

St. Marys River Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC)

Meeting Minutes

Place: Cisler Center (Lake Superior State University)
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

When: July 31st, 2012
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

1. Call to order/introductions

Present: Corrina Barrett, Lorelei Premo, Paula Antunes, Mike Ripley, Barb Keller, Dave Samp, Klaas Oswald, Bretton Joldersma, Greg Zimmerman, Michelle Selzer, Mary Rossiter, Catherine Taddo, Kristina Dension, Amanda Bosak, H. Max Cox

Guests: Shane Albrecht, John Riley, Katie Williams, Robert Bressan, Jason Bertrim, Rick Hobrla

Regrets: Crystal Bole, Kira Fry, Trisha Westman, Don Marles, Don Elliot

2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- May 24th minutes approved

3. Business arising from previous minutes

- Don Elliot sent an email addressing the article that was in the Soo Evening News on May 24th: “The Sugar Island Monitoring Solutions Corp. has asked to meet with our senior politicians to discuss the matter. Our politicians have agreed, but only on the condition that they tour the facility first. I have tried for many months to arrange that – it looks like it may come together in August.”
- Corrina to send out Michigan Implementation Annex again for BPAC members.

4. Office Reports

- BPAC to be represented at the Sault Ships and Sailabration Aug 3, 2012, and Side Walk Sales August 4, 2012 by the BPAC student, Haley.
- Haley also represented the BPAC at Frogfest and the Sault Tribe’s Celebrating Mother Earth Festival, and Corrina represented the BPAC alongside Greg at the Cloverland Electric/LSSU Aqualab Open House.
- Michelle Selzer (MDEQ) stated that there was a coordinating team call meeting discussing the feasibility of the Little Rapids. Data is being collected and models are being developed, as well as discussion on which fish species to target for the matrix that goes into the model. It is moving forward. Should be wrapping up for the end of this year, with the hopes that the EPA will have implementation money set aside for the project (as discussed on the 4-Agency Update).

5. Agency Updates

- Attached.
- BPAC member was worried that there was not a sufficient enough system in place to deal with spills in the St. Marys River. The morphology of the river causes the water to move very fast, and an immediate response from both sides of the river to a spill does not seem to be in place at this time. BPAC decided it was best to try and have a member of the Coast Guard / CANUSLAK come and speak to the group about their procedures during this type of an event.
- MDEQs tributary *E. coli* TMDL work is available on the website: <http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313---,00.html> under “St. Marys River Monitoring Project for TMDL Development”.
- Amanda Bosak collected eggs for the Custers Tree Swallows Study. The summary of their work to date is attached.

6. Presentation

- **Introduction of the new Michigan DEQ AOC Coordinator, Mr. Bretton Joldersma.**
- **Discussion with Mr. John Riley on the Aesthetics BUI for Michigan**
 - Did not find an impairment of the aesthetic conditions in the St. Marys River AOC.
 - CD with findings, assessment, and pictures was shared with Greg and Corrina. They are public documents and available.
 - Used Michigan's Guidance for Delisting AOCs document as a measurement, which includes two cycles of assessment showing no signs of impairment to be considered "not impaired". (Document will be posted on the BPAC website under Downloadable Materials).
 - One of the issues was defining "persistent", especially with respect to the garbage washing up on Sugar Island after heavy rainfall. The assessment team did not run into any events/conditions where garbage was seen washing up at any of the sampling sites.
 - Used 3 assessment sites: Ashmun Bay, behind the Elk's Lodge, and Sugar Island Township Park.
 - Assessments took place on August 3rd, 2011, and May 23rd 2012.
 - Assessed: turbidity, foams, color, oil film, floating solids, settleable solids, suspended solids, and deposits at each site.
 - Took 38 photos, 18 water samples total.
 - Found no impairment.
 - Asking the BPAC to provide a letter of support for delisting this BUI in Michigan.
 - MDEQ asked members to consider that the washing up of garbage is not an AOC specific issue, this is something that all water bodies experience to a degree, and is not really the reason why the AOC was listed for this BUI.
 - Also want to assure everyone that they will not be "walking away" from the Sugar Island issue if and when this BUI is delisted. It is a separate issue that will be dealt with regardless of this BUI.
- **Presentation on the Geotechnical work done on the St. Marys River done by M.R. Wright / SSMIC**
 - Dr. Paula Antunes gave a presentation (on behalf of M.R. Wright and SSMIC) on the Geotechnical Assessment in the St. Marys River that took place in December of 2011.
 - This project was funded by Environment Canada and the Ministry of the Environment and was managed through SSMIC. The consultants and subcontractors hired for this study were M.R. Wright, Purvis Marine, Conetec, Marathon Drilling, and Gaurdian Rescue Services.
 - The purpose of the study included collecting sediment cores to assess the geotechnical properties of the sediment (liquid limit, plastic limit, placticity index, grain size distribution, unit weight and water content), and also to look at the contaminant profile with depth, which would help us to better determine of the sediment is able to support a thin layer cap, or other remedial actions.
 - In addition to using traditional geotechnical methods, Cone Penetration Testing with a UVIF module was also used in this study to profile supplementary information to confirm the contaminant profile with sediment depth.
 - Conventional coring method via (130mm ID) split spoon did not yield successful retrieval due to the soft organic sediment. For this reason, alternative methods (e.g., vibracore) will be considered for further geotechnical investigations.
 - Unfortunatley, sediment coring attempts in this study were largely unsuccessful due to the very soft organic nature of the sediment, which consisted mostly of sensitive fines in the uppermost layers.
 - Data from the Ultra Violet Induced Fluorescence (UVIF) module, which accompanied the Cone Penetration Test (CPT) soundings, indicated a large hydrocarbon contamination in the uppermost 0.9 meters of sediment. These data could not be verified by chemical analysis due to difficulty retrieving sediment cores.

7. Public Comments

- None at this time

8. Memberships

- For new members, applications must be received & prospective members present for confirmation – standard procedure.

9. New Business

- No new business

10. Next Meeting

- Date to be determined – will send out **doodle poll**

11. Adjourn