

# St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Minutes

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

**When:** Monday May 10, 2021  
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

## Call to order/introductions

**Members:** Aubrey Maccoux-Leduc, Joanie McGuffin, Peter Greve, Don Marles, Al Wright, Klaas Oswald, Mike Ripley, Paula Antunes

**Agency Reps:** John Riley (EGLE), Catherine Taddo (City), Heather Williams (USEPA), Mark Chambers (ECCC), Ted Briggs (MECP), Meagan Sutherland (AU), Lisa Derickx (AU)

**Guests:** Kathleen Heymans, Elaine Ho

## Approval of Minutes

- March 1, 2021 – Approved as presented

## Business Arising from Previous Minutes

- BPAC seeking member volunteer(s) for SPAC position
  - The Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) is an association of all Public Advisory Councils across the State of Michigan. The group meets around three times per year which allows for information to be shared across all AOCs.
  - Although one member from each AOC is designated as an SPAC representative, all BPAC members are welcome to join the meetings.
  - Aubrey has been the SPAC representative for 4 years and would like to give the opportunity for another member to represent the SMR BPAC. The time commitment is minimal. The member does not necessarily need to be from Michigan.
  - **Action Item:** Let Aubrey or John know if you are interested in being the SPAC representative for BPAC.
- Response from Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
  - A response was received regarding BPAC's letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Discussions revolved around implications concerning the Pointe Louise Wetlands. Members expressed disappointment with the Minister's Zoning Orders.
  - Decided that the letter should be uploaded to the website.
  - A nearshore assessment across all the Canadian waters of the Great Lakes is being conducted by ECCC. The Lake Superior Nearshore Assessment may have information on wetlands in the Pointe Louise area. This could be a potential presentation topic for a future BPAC meeting.

## Presentations

- Community Fish Consumption Survey for the St. Marys River AOC – Meagan Sutherland (Algoma U)
  - A study was recently released entitled “Assessment of fish consumption beneficial use impairment at the Great Lakes Thunder Bay and St. Marys River Areas of Concern, Canada”. Results suggest that levels of contaminants in fish in the SMR have declined such that the BUI can be considered “Not Impaired”. However, it was recommended that fish-eating pattern surveys are conducted at the AOCs to better define the beneficial use and confirm the critical assumption of 8+ meals/month as “non-restrictive” adopted in this assessment. Thus, a fish consumption survey will need to be conducted to confirm the status of this BUI.
  - The objectives of the SMR Community Fish Consumption Survey are:
    - To form a better understanding of fish consumption patterns within our AOC
    - To inform the decisions regarding the evaluation and re-designation of the fish consumption BUI
    - Bring awareness to the public through educational outreach efforts
  - BPAC comments and questions:
    - This is timely as there has been a lot of community discussion around PFAS, mercury and fish consumption in general.
    - How will anglers be encouraged to participate? Reiteration of the benefits of completing the survey, lots of community engagement, and possibly a draw for a gift card.
    - What is the connection to the *Restrictions on Fish Consumption BUI*?
    - The survey will help to define what the beneficial use is. We have official consumption advisories from the provincial government, but are these restrictive to people? Do people want to eat more fish than what is advised?
      - There were concerns regarding the survey and the overall connection to the BUI (ie. Science should be the primary focus and it shouldn't matter what people eat).
      - The survey is part of a three-tier system and does not negate the delisting criteria that is currently in place for the Restrictions on Fish Consumption BUI (ie. This BUI will no longer be impaired when the fish consumption advisories in the AOC are no longer more restrictive than the advisories for the same contaminants in suitable reference sites. Comparisons shall be based on samples collected in the same timeframe for a minimum of two consecutive sampling events).

## Agency Updates

- No new updates from MECP, USEPA, EGLE.
- ECCC update regarding Whitefish Island fish habitat restoration project. ECCC is continuing to work with Batchewana First Nation. Although the project has been delayed due to Covid, a future presentation for BPAC will be organized.
- Available for Public Review: Draft of Canada's Great Lakes Strategy for PFOS, PFOA, and LC-PFCAs Risk Management (<https://binational.net/2021/04/26/can-cmc-pcspm-pfos-pfoa-lc-pfca-spfo-apfo-apfc-lc/>)

## New Business

- Canada Water Agency Brief
  - The Canada Water Agency sent BPAC some questions in a template that Peter completed. Peter sent an email to BPAC requesting a review of the document before it is submitted to the agency.
  - The impacts of climate change and contaminated sediments at depth should be included in the brief.

- Point des Chenes water
  - There is a PFAS issue at Pointe des Chenes Park which has been recently closed. The park is located adjacent to the river and BPAC expressed concern over the possibility of PFAS migration into the SMR.
  - Lisa is coordinating with the local MECP to have a presentation/discussion with Transport Canada regarding the site at a future BPAC meeting.
  - There is a second source of PFAS to the SMR which is located in Michigan. The Town of Kinross has an airbase where the use of firefighting foam contaminated the groundwater well.
  - Is the government doing anything about PFAS? The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement is (GLWQA) a commitment between the United States and Canada to restore and protect the waters of the Great Lakes. The Agreement provides a framework for identifying binational priorities and implementing actions that improve water quality. The GLWQA has an annex which addresses chemicals of mutual concern.

### **Standing Items**

- Ferrochrome plant
  - It will be a 7-year process for the owner to get the necessary approvals, environmental impact studies, etc. for the proposed facility in SSM.

### **Memberships**

- New application received from Joanie McGuffin.
  - BPAC has requested that Joanie confirm with the Lake Superior Conservancy that they are in agreeance with her representing them as a member of BPAC.

### **Public Comments**

- Two guests were in attendance, Elaine and Kathleen. Elaine is completing a one-year post-doctoral fellowship at Algoma University. She will be working on creating a community-based water quality monitoring network in partnership with Garden River First Nation. She is also involved in the Canada Water Agency with Kathleen from the City of SSM, Ontario.