

St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Agenda

Place: LSSU, Michigan Room
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

When: October 27th, 2016
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

1. Call to order/introductions

2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

3. Business arising from previous minutes

- Re-designating the Eutrophication and Undesirable Algae BUI and the Degradation of Aesthetics BUI (on Canadian side of SMR).
- Action items to be re-visited:
 - Coastal wetlands initiative
 - Post RAP initiative
 - Implementation Annex review
 - Natural Heritage Information Request: Port of Algoma (Discrepancies with AECOM construction plan)

4. Presentations

- No presentations scheduled

5. Office Reports

- RAP Office updates – the RAP Coordinator attended the Great Lakes Public Forum in Toronto from October 4-6. You can view the presentations at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwe1DQGixfLMjKHSoVSQR22fXFf0PEoA>
- SPAC update: the SPAC meeting is today in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Aubrey, our SPAC representative will give an update at the next meeting.

6. Agency Updates

- Provided during meeting.

7. Memberships

- Letter received from Kristen Sherlock. For new members, applications must be received & prospective members present for confirmation – standard procedure.

8. New Business

- SMR AOC coastal wetland report will be presented at the next BPAC meeting by Angela Darwin from the Canadian Wildlife Service.

9. Public Comments

10. Next Meeting

Four Agency Report to the St. Marys River BPAC

Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

Degradation of Aesthetics BUI and Eutrophication/Undesirable Algae BUI

- Based on the multi-year water quality study (2013-15) by Algoma University to evaluate the current status of the two BUIs, the subsequent discussions with BPAC (including the September 22 meeting) and the comments submitted to project-lead Carrie Ginou, a redesignation report for both BUIs is being prepared by ECCC and will be sent to BPAC for review and comment in November.

Fish Tumours

- ECCC is waiting for the final analysis of liver samples taken from 100 White Suckers collected last summer. The evaluation is underway by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture. As of October 25, the lab completed examination of 10 of the 100 samples, and none were found to have tumours. But conclusions as to the tumour rate will come when the lab work is completed in December.

Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat BUI

- As noted at the June 2016 BPAC meeting, ECCC-Canadian Wildlife Service has completed a final report on its multi-year study on the condition of coastal wetlands and wildlife populations (breeding marsh birds, amphibians, aquatic macroinvertebrates) on the Canadian side of the AOC. It concludes coastal wetland habitat and biotic communities are Not Impaired, thus satisfying the wildlife component of the BUI delisting criteria (i.e., *coastal wetland wildlife habitat conditions within the AOC are comparable to those of suitable reference sites, as assessed using an index of biotic integrity*). The report has been shared with BPAC, and the study results and BUI delisting criteria will be discussed at the November BPAC meeting with study lead Angela Darwin, who presented the initial results to BPAC in June 2015.
- The other BUI component is for fish habitat (i.e., *enhance rapids/aquatic habitat conditions through feasible conservation and restoration measures identified in the Stage 2 RAP*). ECCC commissioned a study to determine the feasibility of undertaking several options, and has been in discussions with the Batchewana First Nation regarding possible next steps for an aquatic habitat restoration project on Whitefish Island, adjacent to the “Big Rapids”.

Ontario Ministry of the Environment & Climate Change (MOECC)

On October 3, Michelle McChristie changed positions in the MOECC Thunder Bay office, ending her role as the provincial co-lead for the St. Marys River AOC (and Lake Superior LAMP). A staffing process is underway.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

The Little Rapids bridge work will be complete in mid-November 2016 along with substantial completion of the project. The contractors poured the bridge deck and railings and the HMA paving and should be totally complete along with the pavement markings. The traffic will be shifted onto the bridge in the next week or so and then the temporary road and construction area will be removed. Additionally, all river work will be completed in 2016.

In spring of 2017 there will be some follow up paving, clean up and restoration. The 2017 paving will be an extra top layer on the road sections leading up to the bridge; there were areas called out for 1.5 inches of overlay that need to be completed in the spring after all the other work is done. The Road Commission invited MDEQ to look at the plans and they are keeping the turbidity curtain in place on the south side in case of disturbances. However, the removal should involve larger particles and rock so they aren't expecting a large amount of turbidity; however, they will keep partners updated on changing conditions that could be impacted by flow. The contractor is responsible for contacting local landowners during this process and the population on the island has decreased by about 25% with the changing seasons.

