

St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Place: Virtual Webex Meeting
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario & Michigan

When: Tuesday April 26, 2022
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Call to order/introductions

Members	Mary Rossiter, Peter Greve, Aubrey Maccoux-Leduc, Paula Antunes, Ron Prickett, Klaas Oswald, Joanie McGuffin, Brian Wesolek, Don Marles
Agency Reps	Heather Williams (USEPA) John Riley (EGLE), Ted Briggs (MECP), Gurpreet Mangat (ECCC), Lisa Derickx (AU), Meagan Sutherland (AU)
Guests	Becca Nixon

Approval of Minutes

- February 3, 2022 – Approved as presented

Presentation

- Revitalization in AOCs: Request for focus group participants – Dr. Becca Nixon, Purdue University
 - Research questions: (i) How do AOC residents and leaders define revitalization? How do they prioritize these revitalization outcomes? (ii) What mechanisms connect environmental projects with revitalizations? (iii) How can AOCs promote equitable revitalization processes?
 - Next step: Focus groups in 5 AOCs on definitions and drivers of revitalization.
 - Will send out a form via email for any members interested in participating in a focus group.

Business Arising from Previous Minutes

- Draft Sediment Management Strategy – Feedback was received from BPAC. RAP Team is reviewing feedback. The engagement process will continue with local First Nation communities and the Metis Nation of Ontario.

Agency Updates

- EGLE
 - - Fish Tumours or Other Deformities BUI – Discussions are underway regarding surveys and the collection of fish to assess fish tumours (no decisions made yet). May revise Statewide criteria for State of Michigan, considering mirroring Ontario's restoration criteria by setting a standard of 5% liver tumour rate and looking at brown bullhead from 3-4 sites in the river. Happy to involve any members who are interested.
- ECCC
 - 2022 budget was announced with 19.6million allocated to the Great Lakes and other large lakes.

- Fish Tumours BUI update – collected 100 white suckers last August but analysis has been delayed due to COVID. Hoping to get analysis underway soon
 - Fish & Wildlife populations BUI update – proposed for re-designation and RAP is nearing end of engagement effort.
 - Fish Habitat BUI update – ECCC recently established a 2-year funding agreement with Batchewana First Nation to move forward with Whitefish Island habitat Restoration project
 - Restrictions on Dredging BUI update – assessment report presented 2 years ago but criteria linked to Administrative Controls document and Sediment Management Strategy. Once these documents are finalized we will be looking to present to BPAC again.
- MECP
 - New COA funding agreement was finalized with Algoma University to provide ongoing support for RAP Coordination until March 2024.

New Business

- Shape of the Sault Draft Plan and BPAC comments
 - Document circulated amongst BPAC and passed along to the City for consideration.
- Shoreline protection - <https://www.sootoday.com/spotlight/protect-your-waterfront-property-with-a-shoreline-restoration-4990536>
 - Perhaps BPAC should/could send a letter to the relevant agencies who issue the permits, that this is contrary to good restoration of natural shorelines?
 - Founded on benefits using solid concrete walls to protect properties from river damage. This is not conducive to a more natural shoreline. A letter should be sent to the agencies who issue the work permits. Issue is that a lot of people don't bother getting permits.
 - Perhaps the RAP Coordinator could start working on a program in partnership with other agencies (Sault College, LSSU, etc.) to better inform the public, contracting industry, municipal governments that control zoning and permitting process.
- City's Green Initiatives Program
 - Offers funding for projects that encourage energy efficiency, reduce GHGs and improves water quality / rehabilitation
 - Total funds available for all projects under the CDF – Green Initiatives Program is \$50,000.
 - There is no deadline. Applications are accepted over the course of the year on a rolling basis or until the funds are used up
- Ontario Community Environment Fund – Water Quality Enhancement and Habitat Restoration in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario
 - The three main objectives of this project include enhancing water quality, removing invasive plant species, and restoring wildlife habitat. These objectives will be accomplished by implementing the following activities:
 - (i) Stream cleanups: Volunteer stream cleanup days will be organized to remove litter and debris from the 5 main diversion channels.
 - (ii) Invasive species removal: Invasive plant species will be assessed and removed from

the 5 main diversion channels. Other key areas where invasive plant species are creating environmental degradation on riparian areas will also be explored for removal including the Fort Creek Conservation Area and Bellevue Park situated on the St. Marys River waterfront.

(iii) Rain garden construction: Rain gardens are shallow, sunken gardens that are designed to collect, capture, soak up, absorb and filter stormwater runoff. Rain gardens will be constructed in areas that do not impede flood control maintenance, such as the outer flood boundaries of the channels. Particular emphasis will be placed on areas where runoff occurs at times of high rain events.

(iv) Habitat restoration: creation of edge habitat and/or artificial nesting structures (nest boxes) in areas that do not impede with flood control maintenance, such as the outer flood boundaries of the channels.

Standing Items

- Ferrochrome plant
 - A new owner has taken over from Noront Resources. Australian company with money. Mining metals used in batteries for electric vehicles. Lots of unknowns regarding whether the company will want to setup the Ferrechrome plant in Sault Ste Marie or not.
- PFAS/benzene at Pointe des Chenes/airport – no new information at this time
- Official Plan for the City of SSM, Ontario – These documents are very important in term of natural resources and providing green spaces which is all done through zoning and the permitting process.

BPAC Elections

- Results:
 - Chair (US) – Aubrey Maccoux-Leduc
 - Vice-Chair (CAD) – Peter Greve
 - Second Vice-Chair (US) – Brian Wesolek

Public Comments

BPAC Requests for Presentation (To be scheduled)

- Algoma Boat Slip sediment studies
- Airport/Pointe des Chenes studies re:PFAS/benzene