

ST. CLAIR RIVER BINATIONAL PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL
(BPAC)

Draft Minutes
Meeting 2015 – 1

Tuesday, February 10, 2015
St. Clair County Building, Conference Room A (2nd Floor)
200 Grand River Avenue
Port Huron, Michigan

ATTENDEES:

Donna Strang
Peter Westfall
Judy Ogden
Darrell Randell
Paulette Duhaime

Christine Loeffler
Terry Burrell
Rose Ellison
Fred Kemp
Marina Plain

Kathy Watts
Kris Lee
Melanie Foose
Patty Troy
Naomi Williams

REGRETS:

John Jackson
Fred Fuller
Ted Briggs

Anne Marie Gillis
Phil Vallance
April White

Frank Frisk
Theresa Warren

GUESTS:

Rick Loster
Larry Mavis
Annette DeMaria

Matt Goddard
Bobbi Filanda
Venessa Davis

Cole Meyers
Christine Alexander
Kay Cumbow

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Patty Troy.

Adoption, Additions or Corrections of Draft Agenda

As an oversight, this agenda item was not addressed. Only one change to the agenda was requested later in the meeting: the presentation on Spill Scenarios and Exercises by Rick Loster would occur immediately after the PEAS Update by Matt Goddard.

Approval of December 9, 2014 Draft Minutes and Actions Arising

Actions arising from the last meeting on December 9, 2014 were reviewed along with the draft minutes. Some revisions were identified by Paulette Duhaime: 1) acknowledging that negotiations are ongoing between the MDEQ and Commercial Development Co. regarding Bunce Creek and 2) recognizing that contractor bids for the Krispin Drain habitat project were over budget primarily because of the original timeline of December 2014 for completion of the project.

ACTION – Paulette Duhaime will send Donna Strang the revisions to the December 9, 2014 draft minutes for her to incorporate and circulate to BPAC members.

Moved by Fred Kemp and seconded by Terry Burrell that the draft minutes of December 9, 2014 be accepted with the modifications identified.

CARRIED

Actions from Previous Meeting – December 9, 2014

Action items from the meeting on December 9, 2014 were reviewed. All actions were completed.

Election of Officers

The Chair asked that Fred Kemp facilitate the elections process. Fred Kemp called for nominations from the floor for the following four positions:

United States Co-Chair:

Patty Troy was nominated by Judy Ogden. No other members were nominated. **Moved by Kris Lee and seconded by Darrell Randell that the position be filled by acclamation.**

CARRIED

Canadian Co-Chair:

Kris Lee was nominated by Patty Troy. No other members were nominated. **Moved by Paulette Duhaime and seconded by Darrell Randell that the position be filled by acclamation.**

CARRIED

Canadian Vice Co-Chair:

Terry Burrell was nominated by Darrell Randell. No other members were nominated. **Moved by Kris Lee and seconded by Judy Ogden that the position be filled by acclamation.**

CARRIED

United States Vice Co-Chair:

Paulette Duhaime was nominated by Terry Burrell and Judy Ogden. No other members were nominated. **Moved by Terry Burrell and Darrell Randell that the position be filled by acclamation.**

CARRIED

Nominations from the floor for the position of Representative for the Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) were invited. **Patty Troy and Paulette Duhaime were nominated by Terry Burrell and seconded by Kathy Watts.** No other member were nominated.

CARRIED

Nominations from the floor for the position of Representative for the Canadian Remedial Action Plan Implementation Committee (CRIC) were invited. **Phil Vallance was nominated by Terry Burrell and seconded by Darrell Randell.** No other member were nominated.

CARRIED

Moved by Fred Kemp and seconded by Terry Burrell that the election of officers be closed.

CARRIED

St. Clair County Community College Water Monitoring – L. Mavis

Larry Mavis provided an overview of the student run water quality laboratory at St. Clair County Community College (SC4). The laboratory came to fruition as a result of the community approaching the College to begin water quality monitoring along the St. Clair River. The laboratory teaches students how to use Gas Chromatography (GC) and Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GCMS) equipment following United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) protocols and standards to analyze water samples for over 60 different compounds.

Initial results obtained from the St. Clair River show very low concentrations and quality assurance and quality control measures have been completed. The laboratory has begun monitoring water plants. BPAC members expressed their support for the program and their interest in comparing results analyzed at SC4 to those regulated at water plants. Larry Mavis and his students were invited by BPAC to attend a meeting and provide an additional update at the end of the semester.

NPDES Permits – C. Alexander

Christine Alexander of the Permits section of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) provided BPAC with an update on the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. There remains a backlog in issuing permits to both industrial and municipal facilities resulting from lost staff following numerous retirements from the section. Christine reported that there are now six staff working on the outstanding permits.

Of the six Industrial Major permits on the St. Clair River, two have been issued, two have been drafted and two have had some work completed on them. It is anticipated that all permits for St. Clair River dischargers will be issued by the end of September 2015. The re-issuing of Municipal Major permits along the St. Clair River are much farther along and now include asset management requirements. Asset management requires facilities to maintain, repair or replace components of their system to ensure infrastructure sustainability. Expired permits received an administrative extension until the new NPDES permit is issued however discharge limits, reporting requirements, etc. remain in place.

BPAC members provided some suggestions on permit improvements. Fred Kemp commended the work and customer service he has received by the MDEQ Permits section staff. Kris Lee inquired about the status of MDEQ air pollution permits.

ACTION – Melanie Foose will provide Kris Lee with the contact information for the district supervisor of the Air Quality Division in the Southeast Michigan District office of the MDEQ.

PEAS Update – M. Goddard

Matt Goddard of the Water Resources Division of the MDEQ updated BPAC on the status of the Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS). The PEAS hotline receives calls concerning environmental incidents affecting air, land, water, wetlands, etc. in Michigan. Currently, when a call is received on the PEAS hotline, a MDEQ staff member who is environmentally educated and trained answers the phone and provides information to the appropriate district office who addresses the concerns or incident accordingly. Calls can be received at any time during the

day or after normal business hours. Matt reported that the process from receiving the initial complaint to on-the-ground action has been streamlined with positive results.

On the Canadian side, spill information received by the Spills Action Center (SAC) of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (OMOECC) is officially reported to the Michigan State Police and unofficially to the MDEQ.

ACTION – An OMOECC representative will be asked to attend the next meeting so BPAC members can receive more information on the agreement between the OMOECC and Michigan State Police on spill notifications and whether it would be possible to have the MDEQ on the official binational contact list.

Matt also informed BPAC members that the MDEQ has received approval to utilize the Michigan Health Alert Network (MIHAN) notification system for spills and other environmental incidents. The MIHAN system allows for rapid notification to simultaneous devices (e.g., computer, phone, cell phone, etc.). It is expected that water plants will be eager to subscribe to the system. The spill notification system will be tested during some spill response exercises scheduled over the next couple of years.

ACTION – Kris Lee will provide Matt Goddard with a list of Canadian contacts who may be appropriate observers to the spill exercises.

Spill Scenarios and Exercises – R. Loster

As the Spill Scenarios and Exercises topic was related to the previous PEAS notification system agenda item, the report from Rick Loster was moved prior to the Domtar update by Christine Loeffler.

Binational notifications will be included in this exercise

Rick provided an overview on the spill exercises organized by the United States Coast Guard and upcoming activities on the St. Clair River. Simulations are organized to test the response, recovery and notification systems designed to address a variety of different environmental incidents. Worst-case scenarios are developed and simulated in an attempt to overload resources and identify where improvements in the response plan should be focused.

St. Clair River spill response exercises were held in September 2008 and in October 2009. A table top exercise will be held in May 2015. The exercise will simulate the release of oil such as dilbit from a pipeline due to the unexpected anchoring of a freighter near Marysville, Michigan. Dilbit has an affinity to sink to the bottom of a water body rather than float on the surface of the water like other products. A full-scale exercise will occur in May 2016 after which an “After Action” report will be released. Binational notifications will be included in these exercises.

ACTION – Donna Strang will distribute Rick Loster’s presentation to BPAC members.

ACTION – Rick Loster will provide the “After Action” report to BPAC for the spill exercises in the St. Clair River once it is completed.

Domtar Mill Activities Update – C. Loeffler

Christine Loeffler provided a report on recent activities by Domtar to address bacteria growth in their system. At the previous BPAC meeting, it was reported that fishermen had observed white material near Domtar. Christine informed BPAC that bacteria in their effluent was originating

from their raw source water and that the company had added preservative in December to address the issue, however its effectiveness was still being assessed. In addition, Domtar has requested to treat incoming water with a chemical that is capable of killing bacteria resistant to hypochlorite. The company is awaiting approval to begin the trial and hopes that if successful the treatment will reduce incoming bacterial growth.

Christine also reported on the shoreline rehabilitation project undertaken by Domtar on the Black River bank. The project will see 1 ½ miles (2.4 kilometers) of shoreline stabilized with large rip rap and the creation of turtle habitat. Between 2012 and 2013, 900 feet (274 meters) had been completed. It is expected that an additional 600 feet (183 meters) will be completed by 2016.

Chrysler Beach Project – A. DeMaria

Annette DeMaria of Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. provided BPAC members with an overview of the now completed Chrysler Beach Project in Marysville, Michigan. Before restoration, Chrysler Beach suffered from erosion, direct stormwater inputs and high levels of *E. coli*. Improvements to the park and beach included the installation of rain gardens and bioswales to reduce the direct stormwater discharges from the surrounding 2.5 acres, the reduction of impervious surfaces by 0.7 acres and the addition of 17 300 square feet of planting beds to deter geese from congregating on the beach. The project cost \$580 000 including \$80 000 in labour effort provided by the City of Marysville and \$500 000 in funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Concurrently with the stormwater improvements, the City naturalized a portion of the shoreline by removing a failing seawall, widened and reconstructed the boat ramp and removed dilapidated docks. Future work by the City will include a new bathroom, a fish cleaning station, picnic area amenities and a new fishing pier. The total cost for all of the beach improvements is expected to reach \$1.3 million.

OMOECC, EC, MDEQ and USEPA Updates on Canadian and American Projects – T. Briggs, A. White, M. Foose and R. Ellison

Ted Briggs and April White were unable to make the meeting. Updates will be provided at the next BPAC meeting.

Melanie Foose and Rose Ellison reported on a number of events, documents and projects on the American side of the St. Clair River:

- The 2015 Great Lakes Areas of Concern Conference will be held at the University of Toledo on Wednesday, March 11 until Thursday, March 12, 2015. Registration is available online.
- The State of the Great Lakes Report was released by the MDEQ. There were two articles highlighting local projects along the St. Clair River.
ACTION – Melanie Foose will send Donna Strang a copy of the State of the Great Lakes report for distribution to BPAC members.
- Habitat Projects:
 - Port Huron South
 - This project has been completed and two years of monitoring and maintenance will be conducted.
 - Cottreville

- This project has seen the installation of 25 woody debris structures to improve aquatic habitat, the construction of a sinuous shoreline and the planting of upland trees and pollinator plants.
- Marine City Drain
 - The Marine City Drain project is nearing completion. Three break walls were installed to allow for calmer waters along the shoreline. In addition, logs were placed in the nearshore and woody invasive species were removed. Phragmites management will occur in 2015.
- Cuttle Creek, Marysville
 - This restoration project will result in 3000 feet (914 meters) of restored habitat. A series of pool and riffles will be created throughout the whole length of the creek to improve local aquatic habitat. Invasive species will also be addressed.
- Krispin Drain
 - This project has been taken over by the USEPA. It is hopeful that the project will move forward in June.
- Reefs
 - All three reefs are complete and monitoring will be conducted at each location. The monitoring will be led by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Committee Reports

Statewide Public Advisory Council – P. Troy and P. Duhaime:

No meeting of the Statewide Public Advisory Council has occurred since the last BPAC meeting in December, 2014.

Friends of the St. Clair River – D. Randell and T. Burrell:

Darrell Randell reported that the Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR) held their Annual General Meeting in January and recruited a few new members. The FOSCR will be receiving a donation from the Rosedale Public School Grade 5 class in Sarnia, Ontario as part of the class initiative to raise money for local charities. Lastly, eight coastal wetland projects will be conducted in eastern Lake St. Clair. Darrell will be able to provide more details about these projects at the next BPAC meeting.

Friends of the St. Clair River Watershed – S. Faust

Sheri Faust was unable to make it to the meeting but provided an update to Patty Troy. Plans are underway by the Friends of the St. Clair River Watershed (FOSCRW) for their Winter Bird Walk on February 21, 2015 and the Blue Water Sturgeon Festival on May 30, 2015. Advertisements for both events were distributed to BPAC members.

BPAC Membership Subcommittee – A. Kerr

No report available.

Canadian Remedial Action Plan Implementation Committee – P. Vallance

There has been no meeting of the Canadian Remedial Action Plan Implementation Committee (CRIC) since the last BPAC meeting in December, 2014

Four Agency Managers Work Group – T. Briggs

The next meeting of the Four Agencies Managers Committee will take place on February 20th, 2015.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be in Canada on Thursday, March 26 at the Lambton Kent District School Board Office, 200 Wellington Street, Sarnia, Ontario at 6:30 pm.

Adjournment

Moved by Darrell Randell and seconded by Kathy Watts that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned by Patty Troy at 9:55 pm.