

ST. CLAIR RIVER BINATIONAL PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL
(BPAC)

Minutes - Final
Meeting 2016-5

Wednesday, September 14, 2016
St. Clair County Building Auditorium
200 Grand River Avenue
Port Huron, Michigan

ATTENDEES:

Donna Strang
Patty Troy
Melanie Foose
Terry Burrell
James Clatworthy
Kirsten Lyons
Christine Loeffler

Kathy Watts
Judy Ogden
Fred Kemp
Paulette Duhaime
Frank Frisk
Peter Westfall

Kris Lee
Steve Demick
Naomi Williams
Sheri Faust
Marina Plain
Dan Collins

REGRETS:

Theresa Warren
Ted Briggs

Archie Kerr
Patty Hayman

April White
John Jackson

GUESTS:

Rick Loster, United States Coast Guard
Jeff Friedland, St. Clair County
Andrew McIntyre, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority
Bari Wrubel, City of Marysville

Call to Order and Introductions – P. Troy

The meeting was called to order by Patty Troy at 6:30 pm.

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 Paulette Duhaime that the draft agenda be accepted as prepared.

CARRIED

Approval of July 13, 2016 Draft Minutes and Actions – All

Actions arising from the last meeting on July 13, 2016 were reviewed along with the draft minutes.

- No corrections to be made.

Moved by Jim Clatworthy and seconded by Terry Burrell that the draft minutes of July 13, 2016 be accepted.

CARRIED

Dunn Paper Update – S. McNutt

Scott McNutt was unable to attend the BPAC meeting but provided an update via email to Patty Troy concerning actions taken by Dunn Paper to address the issue of filamentous bacteria in their effluent discharge. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) issued a violation notice to Dunn Paper last spring.

Patty Troy read the update letter from Dunn Paper. After reviewing current procedures, findings suggest that they should be focusing on effluent water temperature instead of calendar dates for their biocide treatment program schedule. Dunn plans to use this approach in the spring of 2017.

ACTION –Patty Troy will follow up with Scott McNutt about a tour of the Dunn Paper facility.

Domtar Update – C. Loeffler

Christine Loeffler updated BPAC members on the efforts undertaken by Domtar to address their issue of filamentous bacteria in their wastewater treatment plant discharge. Activities have included: 1) the implementation and evaluation of different chemical and physical treatment methods (e.g., UV disinfection, chemical additives), 2) increased monitoring and 3) an intensive pigging schedule. Results have varied and Domtar continues to investigate methods to resolve the problem.

BPAC members suggested that the recommendation be made to Dunn Paper to calendar log the conditions in the Dissolved Air Flootation (DAF) clarifiers to observe trends that may be correlated with date, water and air temperatures.

Christine also updated BPAC on a turtle habitat creation project on the Black River. Engineering work was awarded to Huron Consultants. The project is anticipated to move forward in October.

CANUSLAK – May 25, 2016 – R. Loster, B. Wrubel, J. Friedland

Rick Loster, United States Coast Guard:

Rick Loster of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) attended the BPAC meeting and reported on the logistics and procedures of the CANUSLAK exercise that took place on May 25, 2016. The CANUSLAK exercise was a full-scale simulation of a major pipeline release (210,000 gallons of light crude oil) to test the response, recovery and notification among all levels of response teams in Canada and the United States.

The simulation was successfully executed. Rick advised that many aspects of the response and recovery went smoothly but that opportunities for improvement were also identified (e.g., notification, First Nation involvement, etc.). BPAC members requested that they be notified of future full-scale and table-top exercises.

Barry Wrubel, City of Marysville:

Barry Wrubel, Water Plant Supervisor for the City of Marysville, shared his thoughts on the success of the CANUSLAK exercise from a municipal drinking water perspective. He praised the organizers and was impressed at how comprehensive the exercise was.

Jeff Friedland, St. Clair County:

Jeff Friedland provided an overview of the CAUSE IV experiment held earlier this year. The program tests and evaluates technologies and processes that enable cross-border information sharing. The most notable achievement of the recent experiment was the transport of an

ambulance across the border and having doctors and paramedics from both countries communicate over video conference about patient symptoms and history. The efficacy of local cross border mutual aid however continues to lag due to processes and approvals required at the state, provincial and federal levels in both Canada and the USA.

Commercial Shipping Improvements – F. Frisk

Frank Frisk played BPAC members a video about the environmental and economic viability of the Soo Locks and the importance of its future maintenance and improvement. The video suggests that the closure of the Soo Locks could lead to substantially increased transport of materials (e.g., fuel) via rail and truck that would congest major road ways and increase the risk of accidental spillage. Frank also advised that legislation will be applied to address ballast water issues in the shipping industry.

BPAC Celebration Event – September 7, 2016 – P. Troy

Patty Troy reported on the BPAC celebration event held at Marysville Golf Course on September 7, 2016. The event celebrated the official removal of the “Beach Closings” and “Degradation of Benthos” Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) on the American side of the St. Clair River. In addition, the completion of management actions for the “Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat” BUI were also highlighted.

The event was very well attended (approximately 70 people) and tours of local habitat projects were provided. A special tribute provided by the State of Michigan was displayed and numerous media outlets reported on the day. BPAC members who attended praised the City of Marysville and the golf course staff for hosting the event.

Restrictions on Dredging Activities BUI – Canadian Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Implementation Committee (CRIC) – D. Strang

Prior to the BPAC meeting, Donna Strang circulated a question and answer document along with a revised copy of the “Restrictions on Dredging Activities” BUI status assessment that incorporated additional comments and feedback from BPAC members at the July 13th, 2016 meeting in Sarnia, Ontario. At the July meeting, Terry Burrell made a motion to approve the recommendation to re-designate the “Restrictions on Dredging Activities” BUI on the Canadian side of the St. Clair River to “Not Impaired”.

Moved by Terry Burrell and seconded by Kris Lee that the motion tabled on July 13, 2016 to approve the recommendation to re-designate the “Restrictions on Dredging Activities” BUI to “Not Impaired” be taken off the table.

CARRIED

Discussion, questions and comments from BPAC members included the following:

1. The question and answer document should be included as an Appendix to the status assessment.
2. Patty Troy advised that she continues to be concerned that the assessment does not meet the language of the delisting criteria.
3. A draft executive summary prepared for the public was circulated at the meeting. A digital copy will be circulated to BPAC members with the minutes for comment.

BPAC vote to accept the recommendation to re-designate the “Restrictions on Dredging Activities” BUI to “Not Impaired”.

- 1 opposing vote

ACTION – Donna Strang will circulate the draft executive summary for the “Restrictions on Dredging Activities” BUI to BPAC members for comment.

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 BPAC members that she and Rose Ellison will be presenting at the Great Lakes Restoration Conference in Sandusky, Ohio on September 20, 2016. The presentation will focus on the habitat projects completed along the St. Clair River.

Public comment on the “Bird and Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems” BUI assessment for the American side of the St. Clair River AOC ended September 7, 2016. No comments were received.

Melanie also reported that phragmites treatment will be conducted this winter at the Marine City Drain. Paulette Duhaime suggested planning a meeting with appropriate partners to discuss maintenance requirements for each of the habitat projects.

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

The Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) have not met since last BPAC meeting. The next scheduled meeting is October 27th and 28th, 2016.

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

The Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR) held a meeting on August 23rd, 2016. The FOSCR have partnered with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority on an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant that will support wetland creation and enhancement, aquatic monitoring and education. Projects supporting the Alternative Land Use System (ALUS) will also be implemented in the near future.

Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR) – USA – S. Faust

Kirsten Lyons reported on behalf of Sheri Faust who was unable to attend the meeting. She reported that FOSCR had a successful summer and are currently wrapping up tours and field days. The group is looking to partner with St. Clair County Parks on a contract that goes until January 2017. On September 28th, 2016, the FOSCR will host a speaker series titled “If Trees Could Talk”. FOSCR is supporting an “Adopt a Beach” project and will be involved with the habitat managers meeting for habitat projects.

BPAC Membership Subcommittee – A. Kerr, F. Kemp

No new updates identified.

Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC) – TBD

The Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC) has not met since the last BPAC meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for September 20th, 2016.

ACTION – Donna Strang will send Patty Troy the updated municipal and industrial loadings graphs.

Four Agency Managers Work Group – T. Briggs

Ted Briggs was unable to attend the meeting. Melanie Foose advised that the next Four Agency Managers Work Group meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2016 in Windsor, Ontario. It will be a face-to-face meeting with tours of local projects on the Detroit River AOC.

Other Business

- Judy Ogden advised BPAC members that she recently attended a meeting where the central concern was the annual Port Huron “Float-down”. The most recent event saw hundreds of American citizens float to the Canadian side of the St. Clair River due strong winds. Many had to be rescued from the water. The head of the Canadian Coast Guard reported that there likely would have been mortalities had there not been first responders available. A meeting may be organized to discuss the safety of the event and how to plan and respond to similar situations in subsequent years.
- Patty Troy advised that the International Joint Commission (IJC) Public Forum is being held in Toronto, Ontario on October 4th-6th, 2016.
ACTION – Donna Strang will circulate the link to the IJC public forum to BPAC members.
- Fred Kemp advised BPAC members that he recently traveled around the AOC and noticed that middle-channel landowners are using buoys to create their own “no-wake zones.”

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, November 16th in Sarnia, Ontario.

ACTION – Kris Lee will inquire with Lambton Public Health about room availability.

Adjournment

Moved by Judy Ogden and seconded by Sheri Faust that that meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned by Patty Troy at 9:05 pm.