

St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Agenda

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

When: Monday February 1, 2021
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Call to order/introductions

Members	Brian Wesolek, Jessica Wesolek, Don Marles, Aubrey Maccoux-Leduc, Ron Prickett, Peter Greve, Mike Ripley, Crystal Falk
Agency Reps	Heather Williams (USEPA), John Riley (EGLE), Meagan Sutherland (AU), John Rankin (AU), Lisa Derickx (AU)
Guests	Joanie McGuffin
Regrets	Paula Antunes

Approval of Minutes

- December 7, 2020 – Approved as presented

Business Arising from Previous Minutes

- Status Report on the *Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations* BUI for the Canadian side of the SMR AOC – Lisa
 - Suggestion was made to first restore fish & wildlife habitat and delist the *Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat* BUI before delisting the *Degradation of Fish & Wildlife Populations* BUI.
 - Point was made that there is a potential to confuse the public by declaring that on one-hand, fish populations have been restored in the SMR while simultaneously acknowledging that there are active fish consumption advisories in the SMR and that the *Fish Tumors & Other Deformities* BUI has not yet been delisted. Therefore, messaging must be clear and distinguish the concept of the *Degradation of Fish & Wildlife Populations* BUI and highlight its separateness from other, seemingly similar BUIs.
 - Some members expressed their intention to abstain from voting on/supporting the delisting of the BUI until the local First Nation Communities have been consulted.
 - Motion to vote on support for the delisting of the BUI was put forward. Some members listed their opinions in the chat whereas others elected to abstain at this time.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** BPAC to submit final comments on the issue and revisit the discussion as an agenda item in the next meeting.
- Draft Letter of Support for the newly proposed Canada Water Agency to be located in SSM – Ron
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Letter will be distributed amongst BPAC members for feedback and/or objections.
- Draft letter supporting City's involvement in the Clean Marina project for capturing plastics – Ron
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Letter will be distributed amongst BPAC members for feedback and/or objections.

Presentations

- NA

Agency Updates

- Updates will be provided at the meeting from ECCC, MECP, USEPA, EGLE, RAP Office, SPAC

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

- On January 19, ECCC launched a call for applications under the *Great Lakes Protection Initiative* for the Areas of Concern funding priority. The Fund supports action at the local level to restore water quality and ecosystem health by completing actions identified in the Remedial Action Plans, specifically project that implement actions that contributing to the restoration of Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs). Applications are due March 3, 2021. More information is available at: www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/great-lakes-protection/funding

Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)

- No updates at this time.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

- No updates at this time

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)

- All management actions are complete on the U.S. side of the AOC.
- Fish were collected in the fall of 2020 to analyze for the Fish Consumption BUI. Lab results are expected in the summer of 2021.

New Business

- Update on status of remaining BUI's on U.S. side – John (EGLE)
 - There are currently 3 BUIs remaining on the U.S. side.
 - **Restrictions on Fish Consumption BUI:** Last assessment was done 6 years ago. Fish are usually collected every 5 years. Fish were collected in September 2020 and are in line to be analyzed by the state lab; results will hopefully become available by the summer (2021). The last assement found that PCB levels compared favourably to the comparison site, however, there were slightly higher levels of mercury in rock bass compared to comparison sites.
 - **Degradation of Benthos BUI:** The delisting criteria states: “All remedial actions for known contaminated sediment sites with degraded benthos are completed”. These sites include: **a)** the Consumers Energy Gas Plant and **b)** the Cannelton Industries Inc. site. The contaminated sediment at these sites have been addressed. On the Federal level, the USEPA is planning on removing the tannery site (Cannelton Industries Inc.) from the Superfund site list. Cleanup is now complete and no additional work is to be done. Monitoring may still occur over the years by responsible parties. Would like to move forward with delisting the BUI later this year (possibly).
 - **Fish Tumors BUI:** According to the delisting criteria, the BUI will be considered “Not Impaired” when there have been no reports of fish tumors to the DNR or EGLE in 5 consectutive years. In essence, the absence of reporting is the criteria that determines

the removal of BUI. The Water Quality Network was established in 2010/2011 to try to determine if there were fish tumors present by actively seeking information from commercial fisheries, recreational anglers and anybody who spends time out on the water. This information included a wide range of water quality issues such as fish tumors, algal blooms, oil spills, and any other water quality impairments that were observed. This approach continued until 2014 and in that time, no reports had been made about fish tumors. Seeking BPAC input and feedback on the approach to delisting the BUI.

- Pointe Louise Proposed Estate Development – Klaas
 - Between the last meeting and this meeting, the same site was proposed again for an estate development. Developer contacted two city councillors to bring forward a resolution to city council. One of the two city councillors backed out of the resolution and therefore, the resolution was not brought forward to city council (two city councillors are required to bring forward a resolution).
 - New article regarding the petition to annex west end property from SSM into Prince Township so that they could work through Prince Township for approval instead of SSM. Message was received from city councillor that states that the Mayor had been in contact with the Minister to express disinterest in supporting the land transfer.
 - There is concern that the new developer may try to bypass Municipal Governments by going directly to the Minister in Toronto. A letter was drafted to the Minister to address this concern. Motion was put forward to send letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs in Toronto in efforts to prevent developer from any attempt to bypass Municipal Governments.
 - Permission was requested to share letter with Soo Naturalists and there were no objections.

Standing Items

- Ferrochrome plant
 - Emphasis seems to now be placed on getting road approvals in the far north. Company has been dealing with local First Nations and completing environmental impact statements for new roadways.
 - In terms of the company's plan to move to SSM, there has been no movement. BPAC will need to continue to monitor situation and leave as a standing item.
 - Link provided by Aubrey: <https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/ferrochrome-climate-activists-fight-for-representation-on-saults-new-environmental-committee-1911980>

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Memberships

- For new members, applications must be received & prospective members present for confirmation – standard procedure.
- No new memberships

Public Comments

- No Public Comments

Next Meeting

- TBD