

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

**Place:** BT 202, Essar Convergence Centre, Algoma University  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

**When:** March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

## 1. Call to order/introductions

**Present:** Catherine Taddo, Paula Antunes, Gary Leith, Kira Fry, Jennifer Payne, Lorelei Premo, Corrina Barrett, Crystal Bole, Kristina Denison, Klaas Oswald, Chris Graham, Mike Ripley, Mary Rossiter, Bretton Joldersma, Katie Williams

**Guests:** Jennifer Payne, Caroline Duke

**Regrets:** Greg Zimmerman, Barb Keller, Don Marles

## 2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 adopted.

## 3. Business arising from previous minutes

- **Success of Environmental Summit:** The Friday previous to the Summit was a “Kid’s Day”, where 50 fifth graders visited 5 different activity centres related to water conservation. Crystal, Lorelei, Corrina, Haley, and Dr. Zimmerman ran the centres and engaged the students. The teachers commented on how educational the day was and committed to participating next year.
- The Summit had record exhibitors and displays. Extra tables and chairs were needed throughout the event as there were so many people participating in the discussion/talks. Overall the Summit was a great success.
- **Discussion on the Letter of Support to revive Bill 100:** Klaas sent a draft letter to share on the revival of Bill 100 (now renamed to Bill 6). It was addressed to the Sault MPP and Minister of Natural Resources, David Oraziatti. The letter is asking that the Bill be revived as it puts the Canada-US Great Lakes Agreement into effect.
- Form a committee to proof the letter and send it to the MPP / Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of the Environment. Committee includes Klaas, and Paula.
- **Rundown on Conservation Authority Meeting:** The letter that the BPAC sent the Board members was not mentioned during the meeting. Did receive several responses from other agencies though.
- **St. Marys River Elementary School Contest:** Contest went well, winners have been chosen and Pizza Parties were distributed to classes. All students also received a freezie. Next year they will try to expand the contest to more than one school.
- **Proposed Deep Water Harbour:** Paula was not able to connect with the EDC, and is not sure if she will be able to, as she will be changing places of employment. Paula will schedule a meeting and see if another BPAC member can take her place if need be.

## 4. Office Reports

- **Lake Superior Binational Program meeting update:** Under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, each lake has to have a Lakewide Management Plan, and Lake Superior’s is called the Lake Superior Binational Program. Klaas sits on the forum level of the program (for academia, industry, citizens, etc.), and the Workgroup is the mid-level portion of the program with staff members of the agencies involved. The Workgroup meeting was last week in Duluth, and Mike participates on the Mining Committee on behalf of the Tribal Fisheries in Sault Michigan. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission was also meeting during this time and Mike was able to sit in on those meetings. One of the main issues that came out of those meetings was the progress on the Lake Superior Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. The St. Marys

River is included in the Lake Huron Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, which was finished 2 years ago. The Lake Superior plan is underway and there should be a draft document available soon. Mike will send it out to members when it is available to provide comments on the plan.

## 5. Agency Updates

- Attached.

## 6. Memberships

- No new membership requests.

## 7. New Business

### Discussion on Essar Steel's renewal of certificate to dispose of wastes in slag piles:

- Wondering what the site is lined with as it is one of the largest solid waste dumps in Ontario.
- They are also licensed to deal with certain amounts of liquid hazardous waste.
- Is this going to go on indefinitely? Are there any leaks into groundwater? What safeguards are there?
- Kira mentioned that Blair McLaughlin (Environmental Monitoring) would be the best point of contact at the MOE with respect to Essar's activities. His contact information can be found on the Government of Ontario's Info-Go website.

### The Sailing Club:

- Talking about dredging as they are no longer able to get boats in and out of water.
- They received money from the Trillium Foundation to do an assessment of the bathymetry of the bottom, and they found out how much silt has accumulated there / how deep it is to bedrock in that area.
- Now they are hoping for the opportunity to piggyback on someone else's activities as a solution. This problem is happening all throughout the City / St. Marys River, and they are hoping that they could have the City dredge or cost-share with someone else needing to dredge as well.
- They have discussed their ideas with Paula and Corrina, they understand potential risks and have been put in touch with Environment Canada and the Ministry of the Environment for information on studies done on the area.
- This brings up the fact that the St. Marys River needs a Sediment Management Plan with all agencies involved and enforcing it.
- We need to keep in mind that they are recreational boaters at the Club and that they don't have big yachts. The larger yachts would normally pay the dredging fees, but in this case there is not that funding source. The cost of dredging will more than likely hinder immediate dredging, whatever path they chose will take some time.
- BPAC should invite Brian Christie (Past-Commodore) or Nikki Shaw (Commodore) to come and speak to the group about their plans for the future.
- BPAC should write a letter to Environment Canada as well, asking for there to be more stringent requirements for dredging in AOCs. Perhaps the group should consult Mark Chambers and see if there is anything they should do in moving forward.

## 8. Public Comments

- None.

## 9. 2013 Executive Elections

Chairman – Mike Ripley

1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair – Lorelei Premo

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair – Crystal Bole

Past Chair – Canada – Paula Antunes

## 10. Next Meeting

- Date to be determined. Corrina to send out a **Doodle Poll**.

**11. Adjourned at 7:25 pm.**

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

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### **Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)**

- The Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission (EUP Regional Planning) is continuing to work on the Little Rapids Habitat Restoration project. At this time the preferred design option is for a series of box culverts instead of a clear span bridge (see renderings). Box culverts are preferred due to long term maintenance concerns of a clear span bridge. The project team is still evaluating possible options to provide fishing access. Planning is underway to conduct baseline monitoring during this year's field season in order to ensure that pre-data is collected prior to the project potentially moving into the implementation/construction phase. At this time, the Little Rapids project is still in the feasibility and engineering design phase and no decisions have been made on future phases of the project. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 the Little Rapids project team is scheduled to give a presentation at the Sault Area Sportsman's Club's meeting (time and location have not been determined). Additional information about the project is available on the EUP Regional Planning's webpage: <http://eup-planning.org/current-projects/little-rapids-noaa-project>

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

- No update this month.

### **Ontario Ministry of the Environment**

Funding opportunity:

- The ministry has launched year two of the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund; applications are due by Friday, April 26, 2013 at 5pm EDT.
- Additional information is available at [http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/funding/great\\_lakes\\_fund/](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/funding/great_lakes_fund/)

RAP Coordinator Funding Agreement Update:

- The grant funding agreement between the Ministry of the Environment and Algoma University has been drafted for 2013-14; the agreement has a term of one year.

### **Environment Canada**

- Preliminary results on the two year study (looking at population trends and health effects in colonial waterbirds) suggest that there is little evidence of impaired reproduction or deformities in colonial waterbirds attributable to local contaminant effects within the AOC. However some results, including those for contaminants, stable isotopes, and fatty acids, for the second study year are pending; these will be completed by the end of March 2013. The complete report – which will provide detailed methods, results, and a recommendation for the current status of the reproduction and deformities BUI in the SMR AOC – will be completed in the summer of 2013.