

# St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Minutes

**Place:** Algoma University, CC202  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

**When:** April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

## 1. Call to order/introductions

**Members:** Klaas Oswald, Donald Marles, Brian Wesolek, Matt Konieczki, Mike Ripley, Mary Rossiter, Jim Dukes, Paula Antunes

**Agency Reps:** Lisa Derickx (Algoma U), Corrina Barrett (City)

**Guests:** N/A

**Regrets:** Kristina Denison, Emily Martin, Catherine Taddo

## 2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – postponed until next meeting

## 3. Business arising from previous minutes

- DRAFT removal recommendations for Beach Closings BUI (U.S.) – Review and discuss drafted letter of support.
  - A draft letter was presented by Paula Antunes with supporting documents (i.e. Removal Recommendations concerning the U.S. Beach Closures BUI from John Riley).
  - BPAC voted in favour of supporting the recommendations at the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - A discussion revolved around specific wording and a draft was created with the agreement that it would be sent via email to all BPAC members for a final round of review and editing.
  - The submitted letter can be found in an attached appendix to these minutes.

## 4. Presentations

- The Stormwater Management Plan presentation by the City of Sault Ste. Marie, ON, will be postponed until the next meeting that will be held in Ontario.

## 5. Office Reports

- RAP Office (Ontario)
  - Outreach event update:
    - St. Marys Night was a success with a total of 45 attendees enjoying a free night out which included a pasta dinner and the screening of *Watermark*.
    - Over 3500 people visited the Spring Expo at the John Rhodes Centre. There was a lot of interest in the Remedial Action Plan booth and 54 people signed up to receive additional information via the RAP/BPAC email distribution list.
- Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) update: The next meeting will be held in June in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. BPAC members have the option of attending. Once the agenda is finalized, Mike Ripley will arrange to have it circulated to BPAC members via email. Mike will also share a presentation from the IJC on regulation of Lake Superior water levels for those who are interested.

## 6. Agency Updates

### Ontario Ministry of the Environment & Climate Change (MOECC)

Last month, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change released the first progress report on Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy – the report highlights a few projects in the Sault Ste. Marie area: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-great-lakes-strategy-2016-progress-report>

On Earth Day, the successful applicants for the Great Lakes Guardian and Community Fund were announced. The list includes two projects led by Garden River First Nation and two projects led by the SSM Innovation Centre (total funding of approximately \$75,000). Media release: <https://news.ontario.ca/ene/en/2016/04/ontario-helping-local-groups-protect-and-restore-great-lakes.html>

### United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

Little Rapids Update on design progress and schedule: Design is 60% complete for the bridge deck and other bridge pieces and the relocation plans for utilities had been provided. Additionally, the 100% road plan is completed. The contractor is submitting the bridge design in pieces but the end of May start date seems reasonable. Some preparation has started; materials have already been brought over to the island, trees have been taken down and work has started in pits on the island to collect material.

During the permit comment period two comments were received; one about water quality and the other about archeology. The project team talked with the local tribe about possible archaeological impacts, work will stop if anything is found but it's not likely that anything will be uncovered since the causeway is relatively new.

The team is working on determining an appropriate date for a kickoff event. The invitations should go to congress, senators, the mayor, media, NOAA, EPA and approximately 25-50 members of the public will probably attend. The podium time would be approximately ½ hour and a portable microphone will probably be necessary.

The media event could be in the parking lot on the mainland and be followed by a tour of the site. There is a park connected to the parking lot on the mainland that would be well suited for this style of event. The group decided that viewing some active construction would be the most interesting for the attendees and media, so the date will be determined by the construction start date, NOAA schedules and minimizing impacts for Payne and Dolan. Perhaps early June.

### Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

Removal Recommendations for Beach Closings and Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae BUIs on the U.S. side have been drafted. The BPAC has committed to submitting a letter of support to remove the Beach Closings BUI. When the MDEQ receives the letter, we will take the next official steps, which include public noticing the action for 30 days to solicit public input. MDEQ is awaiting unofficial feedback on the Eutrophication document from EPA staff, and will present the document for further discussion at the May BPAC meeting. We will ask for a letter of support at that time. A Removal Recommendation for the Restrictions on Dredging BUI on the U.S. side will be drafted in the coming weeks.

## 7. Memberships

- For new members, applications must be received & prospective members present for confirmation – standard procedure.

## 8. New Business

- The Implementation Annex for the Canadian Waters of the St. Marys River Area of Concern was updated to reflect the work/studies done over the past year. It has been newly designed to help increase readability.
  - BPAC inquired about comments given over the last couple of years that were not incorporated in the Annex. It was suggested that comments be resubmitted to the RAP Coordinator, Lisa Derickx, who will inquire and provide feedback from the appropriate agencies.
  - Suggestions mostly revolved around including sections of the RAP Stage 2 report in an attached appendix and the desire for a watershed plan.
  - Lisa will organize a working group meeting that will allow BPAC members to review the Annex in detail. Agency members could also be invited to help answer any questions.
- The following 2 general interest events have been included in an appendix to the minutes:
  - Great Lakes Communications Workshops: How to use the latest public opinion research to effectively advocate for the lakes – various dates and locations.
  - Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network (OBBN) training course.
- Coastal Wetland Initiative Discussion:
  - Klaas Oswald and Paula Antunes attended the Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition's Annual General Meeting where they listened to a presentation on Coastal Wetlands by Greg Cull (MNR).
  - Changes to the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) in the Planning Act of Ontario allows for the protection of coastal wetlands (whether classified as significant or not) on the Great Lakes and connected waters. All municipalities and townships that front on the St. Marys River are required to update their Official Plans with a five year period to incorporate the changes in the PPS.
  - Other groups at the meeting (Kensington Conservancy, CAFC, MNR) were interested in forming a partnership to advocate that municipalities make the changes in their Official now (rather than waiting the 5 years).
  - The PPS specifies a minimum amount of protection but suggests that municipalities can provide more protection if so desired. Klaas suggests that the BPAC as a group could advocate that any municipality that fronts on the AOC should go beyond the minimum and provide even more protection.
  - The first step will be to draft a letter to the potential partners to express a desire to collectively advocate with appropriate municipalities on coastal wetland protection.
- Post RAP Initiatives Discussion:
  - A discussion forum is desired for the BPAC to discuss post-RAP initiatives. There is a need to brainstorm for funding sources for a Coordinator to lead the post-delisting or perhaps to put together a report similar to the Stage 1. There is potential for a working group discussion on new and emerging issues that are currently not covered under the RAP.
- Corrina Barrett has an update from Peter Tonazzo in regards to the City's Official Plan – Instead of updating the plan, it will need to be re-written. They are anticipating a September launch. Comments have been received from the BPAC and will be addressed.

## 9. Public Comments