

**St. Marys River Binational Public Advisory Council
Minutes of Meeting**

Place: Ministry of Environment Office
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Time: Tuesday, September 9, 2003

Binational Public Advisory Council Members Present

John Bain - Ontario
James Dukes - Ontario
Joe Gallagher - Michigan
MaryAnn Harrington - Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning Office
Barb Keller - Michigan
Donald Marles - Ontario
Martin McPherson - Ontario
Mike Ripley - Michigan
Mary Rossiter - Ontario
Al Wright - Ontario
Greg Zimmerman - Michigan (BPAC Chair)

Guests

Laura Dommerman - Lake Superior State University
Kieran Fleming - Little Traverse Conservancy
Jennifer Manville - USEPA
John Marsden - Environment Canada
Patrick Morash - Ontario Ministry of Environment
Rod Stewart - Ontario Ministry of the Environment

Regrets

Art Ostaszewski - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

1) Introduction and Welcome

Dr. Greg Zimmerman, as Chair of the St. Marys River BPAC, welcomed those present and explained that the main purpose of the meeting was to provide an information update on actions occurring since the approval of the Stage 2.

2) Agency Updates

US EPA Region 5

"Jennifer Manville indicated that Lake Superior State University has received a congressional earmark in the U.S. EPA Fiscal Year 2003 budget. This earmark would provide funding for research and education on aquatic biota and habitat. U.S. EPA is currently working with LSSU to determine a scope of work for the funding, and the Agency is encouraging LSSU to apply some portion of this funding to work related to activities outlined in the Stage 2 Report. The BPAC will continue to be updated on this project. In addition, the Great Lakes National Program Office research vessel, the Mud Puppy, was in the Sault Ste. Marie area a few weeks ago, conducting sediment sampling in the St. Marys River with LSSU. Sites selected for sampling were based on sediment work completed in 1996."

Environment Canada

John Marsden reported that Environment Canada had allocated \$32,000 to the City of Sault Ste. Marie from the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund. These funds were to support work required for the upgrading of the East End Sewage Treatment Plant.

Further funding (\$80,000) was provided to Ducks Unlimited for wetland mapping and landowner contact.

John indicated that Environment Canada was participating with the Ontario Ministry of Environment SSM office on developing strategies for implementing the RAP 2 action items.

Ontario Ministry of Environment

Two reports were provided:

Patrick Morash reported that the Ministry of Environment had provided funding to the City of Sault Ste. Marie for waste water characterization evaluation studies.

Rod Stewart reported on the following items:

The second quarter report of the Environmental Management Agreement with Algoma Steel was now available and actions were on target.

Also at Algoma Steel, a stack emissions modeling study was being undertaken. The results would be very useful for setting emission standards. A second stack emissions study would be undertaken at the GP Flake Board plant in Sault Ste. Marie.

Finally, Rod reported that the Overflow Holding Tank project constructed at Bellevue Park was now complete.

US Corp of Engineers

Greg Zimmerman reported that the US Corp of Engineers was initiating the preliminary study phase of the feasibility of opening some channels to allow water to flow over some of the rubble created as part of the Rock Cut Project. If implemented, the additional water flow could potentially result in an excellent aquatic habitat for invertebrates and for fish spawning.

3) BPAC Updates

a. BPAC Office

Greg Zimmerman reported that the BPAC office is between funding. Should funding become available, he felt that Laura Dommerman would be a leading candidate for BPAC Office support.

b. SPAC

_____ Mike Ripley will attend the next SPAC session. He reported that there may be _____ Clean Water Act funding available for the Michigan PACs. This may be an excellent source of funding for student support of the BPAC Office.

4) New Business

a. Little Traverse Conservancy

Kieran Fleming provided background on the Little Traverse Conservancy. He indicated that the Conservancy had been in existence for around 30 years since its formation in 1972. The focus of the land trust organization is to protect and retain irreplaceable natural lands. Over the past decade, the Little Traverse Conservancy has had an exponential growth in the number of acres it has protected and the number of projects it has been involved with. At the end of 2002, more than 18,200 acres have been protected and 135 nature preserves established. The Conservancy has protected over 58 miles of lake and stream shores.

The Conservancy is interested in protecting strategic properties along the St. Marys River migratory bird flyway. It was recently awarded \$850,000 to protect tracts of land that are significant migratory bird habitat. The funding grant was provided through the 1989 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) which provides matching grants to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the US, Canada and Mexico. In

requesting the grant, the Conservancy was able to demonstrate a 4 for 1 return. Because of successes achieved, Little Traverse Conservancy will apply for a second phase grant involving 8 new projects. For this application, the Conservancy will be able to demonstrate a 2 for 1 return. Kieran provided maps indicating the location of the both Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects. Proposed Phase 2 projects include Betsy River, DeMuth, Fries Acquisition, Jacek Acquisition, Meyers Acquisition, Prince Acquisition, Vermilion Point and Vosper.

Discussion arose on strategies to ensure there was good communication and linkages between the Little Traverse Conservancy and the St. Marys River (Canadian) Ducks Unlimited field office.

b. Eastern Upper Peninsula (EUP) Regional Planning and Development Commission

MaryAnn Harrington provided background on the adoption of the EUP Solid Waste Management Plan by the State of Michigan and the role of the EUP Planning and Development Commission.

She indicated the State of Michigan's Environmental Protection Act (PA 451 of 1994, as amended) requires that each (county) have a solid waste management plan (update) approved by the MI Department of Environmental Quality every five years.

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission has been charged with this duty since the early 1980's for the three counties of Chippewa, Luce and Mackinac.

The latest plan update was to have been completed long before its February 2003 acceptance by the MDEQ but was not because of an issue dispute between the Solid Waste Management Committee (made up of EUP public and private sectors, industry and environmental groups, etc.) and the MDEQ. Specifically the impasse involved the Committee's stand to not include the Rudyard Township (formerly Superior Sanitation) landfill in the plan as a current operating site.

The MDEQ insisted that this site be acknowledged in the Plan and a meeting was scheduled in Lansing in early February 2003 to determine the outcome. Just a couple of days before the meeting between the Solid Waste Management Committee and the MDEQ and State congressional representatives, the Attorney General issued a notice that the Plan would stand without the inclusion of the Rudyard Township Landfill.

Copies of the Plan are available from the EUP Regional Planning and Development Commission.

5) BPAC Membership

Greg Zimmerman asked the BPAC members to consider new approaches for involving industry and city representatives in the business of BPAC. He would be interested in receiving suggestions/recommendations on how this might be accomplished.

6) BPAC Elections

Greg reported that it is time for the election of a new slate of BPAC officers. The Chair will be a Canadian for the next period. He wondered whether an upcoming meeting for the elections might also be tied into the next LSSU Environmental Summit.

Discussion arose, and Don Marles recommended that the elections and the Summit should be separate in order to have a more controlled meeting for electing the officers. At the meeting, after the business of the election of the officers had been achieved, discussion and action plans could be agreed upon for messages to be presented at the Environmental Summit. He also suggested that strategies could also be developed for increasing the number of stakeholders represented on BPAC.

7) Next Meeting

Greg Zimmerman indicated that the next meeting will be directed towards the election of St. Marys River BPAC officers for the 2003-2004 period. In addition, this meeting could also be used for discussions on the involvement to be taken by BPAC with respect to the LSSU Annual Environmental Summit. The Environmental Summit is scheduled for early November.

Date: Tuesday, October 21, 2003.

Place: Cisler Center, Lake Superior State University

8) Adjournment

Greg Zimmerman adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

(Recording Secretary: A. Wright)