioned that he received a map from the city showing small wetlands that are in or close to the city boundary that are not yet regulated, but will fall within the protection of the “2 kilometres” rule of the amended Planning Statement.
- Klaas would like to see the BPAC team up with the Kensington Conservancy and Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition to spread the word on this to local municipalities that are within the AOC. The Sault has a professional planning department, so they are already on this, but St. Joes, Desbarats, and other areas that the AOC extend to have township councils but no professional planners, and may not be on top of changes like these.
- The City of SSM amended the Official Plan (which creates zones such as rural, urban, etc. that guide where development occurs, and what that development consists of). The OP must be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement. The opening of the OP for revision may provide an opportunity for BPAC to inform the city that the Remedial Action Plan for the River (and its watershed) should result in more active zoning designations and policies, such as perhaps the creation of distinct Wetland Zones, or Natural Environment Zones for the protection of (for instance) winter deer yards. That would also go a ways to moving the yardsticks in the BUI remediation.
- There will be open houses by the City in the New Year (January or February) regarding the OP, which may offer the BPAC an opportunity to bring this up with city planners.

#### 4. Office Reports

- Sheri to introduce the new BPAC Office Student, Alexis.
- Sheri and Alexis are currently working on the BPAC Environmental Summit (March 27 and 28).
- They are also working on creating an Environmental Almanac, which will highlight any issues within the AOC that are still of concern, and possibly create an interactive map for using on the BPACs website.

#### 5. Agency Updates

- Canada

##### *Revised BUI Delisting Criteria*

On June 17, EC and MOECC met with BPAC to discuss the revised delisting criteria for the Canadian side of the AOC. Feedback was generally positive, and it helped to further refine the criteria. The revisions were sent to BPAC in September, and the members invited to review and provide additional feedback. EC and MOECC are seeking BPAC’s official endorsement this year.

##### *Degradation of Aesthetics BUI and Eutrophication/Undesirable Algae BUI*

With financial support from EC and MOECC, Algoma University is almost finished its second year studying water quality in the river, as part of an effort to evaluate the current status of the two BUIs. Results so far are generally positive. One more year of fieldwork is planned for 2015, with a final report expected in March 2016.

##### *Degradation of Fish Populations BUI*

This summer, Fisheries & Oceans Canada began sampling for its nearshore fish community survey, which will use an index of biotic integrity approach to assess the overall health of the river’s fish community. Data collection will also take place in 2015, with a final report anticipated in 2016. The study will help determine the current status of this BUI.

- United States

##### *Little Rapids Habitat Restoration Project*

In October 2013, NOAA announced the award of a \$5.9 million GLRI grant for the implementation of the Little Rapids Habitat Restoration project. The grant was awarded to the Great Lakes Commission and sub-contracts are now in place with the Chippewa County Road Commission, Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development, and Lake Superior State University. Construction contract award is expected to be made in early December. Project design will occur during the winter, with construction scheduled to begin in the spring and project completion expected by November 2015.

- The Michigan Delisting Criteria for Fish & Wildlife related BUIs need to be revised to reflect previous discussions on how the Little Rapids Restoration Project would be sufficient to delist the 1) Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat, and the 2) Degradation of Fish & Wildlife Populations BUIs. BPAC needs to start this discussion. Ultimately, what is needed from the BPAC conversation is general agreement on the sufficiency of the Little Rapids project to restore the BUIs, and a clear process to follow to revise the criteria. Leave this as a placeholder as John Riley would like to talk to the group in person.
- The group would like to go back to the Stage 1 document and find out what species were considered at risk / why these BUIs were listed in the first place.

## **6. Memberships**

- For new members, applications must be received & prospective members present for confirmation – standard procedure.
- Emily Martin – Everyone was in favor, and Emily was officially accepted as a member
- Sheri Glowinski – Everyone was in favor, and Sheri was officially accepted as a member
- Alexis Schefka – Everyone was in favor, and Alexis was officially accepted as a member

## **7. New Business** (addressed previously)

- BPAC to discuss: The Provincial Planning Statement (made under the Ontario Planning Act) that was amended in April 2014.
- BPAC to discuss: The City of SS Marie ON is putting together their amended Official Plan, and is likely to hold Open Houses in January or February. Perhaps BPAC could do a bit of research toward a submission to the City for the Official Plan.

## **8. Public Comments**

## **9. Next Meeting**

- Date in October to be determined. Will send out Doodle Poll.

## **10. Adjourned @ 7:35 pm.**