

**Draft**  
**St. Mary's River Binational Public Advisory Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting**

**Place:** Algoma Room  
Civic Centre  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

**Time:** June 11, 1998  
7:00 - 9:45 PM

**Binational Public Advisory Council Members**

**Present:**

Joan Aikens - Ontario  
Roman Aikens - Ontario  
Marilyn Burton - Michigan  
Kara Flannigan - Ontario  
Martin McPherson - Ontario  
Lou Quinlan - Ontario  
Mike Ripley - BPAC Chair, Michigan  
Walter Sarich - Ontario  
Rod Stewart - Ontario  
Al Wright - Ontario

**Regrets:**

John Bain - Ontario  
Dr. Bill Bowerman - Michigan  
Roger Eberhardt - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Jennifer Manville - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (RAP Contact)  
Don Marles - Ontario

**Guests:**

Patrick Morash - Lake Superior Program Office  
Terry Morse - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**1) Welcome and Introductions**

Mike Ripley, as chair, called the meeting to order and requested the members and guests to introduce themselves and their affiliation, if appropriate. Mike reported that Jennifer Manville (US EPA) and Roger Eberhardt (MDEQ) both wished to attend the meeting but couldn't because of other commitments.

## **2) Minutes of May 5, 1998**

Mike Ripley provided some time for the BPAC members to review the minutes of the May 5 BPAC meeting for any revisions or additions. Rod Stewart noted that his name was left off the list of BPAC members present. Al Wright agreed that there was an error and that the minutes would be changed to reflect this correction.

*Marilyn Burton moved that the amended minutes be adopted, seconded by Roman Aiken, and subsequently carried by the members present.*

## **3) Presentation of Lamprey Control Efforts in St. Marys River - Terry Morse**

Mike Ripley thanked Terry for taking time from his busy schedule to come and make a presentation to BPAC. Terry indicated that he had been one of the preliminary members of BPAC and had attended the first inaugural meeting. He said that he recalled it as being a very positive experience.

Terry provided background to explain the sea lamprey control program operations that are proposed for the summers of 1998 and 1999 on the St. Marys River. He indicated that sea lamprey is an exotic species originally found in the North Atlantic. Females lay 60,000 to 100,000 eggs. When there is a high population of sea lamprey, lamprey will attack all fish species including perch, walleye and lake sturgeon. Salmonid species are particularly vulnerable and fish may not live through an attack. Sea lamprey were originally confined to Lake Ontario in the 1800s but when the Welland Canal was constructed they were able to extend their range throughout the Great Lakes by 1938. Lake trout provided the primary preferred food source and by 1950's sea lamprey had removed all lake trout in Lakes Huron and Michigan and approximately 50% of the lake trout in Lake Superior. With the removal of lake trout as a predator, the exotic alewife population was able to expand resulting in massive die-offs in the mid-1960s. These large scale impacts resulted in the creation, in 1955, of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Its primary function was to re-establish lake trout and remove sea lamprey.

Initial focus of the Commission was to determine the life cycle of the sea lamprey. Research determined that spawning occurred in prime clear water streams and the young larval lamprey establish themselves in the mud of these streams for 3 to 5 years before undergoing metamorphosis when the funnel like mouth lined with teeth develops. Once this occurs the sea lamprey begins its parasitic stage and moves downstream and into the Great Lakes for a period of 1 to 2 years. During this active feeding time, the sea lamprey will grow from 6 inches to 18 inches before returning to spawn in the clear water streams.

The life cycle research determined that the sea lamprey were most vulnerable during the larval stage and that streams were identified as the best location to introduce control treatments. These treatments have changed over time from primarily mechanical devices to chemical lampreycide and more recently to a more integrated alternative control program. Although treatment using chemical DFM is still considered the best tool, the Commission, in 1992, set out a vision to reduce dependency on lampreycide as the sole treatment. Use of DFM has been reduced by more than 30% over the amount used during the 1980s. Alternative controls now include the release of sterile males into streams at a ratio of 3 sterilized males for every unsterilized male. The result is a higher incidence of non-viable eggs and preliminary research has shown that the program results are very encouraging.

Terry indicated that good control programs exist for Lakes Superior, Michigan, Ontario and Erie but this is not the case for Lake Huron preliminary due to St. Marys River sea lamprey population. More parasitic sea lamprey are produced in the St. Marys River than in all of the other tributaries of the Great Lakes combined. An increase in production may be as a result of improving water quality making the river a more attractive site for spawning and larval nursery. In the river most of the spawning occurs in the rapids and larval infestation occurs mostly downstream but some occurs upstream as well.

Lamprey control planning for the St. Marys River consists of 3 elements i.e. assessment, lampreycide option considerations and alternative control option considerations. The assessment program has been carried out over a 4 year period using a deep water shocker. The assessment program has shown that larvae are not randomly distributed but tend to be located in larval "hot spots" and the total population has been estimated to be approximately 5.2 million larvae. In addition a dye study demonstrated the use of DFM would not be a cost effective treatment. As a result of these findings, the proposed control treatment is to use granular Bayluscide along with alternate control methods to reduce spawning through enhanced trapping and sterile male release techniques.

The use of granular Bayluscide is effective for application on specific sites. Experiments using helicopters have also determined that aerial application using a helicopter is also an effective method for specific site distribution. In 1998, Terry wishes to apply granular Bayluscide to 200 acres, and in 1999 to treat 2000 acres of the St. Marys River. He estimates that by treating 1% of the total surface area they will be able to eliminate 60% of the larvae in the St. Marys River. The remaining 40% will be dealt with using sterile male release and the enhanced trapping programs.

BPAC members questioned Terry in a number of areas. Kara Flannigan wanted to know if the granular Bayluscide would be a problem for swimmers in shallow water areas. Terry indicated that the chemical is used to control swimmers itch, is not persistent and becomes diluted quickly. He said that alternate control techniques will be increasingly used and in the long term there was a good possibility that chemical applications would not be required. The major problem with sea lamprey is that they are very adaptable and for much of their lives they are not accessible to other natural controls.

Marilyn Burton wondered if there might be a market for using the sea lamprey as a food item. Terry indicated that local adult sea lamprey are in various stages of deterioration prior to spawning and as a result are different from the healthy North Atlantic sea lamprey that Europeans are familiar with. She also questioned if the program might be adjacent to municipal water intake locations. Terry indicated no.

The cost for the St. Marys River sea lamprey control will require an additional \$5.7 million over 5 years. Michigan has already committed itself to \$3.0 million towards this amount but other states and Canada have not responded as yet.

Terry predicted a great potential increase in Lake Huron lake trout numbers with the controls being proposed for the St. Marys River. This increase will result in a positive economic benefit through increased numbers of fishing opportunities and quality of experience.

The 1998 control program was expected to take place on July 13 and 14 but this would be dependent upon weather conditions. Terry also said that the Great Lakes Fishery Commission has established a long list of contacts to ensure public awareness is obtained and questions are answered. Sites to be treated will be delineated and agency boats will be present to ensure that boaters are not within the areas when the application takes place.

#### 4). **Public Comment**

No formal public presentations were given at the meeting.

Marilyn Burton asked about the status of the LSSU BPAC office. Mike Ripley indicated that he had spoken to Dr. Bill Bowerman and that the money for the office was still coming from the EPA. Mike said that he would keep the BPAC members posted and hoped to have an open house when final arrangements were complete.

Martin McPherson asked Mike Ripley if he had a chance to follow up on his request regarding the status of the compensating dams on the St. Marys River. Mike indicated that he had not. Martin also asked how much of a threat was posed by the Spiny Water Flea. Terry Morse said that it was in the Great Lakes food chain and that the State of Michigan was monitoring it. Mike Ripley indicated he would provide a scientific paper to Martin describing the Spiny Water Flea.

**Action Items:** Mike Ripley to provide Martin McPherson with information on the St. Marys River compensating dams and the Spiny Water Flea.

Al Wright described the steps taken in the nomination and designation of the St. Marys River as a Canadian Heritage Waterway. He also indicated that on June 3, the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources (John Snobelen) had confirmed the Province's support of the nomination of the river. The next requirement will be to obtain support of the National Minister of Heritage Canada (Sheila Copps). Once received the local committees can prepare a final document which will identify how the local Canadian communities and agencies will protect the heritage values identified in the background and nomination reports which have been produced. The Stage 2 RAP for the St. Marys River would support and compliment the strategies identified in the final report. Al indicated that the background and nomination report information had been shared with local American interests who have submitted a proposal to have the American side of the St. Marys River considered as an American Heritage River. President Clinton's decision on the first 10 rivers to be selected was originally to be announced in January but the announcement was deferred until July.

Marilyn Burton indicated that there was not unanimous support of the American Heritage Rivers program because of the possibility of the Federal jurisdiction imposing restrictions and controls on the local municipalities and private individuals. She was also concerned about the \$100,000 salary that would be provided as salary to a River Navigator position should the St. Marys River be selected. This money, she thought,

should be directed to accomplishing local improvement activities and not salary.

Marilyn also presented a copy of an editorial article which appeared in The Mining Journal (Marquette). The article, entitled “Water diversion scare spotlights growing concern”, was very critical of the recent decision by the Ontario government to support an application from a private Canadian company to export water from Lake Superior. Mike Ripley indicated that Don Marles had agreed at the last meeting to prepare letters to relevant officials outlining the St. Marys River BPAC’s opposition to any water diversion proposal.

Martin McPherson identified concerns being raised within Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario regarding a proposal to build a commercial marina facility adjacent to Bellevue municipal park. He asked BPAC to write to the city and request that a full environmental impact statement be produced before any decision is made. Mike Ripley agreed to request John Bain to talk to the City Planning Director (Don McConnell) to obtain more information.

**Action Item:** Mike Ripley to request John Bain to obtain planning information regarding the marina proposal.

## 5) Discussion of Stage 2 Review and Comments

Mike Ripley welcomed Patrick Morash from the Lake Superior Programs Office. Patrick said that his office is very interested in obtaining input from BPAC and local agencies throughout the preparation of the Stage 2 RAP. He said that BPAC would not only have a chance to review the individual sections as they became available but also the complete draft report.

Marilyn Burton pointed out that public comment was not addressed during the Stage 1 report preparation and this was the major reason that the St. Marys River BPAC had not signed as supporting it.

Mike Ripley provided BPAC members with a draft copy of the letter to Jake Vander Wal that he agreed to prepare. The letter identified BPAC members’ concerns. Mike identified the issues raised in his draft letter as:

- use of RAP Task Team accomplishments
- development of delisting criteria
- concerns related to contaminated sediments

-east end municipal sewage treatment plant and water pollution

Discussion with Patrick Morash and the BPAC members followed. Recommended changes to the letter involving some of the issues identified were proposed e.g. wording associated with the sewage treatment plant and storm sewer flood runoff. In his draft letter, Mike indicated that BPAC was committed to provide timely comment back to the Lake Superior Program office and was prepared to meet every month if necessary. Roman Aiken questioned the possibility of partial reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by having to attend extra meetings. This type of support appeared not to be available. Patrick Morash said his office did not have expectations that BPAC would meet every month and that it would be acceptable to have BPAC's comments and recommendations submitted in September. Mike agreed to modify his letter so that BPAC would agree to meet more regularly in order to respond to the draft Stage 2 report sections.

***Roman Aiken moved, Marilyn Burton seconded and BPAC members present supported the motion that the amended letter prepared by Mike Ripley be sent to Jake Vander Wal.***

**Action item:** Mike Ripley to send his amended letter to Jake Vander Wal expressing BPAC's concerns relating to the Stage 2 RAP.

## **6) Summary of RAP Summit in Traverse City**

Mike Ripley reported that he found the meeting and the various sessions extremely interesting. He provided a copy of correspondence (Matt Doss to SPAC Members and PAC Chairs dated June 8, 1998 and Kathy Evans to The Honorable Paul Wojno dated May 15, 1998) both related to the legislation implementing the Clean Michigan Initiative and the need to consult with PACs/BPACs associated with Michigan's 14 designated AOCs.

Mike said that there was also a proposal for BPAC members from both the St. Marys and the St. Clair Rivers to attend each other's meetings. More details would be provided in the future.

The projects identified by the other PACs/BPACs for funding consideration over the next three years were very expensive compared to the initiatives that BPAC had identified and prioritized at the last meeting. Given the other examples from other RAP

areas, Mike identified the Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan storm water separation project as a priority. Follow-up discussions will likely occur with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the US Environmental Protection Agency over available funding allocations.

## 7) **New Business**

Mike Ripley provided BPAC members with a copy of a letter from Jennifer Manville in which she summarized the Environmental Protection Agency's involvement in the St. Marys River Area of Concern. Identified in the letter were:

- US EPA Inquiry Regarding Algoma Steel
- Cannelton Industries Superfund Site
- Bay Mills Surface Water Quality Sampling Program
- Bay Mills Project to Assess Contaminated Sediments in the Upper St. Marys River

Jennifer indicated in her letter that as further action is taken on these issues, she would provide further updates to BPAC. Mike indicated that Ken Gebhardt of the Bay Mills Indian Community would attend future BPAC sessions.

Mike reported that an OPAC meeting has been scheduled for September and further details would be forthcoming.

Mike also had a copy of the St. Clair River Stage 2 RAP on CD ROM format. BPAC members should contact Mike to borrow the CD ROM.

## 8) **MOE Report**

Rod Stewart provided an update on the Ministry's activities relating to the St. Marys River:

a) Report on Accomplishments over the past 10 years. Rod and Jake Vander Wal (along with US partners) will be preparing a report which will identify what actions have taken place on the St. Marys River over the last 10 years. The report will be patterned on the recent presentation that they had made to IJC. The report will be developed in a newsletter format and will identify both successes and problems.

b) Study on PAHs in vegetation and soils. Rod provided a copy of the 1997 PAH



study findings. The report indicates that PAHs have decreased but further improvements would be required.

c) Completion of a draft Air Quality Control Order for Algoma Steel. Rod reported that a draft control order has been prepared to improve air quality associated with the air borne particulate (kish) originating during the dumping of hot metal transfer cars. Public meetings will be held to discuss the control order.

d) US EPA Visit. The US EPA will be meeting with staff from the Ontario MOE to discuss a number of concerns. One of these is air quality control. The US EPA will be setting up air monitors in Sault Michigan. Local MOE expertise will be made available to the US EPA.

e) Sault Ste. Marie Ontario Engineering Study. Rod reported that \$200,000 has been directed to an engineering study to examine control of raw sewage overflows. A surge tank appears to be the best option to prevent these overflows. He also reported that the city is committed to further funding to make changes to the present sewage system.

#### 9) **Next Meeting, Date and Objectives**

Mike Ripley announced that the next formal meeting of the BPAC will be scheduled for **August 5, 1998** and will be held at the **Cisler Centre, Lake Superior State University.**

**Action item:** Mike Ripley to contact Dr. Bill Bowerman to arrange for a meeting room.

At 9:45 PM, with no further business pending, Mike Ripley adjourned the meeting.

(Al Wright)