

St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Minutes

Place: CC202, Essar Convergence Centre, Algoma University
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

When: November 12th, 2015
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

1. Call to order/introductions

Members: Chris Graham, Paula Antunes, Ron Prickett, Megan Kelly, Klaas Oswald, Mike Ripley, Don Marles, Matt Konieczki

Agency Reps: John Riley (MDEQ)

Regrets: Kristina Denison, Emily Martin, Gary Leith, Jessica Wesolek, Brian Wesolek, Barbara Keller

2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- September 30th, 2015 – approved as presented (motion carried by Megan Kelly and Klaas Oswald).

3. Business arising from previous minutes

- The Office of the Great Lakes is requesting a written response from BPAC in regards to a letter they submitted summarizing the current status of the Degradation of Benthos BUI on the U.S. side of the AOC. They are requesting a written response from the BPAC, to confirm agreement that the BUI is considered restored on the U.S. side, but consistent with the criteria that were finalized in 2008, they will only seek binational removal of the BUI following completion of remedial activities on the Canadian side.
 - Concerns were raised about the possible contamination along the north shore of Sugar Island. After discussion, the BPAC were satisfied with the work already done but were not prepared to remove the BUI from the American side until the pollution along the north shore of Sugar Island is addressed. As such, the BPAC will respond to the letter by agreeing that the work done on the upper stretches of the river (specifically stating the tannery and gas manufacturing plant locations) but they will not release the BUI until assessment and further remediation, if required, along the north shore of Sugar of Sugar Island is complete. John to look into possible assessment of the area.
- Continue discussion on the status of the beach closings BUI on the U.S. side of the AOC. John Riley has provided a brief discussion paper that includes background information and a starting point for discussion.
 - The majority of the point sources for human sewage have been regulated with Soo Michigan's wastewater treatment plant currently being upgraded (completion scheduled for 2018). It would seem like most of the beach closings are not related to human sewage. The creeks flowing into the river may be a problem but as they are not part of the AOC it is hard to assess their effects. This discussion will be carried forward to the next meeting.

4. Presentations

- The presentation by Jerry Suurna (Suurna HSE Consulting) on the Port of Algoma has been postponed until the next meeting held on the Canadian side (January). The conceptual design was not finalized in time for the meeting.

5. Office Reports

- Problems with the new BPAC website have been remediated (<http://bpac.algomau.ca/>).
- RAP Office (Ontario) will be participating in the Latornell Conservation Symposium in November.
- SPAC update – Requesting a representative for the upcoming SPAC meeting in Lansing. An email will be sent out to the BPAC. A video conference may be set-up for this meeting.

6. Agency Updates

Environment Canada (EC)

Great Lakes Sustainability Fund www.ec.gc.ca/raps-pas

- Later this month, EC will be issuing a call for proposals under its \$2 million/year fund that provides financial support to environmental projects that advance Remedial Action Plans in AOCs. Applications must be submitted by January 8, 2016. In past years, project participants have included local environmental associations, educational institutions, private industry, other federal departments, provincial ministries, municipalities, conservation authorities and others working toward reaching environmental goals in an Area of Concern. For more information, contact Mark Chambers: mark.chambers@canada.ca

Degradation of Aesthetics BUI and Eutrophication/Undesirable Algae BUI

- With financial support from EC and MOECC, AlgomaU completed its third and final year studying water quality in the river in early October. (Lisa can provide details on the last of the fieldwork.) The final report will come in Fall 2016, and will attest to the current status of the two BUIs.

Ontario Ministry of the Environment & Climate Change (MOECC)

Restrictions on Dredging Activities BUI

- With support and input from the MOECC, EC, DFO, Transport Canada and the Conservation Authority, the local RAP Coordinator has drafted a *Dredging Administrative Controls* guidance document on the current regulatory procedures in place on the Canadian part of the river. It will help communicate to project proponents and stakeholders the review and permitting requirements for planning and undertaking dredging activities, including mitigating measures to reduce negative impacts. The draft is being sent out for review amongst the RAP Implementation Committee, and will then be shared with BPAC.

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

- A PAC support grant was recently awarded to Lake Superior State University to assist with ongoing efforts to meet restoration goals, and for public outreach and education.
- The Little Rapids Habitat Restoration continues to advance. A contractor was selected at the end of June. Major construction will occur in 2016, with substantial completion slated for November. The final span opening at the head of the Little Rapids should be about 625 feet, and replaces two existing six foot culverts. The final cost is not to exceed \$7.8 million, and will improve 50 - 70 acres of rapids spawning habitat.
- The Statewide Public Advisory Council will meet in Lansing on November 16 and 17 to for a regular business meeting and to conduct a strategic planning session for the future of the SPAC, in light of an anticipated smaller number of AOCs in Michigan in the coming years. It appears there may not be representation from the St. Marys River (as of 11/9/15). Is anyone here interested in participating on behalf of the BPAC?

7. Memberships

- For new members, applications must be received & prospective members present for confirmation – standard procedure. Ron Prickett has applied for membership. Ron was accepted as a member with a motion carried by Don Marles and Klaas Oswald.

8. New Business

- The Great Lakes Protection Act has become law. The regulations are yet to be developed but generally this law will be useful in terms of the Remedial Action Plan.

9. Public Comments