

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

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

When: May 21, 2013
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

1. Call to order/introductions

Present: Mike Ripley, Kira Fry, Lorelei Premo, Crystal Bole, Klaas Oswald, Kristina Denison, Mary Rossiter, Bretton Joldersma, Greg Zimmerman, Barb Keller, Don Marles

Guests: Sabrina Neveu, Nick Cassel, Eric MacMillan, Julie Sims, Katie Stoltzfus

Regrets: Corrina Barrett, Paula Antunes

2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- March 26, 2013 adopted.

3. Business arising from previous minutes

- Letter of Support to revive Bill 6 (formerly Bill 100)
- Meeting with EDC to discuss Deep Water Port
- Contact Blair McLaughlin of the local MOE regarding Essar's activities (i.e. renewal of certificate to dispose of wastes in slag piles).
- Should BPAC schedule a meeting with the Sailing Club to discuss their plans?

4. Presentations

- *Little Rapids Update*

There will be three meetings: Wednesday May 22 at noon for Sugar Island Residents then 7pm at the Soo Area Sportsman Club and Thursday May 23 at 10am at for the City of SSM MI and Road Commission. The intent is to share more information with the project; a bridge with culverts (potentially 600 ft. openings). Bretton shared the presentation with BPAC that he would be presenting at the upcoming meetings. The presentation is available on the BPAC website <http://www.lssu.edu/bpac>

5. Office Reports

- Update on the Letter of Support for Bill 6, Great Lakes Protection Act 2013
http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&Intranet=&BillID=2718
- MOE reports NO complaints of any effluent in the St. Marys River thus far in 2013
- Bretton will attend June BPAC meeting to present on bird and animal deformity BUI in addition to the Canadian report/presentation in unison

6. Agency Updates

- No agency report is provided
- Fish and Wildlife services is conducting a Ruffe DNA survey from Tahquamenon Bay to the upper St. Marys River
- USGS has conducted a tree swallow survey in AOCs. Sault Tribe assisted in the survey for the St. Marys River.

7. Public Comments

8. Memberships

- Update BPAC Contact List – BPAC Members and Agency Representatives

The list was circulated for edits.

9. New Business

- BPAC will have a display at Tall Ships event and will staff this event.
- PAC grant which funded the 2013 Environmental Summit and the BPAC Campus Office student has some left over funds which will hopefully fund an luncheon on the river this summer.
- SPAC is meeting in Muskegon July 10 & 11.

10. Next Meeting

- The next BPAC meeting will be held on June 19th to accommodate presentations from Michigan and Ontario

11. Adjourn at 7:20 pm

Four Agency Report to the St. Marys River BPAC Meeting

May 21, 2013

Cisler Center, Lake Superior State University, Sault Ste. Marie, MI

Ontario Ministry of the Environment

- The MOE has completed its funding agreement for RAP Coordination in the St. Marys River. The agreement was effective on April 1, 2013 and expires on March 31, 2014.
- Applications for the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund are currently under review

Environment Canada

Assessment of wildlife deformities and reproductive health

- EC completed its 2-year study on common terns and herring gulls, and will provide its final report to the OMOE, MDEQ and USEPA by end of May. The report will also be shared with BPAC. In fact, EC and the MDEQ are planning a joint presentation of their respective studies at the next BPAC meeting; proposed for the early part of the week of June 17.

Assessment of the potential hazards to the St. Marys River from vessel-based discharges

- Delivering on a specific action of the Stage 2 RAP, EC initiated a review of vessel-based spills and discharges to the St. Marys River. A summary report has been prepared, and was recently sent to the MDEQ and USEPA for review. The report will be shared with BPAC soon.
- The assessment reviewed the last three binational reports on marine pollution sent to the IJC by Transport Canada and the U.S. Coast Guard every 3 years, but it is primarily based on cases recorded from between 2001 and 2011 in the Canadian Coast Guard's *Marine Pollution Incident Reporting System*; which captures the suspected causes, pollutant types, discharge severity, season and timing of vessel-based discharges.
- The conclusion is that while the number of incidents within the St. Marys River varies from year to year, vessel-based spills and discharges remain fairly low when compared to the Great Lakes system, and there exists a number of domestic, binational and international regulations/standards, agreements and programs that oversee vessel operations and work to prevent, mitigate and monitor vessel discharges into the Great Lakes and its connecting channels.