

BPAC Meeting Minutes

Monday September 13, 2004, 7:00 p.m.
St. Marys River Binational Public Advisory Council
Cisler Center - Lake Superior State University

Meeting called to order at 7PM by Don Marles, Chair

Present: Joe Gallagher, Jenice Wirth (BPAC Office Staff), Barb Keller, Kara Flannaghan, Sheri Cleaves (replacing Kara as Algoma Health Unit representative), Don Marles, Al Wright, Don Baines, Mike Ripley, Greg Zimmerman

Don asked for any committee and agency reports. No agencies were present to report. Greg reported on the BPAC Office. We have two staff people in the office, Lora Premo is handling the Environmental Summit planning and the Citizen Science project and general office support. Jenice Wirth is organizing the upcoming Contaminated Sediments workshops and taking care of the web page. Greg reminded members that the Environmental Summit is scheduled for 4 November 2004 at LSSU Cisler Center. Format is the same as previous years.

Don then started the main discussion item of the evening: a review of the Beneficial Use Impairments as listed in the Stage II document with members coming up with ideas about action items centered on each. He asked Greg to lead the members through each BUI.

Restrictions on fish consumption. Members felt that it was not in BPAC's purview to comment specifically on fish eating advisories or to analyze how well the agencies are publicizing them. Members did express interest in learning more about programs currently underway to assess knowledge of advisories and attitudes about them. Mike explained a project the tribes are involved in regarding knowledge of fish eating advisories among commercial fishermen and tribal members. While this issue isn't one that BPAC can take on directly due to its large geographic scope, we can use it to build local interest in the St Marys environmental contamination problem in general. Small projects could include promotion of household hazardous waste programs that are currently in place to keep hazardous materials out of the water. Fish eating advisories may be an issue local anglers groups could get interested in. Aside from getting updates from anyone working on projects dealing with knowledge and attitudes about consumption advisories, members did not see any direct action items for this BUI.

Dynamics of fish population. The underlying problems are pollution, habitat alteration, invasive species – all are beyond the immediate reach of BPAC. Again, the issue can be used to fuel interest and support for BPAC, including making sure that sportsmen's groups are invited to meetings specifically about habitat.

One possible action item emerged from this discussion. Plans have been published regarding restoration of West Davignon Creek. BPAC could spur interest in this issue and push the agencies to implement the plan.

- ➔ **INITIAL ACTION ITEM:** Don is to secure a copy of the plan developed by the MNR for West Davignon Creek.
- ➔ *Body burdens of toxins in fish.* Members did not see any direct action items for this BUI.

Fish tumors and other deformities. Members did not see any direct action items for this BUI. Research projects are underway that will provide additional information about the incidence of tumors. BPAC should be apprised of the results of these projects

Dynamics of benthic populations, body burdens of benthic organisms: Except as noted below, members did not see any direct action items for these BUIs. It's a symptom of the contaminated sediments problem, not something we can directly do anything about. Greg explained the report that the BPAC Office will produce based on the upcoming public workshops about contaminated sediments. A question arose regarding availability of the previous study on sediment contamination. Al explained that that study is now available.

A question then came up about the Implementation Annex. Some members were under the impression that it would cover only contaminated sediments. It was pointed out that the Implementation Annex was to cover all the BUIs showing what resources would be available and who would be responsible for restoring the beneficial use in question.

ACTION ITEM-> Contact the agencies to see what is the status of the Implementation Annex

Restrictions on dredging: Fits into the general contaminated sediments problem. No separate action items were seen.

Eutrophication and beach closings: The source of these BUIs was the sewage treatment problems. With the Sault Michigan CSO project completing Phase II and construction starting soon on the East End plant, these problems should improve. Members should be apprised of any monitoring programs and trends they show. The BUI may be able to be delisted eventually. BPAC would be involved in developing delisting criteria.

Degradation of aesthetics: No direct action items envisioned. A single, focused, hands-on project such as the West Davignon Creek restoration would prove that such problems are addressable.

Loss of fish and wildlife habitat: same comment as immediately above.

Follow up discussions:

As a follow up to these discussions, members discussed possible agendas of upcoming meetings and who to invite. Pat Carr should come talk to the group about the Watershed Planning Grant for the Sault Michigan municipal watershed. Sue Greenwood should come talk about fish habitat and management.

Next Meeting: 19 October, Cisler Center, focused on contaminated sediments. Greg will review the citizen science program, Pat Carr will be asked to talk to us about the upcoming watershed planning grant, Barb Keller will be asked to describe her projects, the consulting groups working on specific projects will be asked to report as well as Rosita Clark about the Tannery Bay project.

Meeting adjourned at 9 PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by G. Zimmerman