

**St. Mary's River Binational Public Advisory Council
Minutes of Meeting**

Place: Ontario Room
Cisler Center
Lake Superior State University
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Time: May 5, 1998
7:00 - 9:45 PM

Binational Public Advisory Council Members

Present:

John Bain - Ontario
Marilyn Burton - Michigan
James Dukes - Ontario
Kara Flannigan - Ontario
Don Marles - Ontario
Martin McPherson - Ontario
Mike Ripley - BPAC Chair, Michigan
Mary Rossiter - Ontario
Walter Sarich - Ontario
Al Wright - Ontario

Regrets:

Joan Aikens - Ontario
Roman Aikens - Ontario

Guests:

Richard Back - LSSU - Aquatic Research Laboratory
Barbara Lisiecki - City of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (Planning & Development)
Jennifer Manville - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (RAP Contact)
Allan Jackson - Bi-National Regional Initiative Developing Greater Education
(B.R.I.D.G.E.) for Mike Delfre

1) Welcome and introductions

Mike Ripley, as chair, called the meeting to order and requested the members and guests to introduce themselves and their affiliation, if appropriate.

2) Minutes of April 2, 1998

Mike Ripley handed out copies of the minutes for the April 2 BPAC meeting and asked the members to review them for any revisions or additions.

D. Marles moved that the minutes be adopted, seconded by Kara Flannigan, and subsequently carried by the members present.

3) Discussion of Stage 2 Review and Comments

Mike Ripley indicated that he was very concerned about what would be included in the Stage 2 RAP report for the St. Marys River. He said that he hoped that the work which had been completed to date would be addressed in the document and that there also would be an extensive presentation of the options for clean-up and remediation similar to what was included in the Nipigon Bay Stage 2 RAP. Mike provided a copy of an e-mail sent by Roger Eberhardt to Patrick Morash concerning the schedule and review of the proposed Stage 2 RAP report for the St. Marys River. After reviewing the e-mail, John Bain agreed that Roger Eberhardt had raised some very valid points

Don Marles said that the options presented shouldn't be determined solely based upon the amount of money involved. Mike Ripley thought that cost/benefits need to be evaluated extensively for all possible options. John Bain said the Community Wide Task Team information needs to be incorporated into the Stage 2 RAP. It was a major contribution and involved the whole community and not just BPAC. Marilyn Burton indicated that BPAC had considerable involvement in setting goals at the time of the Community Wide Task Team time period.

Another issue raised in discussion was BPAC's involvement in the delisting criteria. Mike Ripley said that most PACs have been involved in the delisting criteria. Don Marles indicated that the IJC had 14 criteria (beneficial use impairments) for the evaluation and that these should be used. John Bain said it is important to determine how will BPAC be involved in the issue of the delisting criteria. Kara Flannigan thought that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans might be prepared to assist BPAC in establishing discussions around the delisting criteria. Staff from that agency could facilitate the discussions.

Mike Ripley indicated that he had prepared a draft letter to respond to Jake Vander Wal concerning the draft review schedule and some of the issues that had been addressed. A copy of the draft letter was provided to the members present.

Marilyn Burton moved, John Bain seconded and BPAC members present supported the motion that the letter prepared by Mike Ripley be sent out to Jake Vander Wal.

Action item: Mike Ripley to send his letter to Jake Vander Wal.

Action item: Mike Ripley to prepare a second letter to Jake Vander Wal which will identify in more detail the concerns of BPAC members relating to the proposed Stage 2 review and comment schedule. A draft copy of the letter will be presented to the BPAC members at the next BPAC session.

4. Discussion and Prioritization of Funding Needs in the AOC

Mike Ripley introduced this item by indicating that the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protect Agency were having a planning meeting with the Statewide PAC to

discuss potential funding priorities and projects for the next three year period. Mike wanted to identify projects that would be beneficial locally. Because of the funding terms of reference projects identified would have to be exclusive to the American side of the St. Marys River AOC.

a) Brief presentation of proposals and projects in the community

Mike Ripley asked for projects from the BPAC members and indicated that both Barbara Lisiecki and Richard Back would make presentations concerning potential projects that BPAC might support.

Prior to these presentations, Mike described potential projects that he had been provided. The first project involved evaluating surface water intakes. Michelle Riband from LSSU was very interested in carrying out a study which would involve LSSU students testing water in non-communal surface water intake systems along the St. Marys River and interviewing the users of these systems. (Michelle had carried out interviews previously when she was formerly employed with the Chippewa County Public Health Department and had made a presentation to the IJC Science Advisory Committee on November 19, 1997). A second component of the study would be to map water intakes on the Canadian side between Sault Ste. Marie and Echo Bay. Rod Stewart said that the Canadian side had been done previously and that the emphasis was on PAH studies. He thought that a new study would be useful because it would extend the knowledge base. Marilyn Burton said that the residents of Sugar Island are particularly vulnerable.

The second project that Mike described was the Ashmun Creek Bio-Reserve. This project was endorsed by the Sault Community Advisory Group. The basis of the proposal was identified in a paper developed by an LSSU student.

Barbara Lisiecki indicated the City of Sault Ste. Marie Michigan would be submitting a separate project involving Ashmun Bay. The city is currently involved in acquisition of property in the area. It has also put in an application to the Michigan Environmental Trust Fund for funding to make improvements on the site.

Barbara said the city was also involved in some aspects of the Ashmun Creek Bio-Reserve through the acquisition and protection of ravines including those adjacent to Highway I-75 and the City Airport "Backlands" property. Mike Ripley said the acquisition of these properties had been identified in the LSSU student's paper.

A third project that the city had proposed involved the Lower River Islands. These islands had been donated to the city and the city had identified them as Green Space Recreation Use Areas in the city's Master Plan. Phase 1 would involve improvements to the property including a bridge, fishing platforms and wildlife observation towers. Phase 2 would include the development of rustic campsites and the restoration of a log cabin on one of the three islands.

Discussion arose over the clean-up of the "Tannery" property. Jennifer Manville explained that present owners of the property are responsible for the clean-up and that the EPA is involved and would monitor all stages of the clean-up implementation.

Dr. Richard Back with the LSSU Aquatic Research Lab said that he was very interested in the spatial distribution of trace metals within waterways. He described three possible projects. The first involved

the “Little Rapids” area. This project has been proposed through discussions between the Sault Sportsmen’s Club and Sault Edison Hydro. The project entails directing more flow across the “Little Rapids” to the benefit of increased fish spawning. It also would provide an opportunity for collecting base line data prior to any improvements being undertaken. LSSU would provide its expertise and scientific support to carry out the monitoring requirements.

Richard described a second proposal involving spatial distribution of contaminants and environmental survey/evaluations in Lake Munuscong. This project had been previously proposed by Dr. Back and his research associate. The study design was provided to BPAC. Marilyn Burton indicated that she was very interested.

A third potential project described by Dr. Back involved the Ashmun Creek Bio-Reserve. This project would involve drainage monitoring and assessment for changes in flows, sediments, contaminants and water chemistry.

b) Questionnaire from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

In preparation for the State-wide PAC session, Mike said that it would be necessary to complete the MDEQ questionnaire that had been provided to members of BPAC at the last meeting. Each section of the questionnaire was discussed and the results of these discussions follow:

(i) Top 3 Challenges:

- _ Remediation
- _ *Bi-National coordination of regulation and relationships
- _ Public awareness of BPAC
- _ Active involvement of stakeholder’s including industry
- _ Coordination of local resources including universities
- _ Logistical support of BPAC

(* John Bain identified this item as the most important challenge.

(ii) Resources needed to meet the challenges

- _ Continued logistical support
- _ Public awareness officer
- _ Better communication

- _ Better guidance from agencies
- _ Linkage to schools (Junior BPACs)
- _ *Reintroduction of RAP teams
- _ *Identification of roles and responsibilities of the RAP and BPAC

(* Rod Stewart considered these two resource items as being critically important.

(iii) Top Six Projects

- _ Ashmun Creek Bio-Reserve
- _ Water Quality Testing/Surface Water Intake
- _ Little Rapids Biotic Survey
- _ Lower Island Access
- _ Munuscong Lake (spatial distribution of contaminants/environmental survey)
- _ River Walk
- _ Carbide Dock
- _ Support for Tributary Assessments
- _ Support for Sediment Assessments

(iv) Top 3 Training Needs

- _ Development of delisting criteria
- _ Beyond stage 2 what is BPAC's role in Stage 3(?)
- _ Monitoring needs
- _ *Membership including roles, responsibilities, assessment, recruitment

(*) Rod Stewart is very concerned that this item be addressed

(v) Successes

- _ PAH Study
- _ Point source reduction (\$200 million has been spent)
- _ BPAC has continued to exist
- _ Visitation by American chair of IJC and Science Advisory Council

Mike Ripley agreed to take the preceding responses to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality questionnaire to the State-wide PAC session in Traverse City.

5) Public Comment

No formal public presentations were given at the meeting.

Marilyn Burton described articles that she had collected from local newspapers concerning water transfers and beaver kills involving Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials. Don Marles spoke to the water transfer issue. He felt that letters should go to concerned elected officials at the Federal and State/Provincial levels indicating the lack of support for any of these proposals. Don suggested that a copy of BPACs goals should be sent with the letters to indicate BPACs position. (BPAC had previously identified that water transfers would not be supported).

Action item: Mike Ripley requested Don Marles to prepare letters to the appropriate elected officials outlining BPAC's position.

6) MOE Report

Rod Stewart provided an update on the Ministry's activities relating to the St. Marys River:

a) Lake Superior Water Permit Issue

Rod described how the application for the taking of water from Lake Superior had been dealt with by the local MOE office. He pointed out that the applicant could not export water without obtaining the proper authority from the Canadian, U. S. and other international governments that may be involved. The permit to take water is very specific in this regard.

b) Button battery program

This program has been successful in collecting over 5 kilograms of button batteries since the program was initiated on Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The program is a partnership between the Lake Superior Programs Office, the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Clean North.

Since approximately 1/3 of the weight of the battery consists of mercury, over 1 kilogram of mercury has been safely removed from becoming a potential risk of contamination. Government funding for the program was \$2100.00 and local businesses provided volunteer time in collecting the batteries.

c) PAH Study

Rod indicated that Dr. Ron Bell has completed a PAH study in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and he will be invited to make a presentation to BPAC on this findings.

d) Vegetation Analysis

A vegetation analysis program is tentatively scheduled to examine PAHs associated with the outfall of the Algoma Steel coke ovens.

e) Joint EPA/MOE meeting

A joint EPA/MOE meeting has been scheduled for June to discuss industrial air quality issues.

f) MOE meeting with IJC Commissioners

Rod explained that IJC Commissioners are concerned about the level of progress that is occurring with the St. Marys AOC. MOE officials were invited to attend a meeting with the Commissioners during the previous week in Toronto and the Commissioners asked very direct questions.

g) Number 7 Blast Furnace Water Recycling Project

As a result of Municipal Industrial Strategy for Abatement (MISA) regulations, 6 million gallons of effluent from the blast furnace is now being recycled within Algoma Steel's Blast Furnace rather than being introduced into the St. Marys River.

h) Violation

Algoma Steel will be in court in July as a result of violation of a MOE Control Order.

i) Sault Ste. Marie Sewage Diversion Study

The City of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario is undertaking a \$200,000 study to determine the measures necessary to handle excessive sewage flows to the east sewage treatment plant. The capacity of the east network is exceeded during periods of heavy storm sewer runoff flows. Applications for funding to the Province and the Canadian Federal programmes for up to \$80,000 of the total cost of the study may receive greater eligibility because there is a RAP/BPAC in place.

Marilyn Burton indicated that she is very concerned that there is no secondary treatment of municipal sewage from the Canadian Sault. In Sault Ste. Marie Michigan the city was mandated to provide secondary sewage treatment and the local residents pay for the cost through their water bills.

7) Next Meeting, Date and Objectives

Mike Ripley announced that the next formal meeting of the BPAC would be scheduled for **Thursday, June 11, 1998** and would be held at the **City Hall, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario**

Action item: Mike Ripley to contact Jim Elliot to arrange for a meeting room.

Mike indicated that it may be necessary to meet once a month during the summer in order to review the various draft chapters of the Stage 2 RAP report. Terry Morse of the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife has been invited to attend the next meeting.

At 9:45 PM, Mike Ripley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Moved by Don Marles, seconded by Marilyn Burton and carried by the BPAC members present.

(Al Wright)