

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

**Wednesday, September 20, 2017**  
**Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association (SLEA)**  
**1489 London Road, Sarnia, Ontario**

**Participants:**

Darrell Randell	Jake Lozon	Trevor Robak
Courtney Jackson	Stephen Marklevitz	Kris Lee
Dean Edwardson	Dave Richards	April White
Kelly Johnson	Ted Briggs	

**Regrets:**

Brian McDougall	Mike Kelch	Theresa Warren
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**Guests:**

Robin Hyeseong

**ITEMS:**

**Welcome and Introduction:**

April White chaired the meeting and welcomed committee members. April introduced Robin Hyeseong, an intern with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

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

The draft agenda and minutes from the May 24, 2017 meeting were accepted as prepared.

**Actions from the Meeting of May 24, 2017:**

Action items from the previous meeting were discussed:

1. **Action:** Dean Edwardson will forward the SLEA triad study to Kelly Johnson and she will circulate to CRIC members.  
**Completed**
2. **Action:** Industry survey results will be sent to Dean Edwardson for review before the results of the survey are included in the drinking water BUI report.  
**Completed**
3. **Action:** Ted Briggs will send SAC procedural information to Kelly Johnson for circulation to CRIC members.  
**Completed**
4. **Action:** CRIC members are asked to forward high-resolution photos to Kelly Johnson to be used in the Accomplishments Report.  
**On-Going**
5. **Action:** CRIC members will provide comments on the Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems draft discussion paper to Kelly Johnson by the end of June.  
**Completed**
6. **Action:** Kelly Johnson will circulate industry survey questions and answers to CRIC members.  
**Completed**

### **Habitat Delisting Criteria Review and Habitat Update – April White:**

April White explained to CRIC that the Delisting Criteria Review Task Team was asked to review BUI criteria for each AOC to ensure they were realistic, measureable, achievable and aligned with the 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The objective was to flag potential challenges with delisting criteria and flag any unique/important challenges within each AOC that may require senior management attention. Four BUIs were of particular interest – Fish and Wildlife Populations, Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Benthos, and Eutrophication/Algae. Two BUI delisting criteria within the St. Clair River AOC received comments from the task team.

The first was Degradation of Benthos. The BUI criteria reads:

*“BUI will be considered restored when the benthic community structure, diversity and abundance are not significantly different to unimpacted sites and when benthic invertebrate tissue contaminant concentrations (body burdens) are comparable to suitable, un-impacted reference sites within the AOC or when all remedial options, recommended to address the areas of interest for contaminated sediment, have been completed and follow up monitoring confirms their effectiveness.”*

The task team provided the following comment:

The *body burden* component of the delisting criteria is unlikely to be achieved unless the contaminated sediment in the river is addressed. To date, no funding has been committed by MOECC or ECCC for remediation and while remediation is a priority for both agencies, the restoration of this BUI may not be *achievable* if funding is not secured.

The task team made the following recommendation:

Develop/identify what measures will be used to measure effectiveness of remediation with a timeframe.

The task team also made comments related to the Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat Delisting Criteria.

The team made the following comments related to criteria #3 (habitat connectivity):

- How will the RAP Team define and measure habitat connectivity?
- Can the RAP Team define landscape ecology principles?

The team made the following comments related to criteria #4 (tributary buffers in 1A):

- Not achievable in 2 tributaries.
- Are tributaries impacting water quality in the SCR? (is this out of scope with the new GLWQA?)
- How will the RAP Team demonstrate improvements to fish habitat?

The task team made the following recommendation:

The RAP Team continue to review and refine the delisting criteria to include definitions, measures and caveats (e.g. to extent possible) where appropriate.

The Fish and Wildlife Habitat subcommittee has considered these recommendations and is proposing the following delisting criteria revisions:

1. No changes
2. No changes
3. Habitat connectivity between St. Clair River and Sydenham River and between Walpole Island First Nation, Bickford Oak Woods and the Aamjiwnnang First Nation has been improved. ~~using landscape ecology principles.~~
4. 50% of the tributary lengths in Area 1A are buffered by a minimum width of 5m of natural vegetation ~~to improve fish habitat~~ **or buffered to the extent possible.**
5. No changes

6. ~~Wetland quality achieves an integrated ranking of “Good” or better has been achieved based on the IBI scores for water quality, submerged aquatic vegetation, aquatic invertebrates, fish and birds or, when the quality of the wetlands in the AOC are shown to be comparable to reference wetlands outside the AOC.~~

**Wetland habitat components (i.e. water quality, submerged aquatic vegetation, aquatic invertebrates, fish and birds) achieve a quality ranking of “Good” or better based on WQI and IBI scores for a 3 year period, or when mean WQI/IBI scores within the AOC are shown to be not statistically different from reference wetlands outside the AOC for a 3 year period.**

7. No changes

Members of CRIC made the following comments in response to the criteria delisting review:

- Referring to “extent possible” in BUI #4 examples should be provided to explain why it may not be possible to buffer 50% of all tributaries.
- It should be made clear in any reports written that #4 is not referring to all municipal drains in Area 1A. Darrell Randell suggested the criteria be changed to read “major tributaries”.
- Acronyms (WQI and IBI) in #6 should be defined.

The following points came from further discussion among CRIC members:

- 8 representative wetlands within the AOC are monitored to meet the criteria. Not all wetlands within the the AOC are required to meet the criteria.
- The Fish and Wildlife Habitat subcommittee feels that all criteria will be met, if proposed revisions are made.
  - Criteria #6 may depend on the results of recently completed DFO sampling. April White reported that diversity and abundance of species in the Walpole Island delta has improved.
- Dave Richards suggested the *Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat* BUI status report recommend a wetlands acquisition strategy as we continue to see wetland habitat developed for alternative uses.
- Stephen Marklevitz informed CRIC that the loss of wetlands will be tracked using remote sensing, under the upcoming Draft Canada-Ontario Action Plan for Lake Erie.

#### **Accomplishments Report – Kelly Johnson**

Kelly Johnson has been working on drafting the *2012 – 2017 Accomplishments Report*. In each section, actions from the *2012 – 2017 Work Plan* are addressed. CRIC was shown the sections for *Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems*, *Restrictions on Dredging Activities*, and *Degradation of Aesthetics* and asked for comments.

**ACTION:** CRIC members are asked to provide comments on the three draft sections discussed to Kelly Johnson by October 10, 2017.

**ACTION:** CRIC members are asked to send high resolution photos to Kelly Johnson for use in the report.

#### **Outreach and Education Opportunities – Kelly Johnson:**

As RAP Coordinator and chair of the Outreach and Education subcommittee Kelly Johnson asked CRIC members to provide suggestions for future outreach and education opportunities. The following is a list of suggestions:

**Events to attend:**

- St. Clair River Run
- Mitchell's Bay Open
- Blue Water Anglers Derby
- Municipal council meetings

**Events to organize:**

- Take Your Kids Fishing Day – contact Craig Griffiths (Dave Richards suggested MNRF Enforcement could be involved as well as Aylmer's Ontario Stewardship Ranger crew)

**Materials to develop:**

- Pamphlet containing general AOC info (e.g. "Where we were, where we are, where we're going", definition, key projects, next steps)

**SWAG:**

- USB containing AOC related documents

**Groups to engage:**

- Blue Water Anglers
- Elementary and secondary school teachers

**ACTION:** Kelly Johnson will develop a few brief PowerPoint slides related to the AOC and send to CRIC members for use in presentations.

**ACTION:** Kelly Johnson will send CRIC members an email requesting suggestions for outreach and education opportunities. Members are asked to distribute this email to their networks.

**Updates:**

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

- Friends of the St. Clair River have a meeting planned for October 5, 2017. They will be discussing next year's budget.
- FOSCR will be submitting a collaborative application with St. Clair Region Conservation Authority for the Courtright waterfront project. The scope of the project will be increased if grant money can be secured.

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

- Jake Lozon reported that the drone filming project with Environment and Climate Change Canada has started. Two days of filming have been completed and three remain. Over two days, five wetland complexes were filmed in the lower portion of the AOC. Upon completion of filming a short video will be produced highlighting wetland restoration activities in the AOC.
- This season RLSN planted 62-acres of tallgrass prairie at Ontario Power Generation.
- The Highway 40 pollinator habitat project is continuing. 15 acres have recently been planted in Chatham-Kent. A 65-acre project along the east side of the highway is planned. It has been 5 years since RLSN has planted tallgrass prairie on Ministry of Transportation property.
- RLSN is currently starting phragmites control season.
- Jake reported that ALUS projects in the AOC and Lambton County are continuing.

Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) – Kris Lee:

- The US held a redesignation event on August 3, 2017 in Port Huron, Michigan. The event celebrated the re-designation of *Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems and Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat*. A number of US dignitaries attended the event, as well as Marilyn Gladu, MP for Sarnia-Lambton.
- The Binational Public Advisory Council meeting scheduled for September 20, 2017 has been cancelled. A date has not yet been set for the next meeting.
- Kris Lee and Kirsten Lyons (Friends of the St. Clair River US) will be attending the Chatham-Kent and Lambton Children's Water Festival as volunteers.
- The Canadian re-designation event planned for September 28, 2017 has been postponed.

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority – Kelly Johnson for Brian McDougall:

- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority has been working with Shell on a multiphase tree planting project both outside and inside the plant proper. Phase 1 was completed this spring with 120 wire basket large stock trees planted. Phase 2 will be planted this fall, and phase 3 will go in next spring.
- The CA is working with all levels of government on the Draft Action Plan for Lake Erie. Conservation Authorities have been meeting with government as a sector, discussing current CA actions and areas of CA leadership and involvement in the implementation of the Action Plan.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation – Courtney Jackson:

- The shoreline project at Aamjiwnaang has started. It is scheduled to be completed by month end.
- AFN has been completing a drone project to assist in gathering data on wetland habitat within the First Nation.
- Envirofest was held at Aamjiwnaang on August 22, 2017. 59 participants took part in the event. Kelly Johnson attended the event with a booth and discussed with participants Species at Risk in the AOC.

Walpole Island First Nation – Naomi Williams:

- Naomi Williams was unable to attend the meeting. No report was available.

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

- April White reported that Great Lakes Sustainability Fund agreements have been finalized, including one with RLSN.
- The collaboration contract with Aamjiwnaang First Nation is complete. The contract with Walpole Island First Nation is still being negotiated.
- The Science and Monitoring division will be working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to wrap up monitoring within the AOC.
- The Fish Tumours report is going to be completed in the near future as we move toward recommending the BUI for re-designation.
- April has been working with Naomi Jackson to schedule a meeting with Walpole Island First Nation Chief and Council to discuss the three BUIs (*Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems, Restrictions on Dredging Activities, and Beach Closings*) which have been recommended for re-designation.

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

- Ted Briggs informed CRIC that Great Lakes Guardian Fund applications are due November 10, 2017.
- Discussions are on-going for the sediment remediation project. It is hoped a meeting will be held by the end of December.

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

- Dean Edwardson reported that SLEA is currently developing next year's budget. He anticipates there will be money set aside for the sediment remediation project.

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

- Trevor advised CRIC that OMAFRA is working on developing the Agricultural Partnership Program (i.e. Growing Forward 3).
- OMAFRA has been working to finalize items for the Draft Action Plan for Lake Erie.
- Fall farm show season is in full swing with the International Plowing Match taking place this week.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF) – Stephen Marklevitz and Dave Richards:

- Stephen informed CRIC that the transfer payment to St. Clair Region Conservation Authority for shoreline work has been approved.
- MNRF has been involved in preparing the Draft Action Plan for Lake Erie.
- Dave Richards advised CRIC that Species at Risk Stewardship Fund applications are due October 26, 2017.
- Recent funding to Ducks Unlimited (\$1,000,000) has led to a significant increase in wetland projects within the Lake Erie watershed.

Lambton Public Health – Theresa Warren:

- Theresa Warren was unable to attend the meeting. 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 January 10, 2018 at Aamjiwnaang First Nation.