

## St. Marys River AOC BPAC Meeting Minutes

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

**When:** March 13th, 2017  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

### 1. Call to order/introductions

**Members:** Paula Antunes, Klaas Oswald, Mike Ripley, Ron Prickett

**Agency Reps:** Corrina Barrett (City)

**Guests:** Carrie Ginou

**Regrets:** Greg Zimmerman, Alexia Whisler, Brian Wesolek, Aubrey MAccoux-LeDuc, Emily Martin, Don Marles, Catherine Taddo

### 2. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

- February 1, 2017 – postponed to next meeting

### 3. Business arising from previous minutes

- BPAC Terms of Reference and update member and participant list -
  - This agenda item will be postponed until next meeting when a greater number of members are present.
- Discussion of IJC meeting and follow-up
  - The meeting was well attended with a good representation of multiple groups/stakeholders.
  - There was speculation as to why the IJC representatives didn't present any information on the Triennial Assessment of Progress on Great Lakes Water Quality. However, the general consensus was that it was a good meeting for hearing the perspectives of other groups and stakeholders.
  - Acknowledgments go to Mike Ripley and Klaas Oswald for presenting and speaking at the meeting. Klaas voiced some concerns on behalf of the BPAC. A follow-up letter will be drafted for submission to the IJC. This draft letter will be reviewed at the next BPAC meeting before submission.

### 4. Presentations

- DRAFT Beach Closings Re-designation report for the Canadian side of the St. Marys River AOC– Lisa Derickx, St. Marys River Remedial Action Plan Coordinator
  - Although the written draft report was not ready for circulation, the purpose of the presentation was to present all information related to the Beach Closings BUI, provide an evaluation of the updated delisting criteria, and summarize an assessment of multi-year beach data. The BPAC was solicited for comments so that these could be incorporated during the early writing stage.
  - The following comments were received:
    - Remove the term “official public beach” – When explaining the basis of the beach closing beneficial use impairment it was stated that “there was no official public

beaches on the Canadian side of the river in the 1980s and that the impairment was based on levels of *E.coli* in the river exceeding both Ontario Provincial Water Quality Objectives and the Michigan Water Quality Standard.”

- Give a more precise explanation of the original problem with floating contaminated masses downstream of Bellevue Park. It is important to explain the severity of the problem before summarizing the 2007-2010 assessment by the Binational Sugar Island Monitoring Work Group.
- Ensure that the report is written in a way that is understandable to the general public. Ensure that all technical terms are thoroughly explained. Simplify the wording.
- Include a graph using the data from the table for better visualization – will allow us to see if there is a change over time. Perhaps even individual graphs for each of the beaches over time.
- It was pointed out that Centennial Park is the only beach that would be affected by the completed remedial actions. There is a data gap. Health Canada is supposed to test the beaches in Garden River. Wondering if these beaches have actually been tested. These are the closest beaches downstream of the main point source.
- If we are trying to evaluate the effectiveness of the completed remedial actions, than Centennial Park is the only beach that has been tested and it has only been tested 3 out of the 5 years.
- List all the beaches on the map even if they haven't been tested to show inclusion.
- Request to get information on whether Health Canada tests on beaches within the Garden River Reserve. If not, why are they being excluded?
- Sugar Island Beach is often closed due to *E.coli* and it is unknown whether Bell's Point and Objibway Park are tested – therefore there are data gaps that need to be addressed. More beaches and testing are needed for inclusion in this assessment.
- Delisting criteria have been met in terms of completed actions but we need monitoring to ensure that these actions have been successful.
- Monitoring should be focused and directed – APH data that was used in the assessment is not – we need data downstream of the point sources.
- There was a request to find out whether funding for testing could be provided at these beaches. Beaches requested for testing are Bell's Point, Objibway Point, Kinsmen Park (Echo Bay), and Sailors Encampment (Contact Tanna Elliott, from the Kensington Conservancy, because she would know if there are any public beaches in this area).
- Find some Health Canada data from the past.

## 5. Office Reports

### **LSSU BPAC office** –

Continuing to look at both the kayak tour script for the AOC and planning for some time in the future to work with DEQ and EPA on celebrating the delisting of the tannery site.

### **RAP Ontario office** –

The RAP Coordinator has been working on the BPAC annual report (Ontario), will be attending the TRIECA conference next and will be soliciting BPAC input on the DRAFT beach Closures re-designation report.

### **SPAC update –**

Next Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 28 in Grand Rapids (12pm- 5pm). The SPAC meeting is being held on this date in Grand Rapids to make it easy for participants to also attend the AOC Conference (<https://www.epa.gov/great-lakes-aocs/2017-great-lakes-areas-concern-conference>) jointly sponsored by the U.S. EPA and the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes at the Eberhard Center in downtown Grand Rapids on March 29-30.

## **6. Agency Updates**

### **Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)**

#### ***Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat BUI***

- For the Canadian side of the AOC, the delisting criteria for the fish habitat component of the BUI is to, “*enhance rapids/aquatic habitat conditions through feasible conservation and restoration measures identified in the Stage 2 RAP*”. Building on the 2015 feasibility study that evaluated options noted in the RAP, in January 2017 ECCC and the Batchewana First Nation signed a contract to advance a proposed aquatic habitat restoration project on Whitefish Island. Staff from ECCC and the Batchewana Natural Resources Dept. met on March 2 to discuss project planning and design and community consultation and approvals.
- As discussions continue, BPAC will be engaged and kept informed throughout the process, including a future presentation to discuss proposed activities. Conceptual drawings have been prepared to illustrate possible features for Whitefish Island habitat enhancement (PDF provided). These are draft, and meant to illustrate what may be possible based on proven habitat restoration approaches and techniques used elsewhere.

### **Ontario Ministry of the Environment & Climate Change (OMOECC)**

- The OMOECC funding agreement with Algoma University for the Coordination of the St. Marys River RAP has been renewed for 2017-18.

### **United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) & Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)**

- John Perrecone from the Great Lakes National Program Office will be taking over responsibility from Ted Smith for the St. Marys River AOC.

## **7. Memberships**

- For new members, applications must be received & prospective members present for confirmation – standard procedure.
- Alexia Whisler has submitted a letter, however could not make it to this evenings meeting. Would like to use senior research opportunity to look further into the microplastics and was wondering if this would be of interest to the BPAC.

## **8. New Business**

- An update was given on the Official Plan for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, which the BPAC provided comment on. It was decided that the plan needed to be re-written (instead of just amended). A draft should be available for review this spring or summer. There will be a long public consultation period. Information on the public information sessions can be found on the city website.
- The Sierra Club and Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition are having a “Celebrate the UP” day in September. They are hoping to have a presentation from BPAC. Mike Ripley will send an agenda when available. Paula Antunes and Lisa Derickx have tentatively agreed to a presentation.

## **9. Public Comments**

- No public comments were received.

## **10. BPAC Executive Elections**

- Postponed until the next meeting

## **11. Next Meeting**

- A Doodle Poll will be set-up for an April meeting.