

St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Minutes

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

When: September 22nd, 2016
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

1. Call to order/introductions

Members: Paula Antunes, Don Marles, Jim Dukes, Mary Rossiter, Chris Graham, Klaas Oswald, Jessica Wesolek, Brian Wesolek, Ron Prockett.

Agency Reps: Lisa Derickx (Algoma U), Ron Dorscht (MOECC), Carrie Ginou (Algoma U), Aubrey Maccoux-LeDuc (Bay Mills, SPAC rep), Catherine Taddo (City)

Guests: Billy Wilson, Scott Williamson

2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- June 15, 2016 – Approved as presented

3. Business arising from previous minutes

- Several BPAC members attended the annual SPAC meeting. Next meeting is scheduled for March 29-30, 2017, in Grand Rapids. Social media was a main topic with phone calls being the most important take home message.
- BPAC members vote in favour of writing a letter of support for the Aquatic Research Laboratory at LSSU.

4. Presentations

- Sanitary and Stormwater Infrastructure Overview – Catherine Taddo (City of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario). Some points of interest included:
 - The West end sewage treatment plant is scheduled to be upgraded in next few years. Although the treatment type will not be changed, other updates may be incorporated such as a UV system. The City will not be changing the treatment type, to coincide with the Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) upgrade realized at the East End treatment plant, as it is currently meeting all environmental appliance approval conditions. (Post meeting note: The East End Sewage Treatment Plant was upgraded from a primary treatment, to a secondary treatment plant whereas the West End Sewage Treatment Plant is already a secondary treatment system (conventional activated sludge). The West End Treatment Plant upgrades will take place in phases. Phase I includes headworks, sludge dewatering, HVAC, condition assessment items, and studies, at this time.) There may be upgrades to the septage receiving station.
 - The City purchased rain gauges for an 'Inflow and Infiltration Study'. These gauges were installed across the city and are connected by telemetry that allows them to wireless upload data to a monitoring station. They are also connected to an alarm system that are based on pre-set storm conditions that send out notifications should exceedances occur.
 - Oil sheens were noticed in waters coming out of a storm sewer under the downtown riverside boardwalk. Discussion revolved around oil and grit separators (OGSs) and the possibility of having these installed. Although upgrading the OGS's is in the City's Master

Plan, there are funding constraints. Currently there are Spill Response Measures in place should a major spill occur.

- In response to a question that was raised about water discharge at the west end treatment plant – the water discharged is monitored and results sent to the MOECC as per their Environmental Compliance Approval.
- Water Quality Monitoring and Analysis in the St. Marys River Area of Concern - Carrie Ginou (Algoma University)
 - Investigation over 3 years and 2 full field seasons funded through ECCC and MOECC.
 - The goal of the study was to re-assess the *Eutrophication and Undesirable Algae BUI* and the *Degradation of Aesthetics BUI* for the Canadian side of the St. Marys River AOC.
 - In conclusion, measurements were generally more favourable than historical values for the St. Marys River, comparable to literature results, and within the range of environmental standards. There were no observations of objectionable deposits.
 - The report can be found online at: http://bpac.algomau.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Water-Quality-Technical-Report-2013-15_Aug-2016.pdf
 - Based on the delisting criteria for the *Eutrophication and Undesirable Algae BUI* and the *Degradation of Aesthetics BUI*, the recommendation is to re-designate to a “Not Impaired” status.

5. Office Reports

- RAP Office updates – Outreach activities with Billy Wilson, Sustain Algoma Expo, Art competition, Bike Ride Event (5 people turned out with Soo Nats).

6. Agency Updates

Environment Canada (ECCC)

Pursuant to the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*, the governments of Canada and the United States have finalized a Lake Superior Lakewide Action and Management Plan which is an ecosystem-based strategy for restoring and protecting Lake Superior water quality. The plan will guide the Lake Superior Partnership’s work through to 2020 at which time a new plan will be developed. The plan is posted online at Binational.net

The first Great Lakes Public Forum will be held in Toronto from October 4-6, 2016. In addition to the plenary sessions, there will be breakout discussions for each lake. Registration is free and some sessions will be available via webcast.

Ontario Ministry of the Environment & Climate Change (OMOECC)

Following up on the recent discussion about Didymo (rock snot) on the St. Marys River, Tara George, Lake Superior scientist is working with provincial and federal scientists to determine the need for and type of water quality monitoring to improve our understanding of this issue.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

Construction progress and schedule for the Little Rapids Project (Provided by the Chippewa County Road Commission/AECOM): The beams have all been set for the bridge deck and the construction team will pour the deck the week of September 26. This is a major step and indicates that the project is on schedule for completion this year. After the deck is poured, the railings will be poured and both the temporary access road and causeway fill will be removed. The beam setting took place the week before Labor Day and went smoothly. Communication with the community has been quiet.

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

The Little Rapids project is progressing on schedule. The new bridge deck is set to be poured early the week of September 26th, with project completion expected in about six weeks.

The Beach Closings BUI removal on the US side became final on July 27th.

The comment period for the Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae Beneficial Use Impairment removal on the US side ended September 20. One set of comments was received by the DEQ. The next step will be to forward the removal package to EPA, seeking approval for the recommendation to officially remove the BUI.

7. Memberships

- For new members, applications must be received & prospective members present for confirmation – standard procedure.
- Letter received from Kristen Sherlock. Kristen was unable to attend but her letter was read to BPAC members. Voting will be postponed until the next meeting when she is in attendance.

8. New Business

- SooToday (Kenneth Armstrong, Photojournalist/Reporter) has requested comment from BPAC regarding a recent permit issued by the provincial government to Essar Steel Algoma, in which the company is allowed to draw as much as 1.13 Billion litres of water per day from the St. Mary's River. Permits are re-issued every 5 years. Non-contact used primarily for cooling (temperature of water gets cooled back down before it is discharged to Lake Superior (10 degree buffer). Contact water goes through a water treatment process following O.Reg 214/95. BPAC will not have a comment regarding this permit.

9. Public Comments

- No public comments

10. Next Meeting

- To be scheduled for late October