

ST. CLAIR RIVER BINATIONAL PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL
(BPAC)

Minutes - FINAL
Meeting 2017-3

Thursday, July 20, 2017
St. Clair County Administration Building (Auditorium)
200 Grand River Ave.
Port Huron, Michigan

ATTENDEES:

Patty Troy
Kris Lee
Peter Westfall
Kirsten Lyons
Kelly Johnson

Paulette Duhaime
Melanie Foose
Terry Burrell
Frank Fisk
Naomi Williams

Kathy Watts
Lori Eschenburg
Judy Lindberg
Brian McDougall
Marilyn Gladu

REGRETS:

Archie Kerr
Jim Clatworthy

John Jackson

Marina Plain

GUESTS:

Jason Fischer – USGS

Call to Order and Introductions – P. Troy

The meeting was called to order by Patty Troy at 6:37 pm.
Marilyn Gladu, Member of Parliament for Sarnia-Lambton, was introduced as well as Jason Fischer of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Adoption, Additions or Corrections of Draft Agenda – All

The draft agenda was reviewed and additions or corrections were solicited from BPAC members.

Moved by Terry Burrell and seconded by Kathy Watts that the draft agenda be accepted with the following addition: 1) Debbie Burniston report by Kris Lee under “Other Business”.

CARRIED

Approval of May 24, 2017 Draft Minutes and Actions – All

Actions arising from the last meeting on May 24, 2017 were reviewed along with the draft minutes.

Moved by Terry Burrell and seconded by Kathy Watts that the draft minutes of May 24, 2017 be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

USGS Reef Monitoring Survey – J. Fischer

Jason Fischer of the U.S. Geological Survey presented to BPAC on various fish habitat restoration projects in the St. Clair River. Since the inception of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) positive steps have been taken to improve water quality issues within the river. A series of projects have been implemented to restore fish spawning habitat for lake sturgeon, walleye and other native fish. One such project saw the construction of spawning reefs. Seven experimental reefs were built between 2004 and 2016 in the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers. After construction, teams monitored fish activity and the number and types of fish eggs and larvae to evaluate whether reproduction of target species is occurring. The constructed reef at the Middle Channel did experience the deposition of sediment which contributed to reduced reproduction rates. Since then the reef design and placement process has been adapted to minimize the risk of sedimentation at following construction sites. Evaluation of the reefs is ongoing to ensure the reefs remain exposed and continue to be used by spawning fish. Another initiative being carried out is the development of 5 shoreline restoration projects providing shallow water habitat to native fish species. These projects occur over a 1.9 km stretch of the St. Clair River. Evaluation of these projects took place from 2015-2016.

BUI Re-Designation Events – Update – P. Troy, K. Lee

Patty Troy informed BPAC that a BUI re-designation celebration event is being planned for August 3, 2017 at 10 a.m. The event will take place at the Blue Water River Walk in Port Huron, Michigan. We will be celebrating re-designation of the following BUIs on the US side: 1) Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat, and 2) Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems.

ACTION – Kelly Johnson will send the event invitation to BPAC members.

Kris Lee reported to BPAC that a BUI re-designation event is being planned tentatively for September 28, 2017 at 10 a.m. The event will move forward once approvals have been obtained from Environment Canada, Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, and First Nations Wapole Island and Aamjiwnaang. The event would be held in Point Edward, Ontario at the Sarnia Yacht Club. Final decision for the event will occur near the end of August. Walpole Island is planning two special meetings in early August to discuss formal approval. BPAC will be notified on the status once these meetings are complete. The BUI's under review for public celebration are: 1) Restrictions on Dredging Activities, 2) Bird and Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems, and 3) Beach Closings.

ACTION – Status of approval from Aamjiwnaang will be followed up by Brian McDougall as Aamjiwnaang was not present to confirm.

Freedom of Information Act Request – Update – K. Lee

Kris Lee has received a response from the MOECC regarding her Freedom of Information Act request.

ACTION – Kelly Johnson will forward the FOI report to BPAC members.

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

OMOECC Update:

Ted Briggs was unable to attend the meeting. No update was available.

ECCC Update:

April White was unable to attend the meeting. No update was available.

MDEQ Update:

Melanie Foose advised that the Habitat BUI report has been finalized and is currently under DEQ administrative review. It is expected to be sent to EPA for official BUI removal soon.

PAC Support Grants – The DEQ is working on finalizing the PAC support grants which should be sent out for signature soon.

USEPA Update:

Rose Ellison was unable to attend the meeting. No update was available.

Committee Reports:

Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) – P. Troy and P. Duhaime

Patty Troy advised BPAC members that the last SPAC meeting was held June 12-13, 2017 on the Clinton River. The meeting including a tour of area habitat restoration projects. The group also discussed the future of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

The next meeting will be held on October 10-11, 2017 and will include a legislative briefing.

Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR) – Canada – D. Randell and T. Burrell

Terry Burrell reported that the FOSCR produced a newsletter in June which can be accessed on the Friends website at: <https://www.friendsofstclair.ca/www/pdf/FOSCR%20E-%20Newsletter%20June%202017.pdf>

The Friends continue to work with St. Clair Region Conservation Authority on projects in the St. Clair River AOC.

Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR) – USA – K. Lyons

Kirsten Lyons advised BPAC of a number of upcoming events being hosted by Friends of the St. Clair River U.S. They include a Women of the Watershed tour at Blue Water River Walk on July 26 at 6:00 p.m., a webinar entitled Volunteer Monitoring for Community Engagement on July 27 at 11:00 a.m., and a Mobile Boat Wash event on July 30th at the Marysville Boat Launch.

ACTION – Kirsten Lyons will forward all event information to Kelly Johnson to distribute to BPAC members.

Kirsten also reported that over 7000 people attended this year's Sturgeon Festival. 400 children also got the opportunity to go out on the Huron Lady II for sturgeon science cruises. A festival wrap-up meeting will be held on August 10, 2017 at 1 p.m. at the St. Clair County Health Department.

Kirsten also reported that construction has begun on the interpretive boardwalk in the Wetlands County Park at the south end of Blue Water River Walk.

BPAC Membership Subcommittee – A. Kerr and F. Kemp

No new updates identified.

Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC) – K. Lee

No new updates identified.

Four Agency Managers Work Group – M. Foose

The Four Agency Managers Work Group meeting was held via teleconference on June 29, 2017. The group discussed the “Loss of Habitat” BUI on the U.S. side. A short PowerPoint presentation was provided to the group on the removal of the Loss of Habitat BUI on the US side.

The next meeting will be held October 19, 2017 in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Other Business:

- Kris Lee has received the report by Debbie Burniston from April White which was discussed at the last BPAC meeting.
 - **ACTION** – Kelly Johnson will distribute the report to BPAC members.
- Lori Eschenburg reported to BPAC that a River Day was held on June 10th. Over 50 people attended and paddled the Krispin Blueway on Harsens Island. The funds raised were donated to a local conservation organization.
- Frank Frisk of the International Shipmaster’s Association advised BPAC that he has met with both Canadian and U.S. shipping reps and they confirmed that they have been on a fast track to retrofit all their vessels to exceed required equipment recommendations.
 - U.S. shipping company, Interlake Steamship Company, based in Ohio, has completed upgrades on fuel systems, waste systems, on board water systems, and they have formally used burners to dispose of certain items. They also completely compact everything disposable into blocks which are offloaded and sent to recycling stations.
 - Canadian shippers have retrofitted their running fleet in the same manner. They also have many new builds that will also exceed the required recommendations.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 20, 2017 in Sarnia, Ontario at the Lambton Health Unit.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Patty Troy at 8:25 p.m.