

St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Minutes

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

When: February 3, 2022
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Call to order/introductions

Members: Peter Greve, Aubrey Maccoux-Leduc, Paula Antunes, Brian Wesolek, Al Wright, Klaas Oswald, Don Marles, Mike Ripley, Jessica Wesolek, Mary Rossiter, Jime Dukes, Ron Prickett

Agency Reps: Heather Williams (USEPA), John Riley (EGLE), Mark Chambers (ECCC), Ted Briggs (MECP), Lisa Derickx (AU)

Guests: NA

Approval of Minutes

- December 6, 2021 – Approved as presented

Business Arising from Previous Minutes

- Draft Sediment Management Strategy
 - Feedback requested from BPAC with a suggested timeline of February 11, 2022
 - A summary of the draft Sediment Management Strategy was presented at the December 6, 2022, BPAC meeting.
 - BPAC discussion and comments:
 - Reference was made to a past study where iron oxide was infused into the substrate as a means to counter the gases being generated by pulp sludge. The gases were having an impact on giant mayflies that feed on microscopic organisms in the substrate. The iron oxide neutralized the gases and after treatment and populations of giant mayflies recovered.
 - A recommendation was made to include this study in the strategy.
 - There was a chromium plant in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, in the 1930s-40s. It was situated beside the St. Marys River.
 - This should be added to the list of historical sources of pollution.
 - It seems like many people are unaware that they need to get a permit to do in-water works. The strategy doesn't call for any kind of regular monitoring to see if works are occurring or have occurred without benefit of a permit. If they find unauthorized works have taken place, who's responsible for investigation and possible enforcement and remediation?
 - The Administrative Control Guidance is unlikely to be effective if private landowners are not aware of the guidance and the procedures.
 - A recommendation was made for a public outreach campaign to accompany the Strategy/Administrative Controls Guidance
 - A BPAC member expressed how difficult it is to get information on what a private landowner can and cannot do to the shoreline (based on personal experience).

There seemed to be conflicting views between the various agencies as to what work is appropriate.

- Members expressed their concerns that there seems to be a lack of coordination amongst the various agencies involved in the permitting process.
- How will this strategy be implemented and enforced ? All the different government and non-government agencies need to work together.
 - RAP Team response: All of the agencies that are mentioned in the document, and that play a critical role, were part of the review process. The document is based on the the regulations that these agencies are required to enforce.
- There is a flow chart from the Cornwall Strategy. How is there Administrative Controls being implemented in Cornwall? Can we get any lessons learned from them?
- Concern about whether the SSMRCA has the capacity to deal with some of the larger scale projects.
 - RAP Team response: Depending on the size of the project, there are regulatory triggers involved. The larger the project, the more agencies that will be involved.
- Are mitigating measures, such as the use of silk curtains, required for dredging and other in-water projects?
 - RAP Team response: Yes, mitigating measures are required. The exact measures required are determined on a project-by-project basis (since every project is different).
- When large dredging projects are to occur, will homeowners, local First Nation communities, and the State of Michigan be notified? This is important in case something goes wrong with the mitigating measures put in place and contaminated sediments do in fact get resuspended.
- ECCC should be listed as one of the agencies associated with and/or responsible for the Administrative Controls. Environment Canada is the agency that has the most experience with contaminated sediment cleanups in areas of concern on the Great Lakes. Why isn't ECCC top and foremost in coordinating these plants?
- Concerns were raised about the Administrative Controls Guidance document. Feelings that the document is inadequate and needs more information and clarification. Confusion about who the first point of contact should be for a proponent considering dredging or other in-water works.

Agency Updates

- Updates will be provided at the meeting from MECP, USEPA, EGLE, SPAC, RAP Office
 - Due to time constraints, it was agreed that updates would be provided at a future meeting.
- Updates to AOC boundary maps – presented by Heather Williams (USEPA)
 - Map updates were described for the US side of the AOC.
 - The AOC shoreline of the current shapefile was updated using NOAA's shoreline date. This was obtained from the Continually Updated Shoreline Product (CUSP): <https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/CUSP/>
 - Utilizing aerial imagery, both current and historic, and best professional judgement, manual edits to the shoreline were made if significant deviations were apparent due to man-made changes or possible errors.
 - BPAC question: Why is Hay Point to Fort St. Joseph on the Canadian side not included?
 - Response: Hay Point is the historical boundary for the Canadian side as described in the Stage 1 RAP report (1992).

New Business – Due to time constraints, it was agreed that the agenda items listed below would be included on the next meeting agenda

- Shoreline protection - <https://www.sootoday.com/spotlight/protect-your-waterfront-property-with-a-shoreline-restoration-4990536>
- City's Green Initiatives Program - offers funding for projects that encourage energy efficiency, reduce GHGs and improves water quality / rehabilitation

Standing Items

- Ferrochrome plant
- PFAS/benzene at Pointe des Chenes/airport
- Official Plan for the City of SSM, Ontario

Memberships

- No new applications

Public Comments

- No public comments

BPAC Requests for Presentation (To be scheduled)

- Algoma Boat Slip sediment studies
- Air pollution – MECP/Algoma Steel
- Airport/Pointe des Chenes studies re:PFAS/benzene