

**St. Clair River Canadian Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Implementation Committee (CRIC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Final**

**Tuesday, March 7, 2017**  
**Maawn Doosh Gumig Community Centre**  
**1972 Virgin Avenue, Aamjiwnaang First Nation**

**Participants:**

Theresa Warren	Kris Lee	Ted Briggs
Sharilyn Johnston	Donna Strang	Jake Lozon
Darrell Randell	Dean Edwardson	April White
Naomi Williams	Christine Rogers	

**Regrets:**

Trevor Robak	Mike Kelch	Dave Richards
Jenn Richards	Brian McDougall	

**ITEMS:**

**Welcome and Introduction:**

April White chaired the meeting and welcomed committee members. Theresa Warren was introduced as the new representative for Lambton Public Health.

**Review and Acceptance of the Agenda and Previous Minutes:**

The draft agenda and minutes from the December 1, 2016 meeting were accepted as prepared.

**Actions from the Meeting of December 1, 2016:**

Action items from the previous meeting were discussed:

1. **Action:** Naomi Williams will provide Donna Strang with Walpole Island Beach Closings data for 2014 and 2015.

***On-Going*** – Naomi Williams has contacted the Walpole Island Health Centre regarding accessing this information and providing it to the CRIC.

2. **Action:** Donna Strang will follow up with Claude Lafrance regarding the open house summaries for the “*Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems*” BUI draft discussion paper.

***Completed*** – Donna Strang advised CRIC members that she contacted Claude Lafrance regarding the status of the open house summaries from the “*Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems*” BUI open houses. She received the draft summaries the day before the CRIC meeting, therefore the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (OMOEC) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) have not had an opportunity to review.

**ACTION** – Donna Strang will circulate the draft open house summaries once reviewed by the OMOEC and ECCC. Next steps will be determined at the next CRIC meeting.

3. **Action:** The new work plan will be an agenda item for additional discussion and comment at the next CRIC meeting.

**Completed** – The new work plan will be discussed later in the meeting.

4. **Action:** A letter will be prepared on behalf of the CRIC and provided to Sharilyn Johnston expressing support for a full-time coordinator position for the Antler River Group.

**Completed**

5. **Action:** Dean Edwardson will forward the SLEA triad study to Donna Strang once completed. Donna will circulate to CRIC members.

**Deferred** – Dean Edwardson reported that he has not yet received the completed study but will forward to Donna Strang once he receives it.

#### **Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems Draft Discussion Paper and Industry Survey – Next Steps – April White, Ted Briggs and Donna Strang:**

Kris Lee advised CRIC that members of the Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) are considering writing a letter to the industries that have not responded to the CRIC survey that requests information regarding spill prevention measures at their facilities. Currently, only two industries that discharge directly to the St. Clair River have not responded. CRIC requested that BPAC hold off on contacting these industries until proper follow-up can be conducted. Kris also inquired about what water users were on the list used for notification by the Spills Action Centre (SAC).

**ACTION** – Donna Strang will contact the outstanding industries regarding the status of the CRIC industrial survey.

**ACTION** – Ted Briggs will obtain the procedure used by SAC to notify downstream water users of a spill.

#### **Status of Work Plan Deliverables – BUI Updates – April White, Ted Briggs and Donna Strang:**

April White, Ted Briggs and Donna Strang updated CRIC members on the status of three Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) that have been in different stages of the re-designation over the last year.

##### *Restrictions on Dredging Activities:*

- The final draft status assessment for the “*Restrictions on Dredging Activities*” BUI has been forwarded to the Four Agency Managers Work Group for review. Comments have been received by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) but not from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).
- A motion will be requested regarding the status of the “*Restrictions on Dredging Activities*” BUI at the next meeting of the Walpole Island Heritage Centre committee in March.

##### *Beach Closings:*

- The draft status assessment for the “*Beach Closings*” BUI will be presented to the BPAC at the next meeting scheduled for May.
- The status assessment along with its recommendation to re-designate the “*Beach Closings*” BUI to “Not Impaired” has been acknowledged by the Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Committee and Chief and Council.
- The Walpole Island Heritage Centre Committee will be provided with an overview of all community engagement activities conducted in support of the “*Beach Closings*” BUI in the next couple of months.

##### *Bird and Animal Deformities or Other Reproductive Problems*

- The “*Bird and Animal Deformities or Other Reproductive Problems*” BUI status assessment will be presented to the Walpole Island Heritage Centre Committee at their March meeting.

- The status assessment along with its recommendation to re-designate the “*Bird and Animal Deformities or Other Reproductive Problems*” BUI to “Not Impaired” has been acknowledged by the Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Committee and Chief and Council.

#### *Others*

- A guidance document for the “*Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption*” BUI is expected shortly. The guidance will outline new delisting criteria and/or approaches that will make achieving re-designation to “Not Impaired” more realistic.
- A review of the “*Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat*” BUI delisting criteria resulted in a number of potential changes to the current targets.

#### **Post-2017 Work Plan and Accomplishments Report – April White, Ted Briggs and Donna Strang:**

With the end of the 2012-2017 work plan, an Accomplishments report similar to what was prepared for the 2007-2010 work plan was proposed. CRIC members discussed how best to move forward in preparing this document:

- In previous reports, a template was provided and CRIC subcommittee members updated progress for each action listed.
- The accomplishments report should be smaller and more concise to ensure the document is more public friendly than previous reports have been.
- A larger, more detailed report will be helpful when the Stage 3 Remedial Action Plan is being developed.
- The report needs to acknowledge challenges in addition to successes.
- A summary report should also be prepared for distribution at local events, etc.

CRIC members agreed to have a draft Accomplishments report prepared by the end of Summer.

**ACTION** – Ted Briggs will prepare a sample template for CRIC subcommittees to use when preparing their updates for the Accomplishments report

**ACTION** – CRIC members will send Donna Strang any high-resolution photos that could be used in the Accomplishments report.

#### **Science and Monitoring Subcommittee Update – April White:**

April White provided an update to CRIC members on recent work conducted by the Science and Monitoring Subcommittee. The subcommittee last met in December, 2016 to review activities conducted to date and identify remaining or additional actions required to re-designate the remaining BUIs.

#### **Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption:**

- **Recent Activities**
  - The delisting criteria for the *Fish Consumption* portion of this BUI has been reviewed and changes have been proposed in order to ensure the target for this BUI is achievable and realistic.
  - *Wildlife Consumption* has been assessed using fish consumption guidelines.
- **Potential Activities:**
  - Additional fish sampling and analysis
  - Additional muskrat sampling and analysis (particularly from Walpole Island)
  - Draft the *Wildlife Consumption* portion of the status assessment

Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations:

- Recent Activities
  - Fish were collected in 2014 and analyzed for contaminant burdens. These results will be compared to contaminant burden data from 2004.
  - A draft status assessment for the *Wildlife Populations* portion of this BUI has been completed and is currently being reviewed by subcommittee members.
- Potential Activities
  - Fish Populations – 1) Exposure experiments to assess bioaccumulation, 2) Fish survival experiments using fertilized eggs exposed to water collected from discharge plumes
  - Wildlife Populations – 1) Compare wildlife contaminant burdens between Area of Concern (AOC) sites and Great Lakes reference sites, 2) Assess temporal wildlife contaminant burden trends, 3) Assess body burdens against survivability thresholds and 4) Assess risk to higher trophic level consumers who feed on indicator species.

Fish Tumours or Other Deformities:

- A short technical memo is expected that summarizes neoplasm results on 62 fish sampled in the Walpole Island delta. This information will be incorporated into the draft status assessment drafted by Sandra Kok and Claude Lafrance in 2011.

Degradation of Benthos:

- There are a number of existing monitoring programs and reports supporting the “*Degradation of Benthos*” BUI. These include: 1) sediment trap monitoring, 2) suspended sediment monitoring at the head and mouth of the St. Clair River and the Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association (SLEA) triad study. Numerous reports have been prepared summarizing sediment quality and impacts on benthic communities in the St. Clair River.

Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems:

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) conducts annual sampling of water quality at the head and mouth of the St. Clair River. Many different parameters are measured including nutrients, major ions, trace metals and organic compounds.
  - This monitoring has been on-going for many years and provides a valuable analysis of compound changes over time however, preparation of reports are extremely time-consuming.
  - A suggested solution to this problem is to request a report or memo that summarizes only those compounds that are of interest in the St. Clair River AOC.

Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat:

- The “*Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat*” BUI is managed by the Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Populations subcommittee. Priorities for the subcommittee have included quantifying and qualifying fish habitat in the AOC, identifying upstream wildlife habitat projects and using GIS to track and measure areas where sites were enhanced and/or restored.  
**ACTION** – April White will provide Donna Strang with the Habitat presentation she recently delivered at the Lake Erie Millennium Network meeting. Donna will circulate to CRIC members.

April also advised that a science symposium will be held at Aamjiwnaang First Nation in April. The theme is “Water, Wetlands and Critters” and proposed topics will include:

Water Quality  
Benthic Invertebrates  
Contaminated Sediments  
Fish Body Burdens  
Wetland Health and Restoration  
Wildlife Populations

**Aamjiwnaang First Nation – St. Clair River Shoreline Project – Sharilyn Johnston:**

Sharilyn Johnston updated CRIC on the Aamjiwnaang First Nation shoreline project. The objective of this project is to “soften” or naturalize a 2 km stretch of the St. Clair River shoreline adjacent to Aamjiwnaang First Nation. The project will also include shoreline work that will improve shoreline access, enhance aquatic habitat and provide general improvements to the existing shore along the entire project site. Design features will include habitat pods, finger groynes and a fishing pier. Some delays have occurred due to permitting issues but construction is expected to commence in early Spring.

**Updates:**

**Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR) – Darrell Randell:**

Darrell Randell advised CRIC members that FOSCR has completed all projects for the 2016-2017 fiscal year with the exception of one wetland on Clay Creek. FOSCR will also be attending the Go Wild Grow Wild Expo in London on April 8<sup>th</sup> to promote the health of the river and educate the public on how close the St. Clair River is to being “delisted” as a Great Lakes AOC.

**Rural Lambton Stewardship Network (RLSN) – Jake Lozon:**

Jake Lozon displayed before and after photos of projects completed by the RLSN. Properties included: 1) Bay Lodge, 2) Connor Marsh, 3) the Corsini property, 4) Swan Lake, 5) Winterline (which has been converted from wetland back to agriculture), 6) Griffore and 7) Rex Club 14.

**Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) – Kris Lee:**

Kris Lee had to leave the CRIC meeting early. No report was available.

**St. Clair Region Conservation Authority – Brian McDougall:**

Brian McDougall was unable to attend the CRIC meeting. No report was available.

**Aamjiwnaang First Nation – Sharilyn Johnston:**

Sharilyn Johnston advised that the Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Department hosted a St. Clair River Day on February 25, 2017. The event attracted between 60 and 70 people and featured booths that provided updates on each BUI in the St. Clair River AOC along with a hands-on educational activity.

**Walpole Island First Nation – Naomi Williams:**

Naomi Williams updated CRIC members on recent activities undertaken by the Walpole Island Heritage Centre.

- A shoreline plan for Walpole Island is nearing completion. The plan identifies potential sites that would be suitable for restoration. The document should be completed by the end of March, 2017.
- The community health study initiated by the Heritage Centre is on-going. Currently, 42 people have provided blood and hair samples that will be analyzed for mercury and arsenic and will have the species of these compounds determined as a follow-up to a previous health study

conducted in the community. In addition, fishermen have been hired to collect five different species of fish for contaminant analysis.

- The results of community engagement conducted for the Squirrel Island tower project will be available in the next week. Community members have been asked to provide their opinion on whether the tower should be relocated, etc.

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) – April White:

April White advised that letters are currently being prepared for those organizations that were successful in securing funding through the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund for the 2017-18 fiscal year. In addition, ECCC is involved in a detailed review of delisting criteria for Great Lakes AOCs to ensure they are measurable, achievable and realistic.

Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (OMOECC) – Ted Briggs:

Ted Briggs reported that OMOECC priorities are focused on completing year-end reporting requirements. He also advised that any partners looking for 2017-2018 funding should contact him.

Ted also advised CRIC members that the International Joint Commission will be holding a public meeting on March 22<sup>nd</sup> to solicit public feedback on the recently completed Progress Report of the Parties.

Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association (SLEA) – Dean Edwardson:

Dean Edwardson advised that there was no new updates to report.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) – Trevor Robak:

Trevor Robak was unable to attend the meeting. No report was available.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF) – Jenn Richards:

Jenn Richards was unable to attend the meeting. No report was available.

Lambton Public Health – Theresa Warren:

Theresa Warren had to leave the CRIC meeting early. No report was available.

City of Sarnia – Mike Kelch:

Mike Kelch was unable to attend the meeting. No report was available.

**Next Meeting and Adjournment:**

The next CRIC meeting will be on Wednesday, May 24, 2017 at the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, Strathroy.