

# St. Marys River Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) Meeting Minutes

**Place:** Macarthur Room, Cisler Center, LSSU (downstairs, across the hall from the galley)  
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

**When:** April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

## 1. Call to order/introductions

**Members:** Mike Ripley, Don Marles, Klaas Oswald, Chris Graham, Crystal Bole, Dave Samp, Greg Zimmerman, Nancy Griffin, Marilyn Burton

**Agency Reps:** Corrina Barrett (AU), Catherine Taddo (City), Kira Fry (MOE), Carrie Ginou (AU)

**Guests:** Megan Kelly (LSSU Assistant Prof), Sheri Glowinski (LSSU Prof), Frank Breen

**Regrets:** Paula Antunes, Martha Scott (AU), Lorelei Premo

## 2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – minutes approved and adopted.
- March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (deferred to next meeting)

## 3. Business arising from previous minutes

- The 2013 Annual RAP Coordinator Report to BPAC was circulated via email and a comment period was provided (March 6). No comments were received, so the report was finalized and printed professionally. The North Shore RAP Team also asked to display the report on their website: <http://www.infosuperior.com/> under “RAPID DATABASE”.
- Finalized Implementation Annex was distributed for everyone’s records (March 6).
- Update from Klaas on work he has done and OMB hearing regarding the Pointes Estates Proposal (placeholder)
  - Klaas reiterated the fact that he will be participating in the upcoming OMB hearing as a Party on behalf of the BPAC. This item will be removed from future agendas for the time being as the hearing will not taking place until November.

## 4. Office Reports

- Update on LSSU BPAC Resource Office activities
  - The BPAC Environmental Summit was cancelled this year (timing just didn’t work out).
  - Received quite a few calls regarding the coal dust from the coal pile that was unloaded on the Carbide Dock back in January. Greg contacted the DEQ and a plan had been put into place regarding the clean-up of the coal. A filter cloth was put around the pile, and contractors were brought in to dig up snow that was contaminated. Greg did receive pictures of icebergs in the St. Marys though that were covered in coal dust.
  - Sheri Glowinski has taken over the BPAC resource office and submitted the PAC support grant for the BPAC. It included continued funding for: the BPAC Student Office, next years Environmental Summit, some money that has been earmarked for the Little Rapids Restoration Project (such as macroinvertebrate identification, data analysis), as well as financial support for a BPAC student for about 3 hours/week.
  - Sheri has also completed a “Perception Study” on the general publics perception of the river. She may present findings at a future meeting.

## 6. Agency Updates

- Attached.

## 7. Memberships

- Megan Kelly and Sheri Glowinski to send their letters requesting BPAC membership to the Executive.

## 8. New Business

- Essar would potentially like to team up with EC and the BPAC (possibly through the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund) regarding conducting a boat slip sediment assessment similar to that of 2006. Deadline for GLGC Fund is May 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - Corrina and Chris looked into this and neither the BPAC is eligible (due to not being incorporated) nor is the scope of work eligible for this particular fund.
  - Chris indicated that the OCEF (Ontario Community Environment Fund) may be more appropriate: [Located Here](#) (deadline is already up for this year though).
- Ammonia Liquor Spill from Essar – sent out MSDS on April 9, spill was only a fraction of this.
  - It was a large “emergency tank”, and whenever the byproducts are overwhelmed, it pumps stormwater/cooling tower water, etc. over to this tank. Every week, a byproducts operator takes a level reading of the tank, and that day it showed a drop in eight feet.
  - A valve had split open and was spraying the ammonia water into the berm. The tank holds about 60,000 gallons/foot, which means a loss of about 450,000 - 500,000 gallons of ammonia water.
  - Immediately called the Spills Action Centre (as the spill had the potential to get off site).
  - The tank itself is open air, which means that precipitation (rain, snow) falls freely into it and dilutes what is in there. During one night in the winter, the tanks level went from 50 inches to over 100 inches (about 4 feet) and nothing had been pumped in (meaning snow was making up the difference). So of the 500,000 gallons, at least half was accounted for as precipitation, bringing the total spill down to 250,000 gallons of ammonia water.
  - They dug interceptor trenches around 8 feet deep, and collected all groundwater within the trenches, and are dumping it back into the tank.
  - Have put 600,000 gallons back into the tank to date. Essar and the MOE are doing comprehensive tests along the Davignon and into the Boat Slip to ensure nothing has made it’s way off of the property. They also passed all of their acute toxicity tests on rainbow trout and daphnia. Continuing to monitor the situation.
- Update on Water Quality Study through Algoma U
  - The Year One Report has been finalized and is now on the BPAC website: <http://www.lssu.edu/bpac/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Water-Quality-Project-Year-1-Report-March-2014.pdf>
  - Sampling was set to start in mid-April, but will be delayed until ice has completely melted on the river.
- IJC expecting higher than normal flow through the SMR Rapids this summer: [http://ijc.org/en /ilsbc/news?news\\_id=435](http://ijc.org/en /ilsbc/news?news_id=435)
- RAP Presentation to AU 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Geography Class: Corrina presented on the RAP and AOC.
- RAP presented a poster last week in Ottawa at the RPIC Federal Contaminated Sites 2014 Conference: was very well received.
- City’s Notice of Completion: Stormwater Management Master Plan – Released March 8: <http://www.city.sault-ste-marie.on.ca/newsitem.aspx?ID=1149&deptid=1>
  - The City is currently reviewing the comments received to date. They will then incorporate any updates into the final document, and then issue the final document.
- Does this dredging pose any risk to AOC? <http://www.saultstar.com/2014/03/12/more-than-39-million-earmarked-for-operating-maintaining-site>
  - Corp of Engineers will be making improvements to the Locks and dredging near the rock cut.
  - This is routine/maintenance dredging and shouldn't pose a risk to the AOC.

- State of the Great Lakes 2011 Technical Report and 2014-2016 Great Lakes Binational Priorities for Science and Action are available for download: [http://binational.net/home\\_e.html](http://binational.net/home_e.html)

#### **9. Public Comments**

- None.

#### **10. Next Meeting**

- Date in May/June to be determined. Will send out Doodle Poll.

#### **11. Meeting Adjourned at 7:45 pm.**

# Four Agency Report to the St. Marys River BPAC Meeting

April 23, 2014

Macarthur Room, Cisler Center, LSSU, SSM Michigan

## Ontario Ministry of the Environment

The Ministry of the Environment has finalized two grant funding agreements with Algoma University to support the implementation of the St. Marys River RAP: \$74,246 will be provided to support RAP coordination, and an additional \$92,861 will be provided over two years to support the water quality assessment.

The Great Lakes Guardian Fund is accepting applications until May 9; for details visit <http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/great-lakes-guardian-community-fund>.

## Environment Canada

### Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems BUI:

- At the March BPAC meeting, EC shared the results of its completed multi-year study of deformities, contaminant levels and reproductive health of birds. The report was shared with the BPAC Executive on March 3. It reaffirms the conclusions presented to BPAC at the meeting on June 19, which is: there is little evidence of impairment in colonial waterbirds attributable to local contamination effects within the AOC. EC is asking for BPAC's endorsement of the report's findings, which will support the redesignation of the BUI to "not impaired" (same status on Michigan side of the AOC).

### Degradation of Aesthetics BUI and Eutrophication/Algae BUI:

- Year 2 of 3 has begun on the assessment of the river's water quality, with EC and MOE providing financial support to Algoma University. The study will collect and analyze a number of physical and chemical properties to test water quality and thus assess the current status of the two BUIs.
- Results are still pending from the EC-commissioned report on agricultural activities in Ontario and the impacts on the AOC. The report will be shared with BPAC once available. It will provide insight into the current nature, density and scope of agricultural activities around the river, and the degree of environmental impact to the AOC. It is linked to RAP action *NPS-6: Control of agricultural and other non-point sources of pollution*.

### Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat BUI:

- EC's commissioned study on the physical, ecological and economic feasibility of creating new or augmenting existing rapids on the Canadian side of the river is progressing. The contractor, in collaboration with EC, Batchewana First Nation, Garden River First Nation, and other government agencies will be soon begin planning fieldwork for 2014. The study results (expected March 2015) will support future discussions with the Canadian RAP Implementation Committee and BPAC regarding the prospect of taking specific remedial actions to restore this BUI. It is linked to RAP action *FF-6: Remediation of Rapids Habitat*.

## Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

New AOC Coordinator: The MDEQ's Office of the Great Lakes is going through a small reorganization and, as a result, Bretton Joldersma will no longer be the AOC Coordinator for the St. Marys River. Effective April 28, 2014, Bretton Joldersma will be transitioning over to the Lakewide Management Program and will become the Lake Coordinator for Lake Huron including the St. Marys River. The new AOC Coordinator for the St. Marys will be John Riley (phone: 517-284-5045; email: [rileyj2@michigan.gov](mailto:rileyj2@michigan.gov)). John Riley will be a great asset for the BPAC, he is very familiar with the AOC program and, over the past 5 years, he has worked with several AOCs throughout Michigan.

*Bird or Animal Deformities or Reductive Problems BUI:* On March 11, 2014, the MDEQ received EPA's concurrence that the restoration criteria for this BUI had been met. Therefore, this BUI has been official removed from Michigan's side of the AOC.

*Degradation of Aesthetics BUI:* On January 27, 2014, the MDEQ received EPA's concurrence that the restoration criteria for this BUI had been met. Therefore, this BUI has been official removed from Michigan's side of the AOC.

*Fish Consumption BUI:* At the previous BPAC meeting the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) presented data from their fish tissue contaminant level study for the St. Marys River. Based on comments received during that meeting, the MDEQ will be conducting additional sampling this spring (2014) to target northern pike, yellow perch, and rock bass from the AOC and the Little Bay De Noc reference site. Northern pike fillet samples will be analyzed for mercury and the standard suite of chlorinated organics, including PCBs and DDT. Rock bass and yellow perch fillet samples will be analyzed for mercury only.

*Little Rapids Update:* In late October NOAA announced the award of a \$5.9 million GLRI grant for the implementation of the Little Rapids Habitat Restoration project. The grant was awarded to the Great Lakes Commission and sub-contracts are now in place with the Chippewa County Road Commission, Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development, and Lake Superior State University. The DEQ has issued Part 301 (inland lakes and streams) and Part 31 (floodplain/water resources protection) permits for the project. Permits from the U.S. Army Corp are still pending. Additional baseline monitoring is planned for the for this field season. At this time the project team is anticipating that construction will begin, and be completed, during the 2015 construction season.