

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

Tuesday, February 13, 2018
Maawn Doosh Gumig Community Centre
1972 Virgil Avenue, Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Participants:

Darrell Randell	Trevor Robak	Courtney Jackson
Stephen Marklevitz	Kris Lee	Theresa Warren
April White	Kelly Johnson	Ted Briggs
Naomi Williams	Dennis Plain	

Regrets:

Brian McDougall	Mike Kelch	Theresa Warren
Dean Edwardson	Jake Lozon	Dave Richards
Sharilyn Johnston	Annette Verhagen	Kristen Diemer

ITEMS:

Welcome and Introduction:

Ted Briggs chaired the meeting and welcomed committee members.

Review and Acceptance of the Agenda and Previous Minutes:

The draft agenda and minutes from the September 20, 2017 meeting were accepted as prepared.

Actions from the Meeting of September 20, 2017:

Action items from the previous meeting were discussed:

1. **Action:** CRIC members are asked to provide comments on the three initial draft sections of the Accomplishments Report to Kelly Johnson by October 10, 2017.
Completed; no comments received
2. **Action:** CRIC members are asked to send high resolution photos to Kelly Johnson for use in the Accomplishments Report.
Completed; no photos received
3. **Action:** Kelly Johnson will develop a few brief PowerPoint slides related to the AOC and send to CRIC members for use in presentations.
Completed
4. **Action:** Kelly Johnson will send CRIC members an email requesting suggestions for outreach and education opportunities. Members are asked to distribute email to their networks.
Incomplete; Suggestions were solicited from the CRIC at the September meeting as well as from the Outreach and Education Subcommittee. Sufficient response was generated from these two groups.

Habitat Delisting Criteria Review and Habitat Update – April White:

April White presented proposed revisions to the Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat BUI to the CRIC. After receiving feedback at the September 20, 2017 CRIC meeting, the proposed changes are as follows:

- **Criteria #3:**

Habitat connectivity between the St. Clair River and Sydenham River and between Walpole Island First Nation, Bickford Oak Woods and the Aamjiwnaang First Nation has been improved using landscape ecology principles.

Changes:

- “Habitat connectivity” will be defined by projects that created a fish and wildlife corridor;
- “Landscape ecology principles” will be deleted as the subcommittee could not define the term.

Proposed criteria:

Habitat connectivity between the St. Clair River and Sydenham River and between Walpole Island First Nation, Bickford Oak Woods and the Aamjiwnaang First Nation has been improved.

- **Criteria #4:**

50% of the tributary lengths in Area 1A are buffered by a minimum width of 5m of natural vegetation to improve fish habitat.

Changes:

- Add the wording “to extent possible” to make the target realistic;
- Delete the wording “to improve fish habitat” as there is no way to provide evidence of improvements in the tributaries.

Proposed criteria:

50% of the major tributary lengths in Area 1A are buffered by a minimum width of 5m of natural vegetation or buffered to the extent possible.

- **Criteria #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.

Changes:

- 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 statistically equivalent to those outside the AOC for a 3-year period.

Proposed criteria:

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 the Water Quality Index (WQI) and Indices of Biological Integrity (IBI) scores for a 3-year period, or when mean WQI/IBI scores within the AOC are shown to be statistically comparable to those outside the AOC for a 3 year period.

There are no negative implications associated with the minor revisions to criteria #3 and #4. In regard to criteria #6 “fish” community surveys have not been conducted in the coastal wetlands within the AOC

for 3 years. One round of fish surveys were completed in 2017. CRIC members agreed that “3-year period” needs to remain in the criteria.

Next Steps:

- One more subcommittee meeting will be held to finalize the criteria, after which the final criteria will be presented at the next CRIC meeting for the CRIC’s input/comments/support. Once the CRIC has endorsed the edits to the criteria, it will be taken to the Bi-National Public Advisory Council (BPAC) for support.

ACTION: The criteria wording will be finalized and brought back to the CRIC for endorsement.

Status of Accomplishments Report – Kelly Johnson

Kelly Johnson, along with Ted Briggs and April White, are continuing work on the draft *2012 – 2017 Accomplishments Report*. In each section, actions from the *2012 – 2017 Work Plan* are addressed.

2018 Outreach and Education Work Plan – Kelly Johnson:

Kelly Johnson presented the 2018 Outreach and Education Work Plan to the CRIC. This work plan was developed after receiving feedback from CRIC members at the September meeting as well as from Outreach and Education Subcommittee members.

Activities to be undertaken in 2018 include:

- New display boards
- Updated factsheet(s)
- Friends of the St. Clair River website redevelopment
- Story Map creation
- Purchase of engagement items (i.e. swag)
- Continued participation in Friends of the St. Clair River Newsletter
- Attendance with display at community events
- Organization of “St. Clair River Days”
- Community-based presentations
- Participation in industry events such as open houses
- Presentations to local councils

The work plan is flexible and activities will depend on the schedule and workload of the RAP Coordinator. CRIC members may be asked for assistance with events throughout the year. Kelly asks members to pass along relevant outreach and education information to her as it comes available (e.g. event dates, opportunities, etc.).

Updates:

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

- Friends of the St. Clair River have been approached by Cargill Sarnia to partner on a potential project in the St. Clair River area. Members of the Friends along with representatives from St. Clair Region Conservation Authority met with Cargill to discuss possible projects and then submitted four project proposals. FOSCR are waiting for a response from Cargill.
- FOSCR will be having a display booth at Carolinian Canada Coalition’s Go Wild Grow Wild event in London on April 7th.

- The FOSCR website will be undergoing a redevelopment in the coming months working in conjunction with the CRIC as part of the outreach and education work plan.

Ducks Unlimited – Darrell Randell:

- Darrell Randell reported that DU's Lake Erie Watershed Initiative is wrapping up. Close to 70 projects have been completed or are near completion under the initiative. These projects amount to approximately 250 acres of wetlands created and restored. Some of these projects are located within the St. Clair River Area of Concern.

Rural Lambton Stewardship Network (RLSN) – Jake Lozon:

- Jake Lozon was unable to attend the meeting. No report was available.

Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) – Kris Lee:

- The Binational Public Advisory Council met on January 25, 2018. During this meeting April White provided BPAC with an overview of highlights from the 2017 Science Symposium. The purpose of the symposium is to share results of research and projects undertaken in the AOC to support BUIs and to foster greater community awareness and interest in the restoration of the St. Clair River. The symposium also provides the community with the opportunity to ask questions about on-going efforts.
- The BPAC also discussed the U.S. Drinking Water BUI criteria. Amendments to the criteria are being proposed and will be brought back to the BPAC for approval.
- The next BPAC meeting will be held in Port Huron, Michigan on April 19, 2018. A representative from Enbridge will be speaking at this meeting about the proposed Line 5 replacement project.

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority – Brian McDougall:

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

Aamjiwnaang First Nation – Courtney Jackson:

- The shoreline project at Aamjiwnaang is now complete. Courtney Jackson reported to the CRIC that she is working to promote the benefits of the project within the community. It is also hoped that further work, including a fishing pier and swimming dock, will be done to complement the work already completed.
- Aamjiwnaang will be holding St. Clair River day on March 10th. This is a fun event aimed at educating youth in the community about the St. Clair River.

Walpole Island First Nation – Naomi Williams:

- Naomi Williams informed the CRIC that the Heritage Centre is looking to restore Bush Marsh and will be looking to engage resource users in the project.
- The Heritage Centre has been exploring the impacts of septic systems on beach closures. Interior ditches have been sampled and high levels of *E. coli* were found. However, there is no direct hydrological connection between these interior ditches and the river. The interior ditches are pumped out during high water scenarios to the Syne Channel and Lake St. Clair. An application has been submitted to the federal Clean Water/Wastewater fund to explore the feasibility of a new wastewater treatment plant. The study will be completed by the end of 2019.

- The Heritage Centre has recently undergone renovations. Staff are hoping to hold a public open house event to showcase projects completed on the island and for the public to view the renovated Heritage Centre.

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

- April White reported the much of the fish and wildlife research has been completed so no new research projects are being planned during the 2018 – 2020 work planning discussions within ECCC. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will likely continue to monitor fish communities in restored wetland sites and ECCC may also monitor these wetlands in 2018 pending discussions.
- The Great Lakes Sustainability Fund will now be one of 5 funding streams under the Great Lakes Protection Initiative. On-line requests for Project Proposals under these funding streams were solicited at the end of January. An on-line application is available on the ECCC website. GLSF funding has been reduced by approximately \$500,000 for 2018 so partners are encouraged to ensure project proposals address a remaining action item in the AOC’s Remedial Action Plan.
- April continues to work with Walpole Island First Nation to schedule a meeting with Chief and Council regarding BUIs: 1) Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems, 2) Restrictions on Dredging, and 3) Beach Closings.

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

- Ted Briggs informed CRIC that MOECC COA funding planning is currently taking place for 2018 – 2019.

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

- Dean Edwardson was unable to attend the meeting. No report was available.

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

- Trevor Robak advised the CRIC that the Growing Forward 2 program is coming to an end, however the Agricultural Partnership Program is being developed. This program will focus on phosphorous reduction in the western basin of Lake Erie which would include the St. Clair River.
- The Lake Erie Draft Action Plan is still under development. (Update: a draft was released on February 22, 2018)
- OMAFRA is currently working with various partners on a “right timing” initiative. This program will involve commodity groups working with their members to apply manure at the appropriate times.
- OMAFRA continues to work on a 4R initiative. This program will include new voluntary standards for fertilizer supply companies. 4R stewardship practices aim to apply the right fertilizer source at the right rate at the right time and in the right place.

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

- MNRF will be starting a connecting waterways fish community survey. The purpose is to evaluate the fish community in the St. Clair, Detroit, and Niagara Rivers. The evaluation will also look at invasive species and Species at Risk. Surveys will be completed on a 3-year rotational basis, likely starting in 2019.
- In 2018 an angler creel survey will be conducted in the St. Clair River. It will be used to estimate recreational catches, harvest and effort. Final details are still being worked out, but the survey will likely take place from May to September.

Lambton Public Health – Theresa Warren:

- Theresa Warren had no updates to report to the CRIC.

City of Sarnia – Mike Kelch:

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

St. Clair Township – Darrell Randell:

- Darrell Randell reported that work is underway on the Courtright Shoreline Project. It is hoped that the scope of the work will be expanded with additional funding.
- The township is also looking to expand the capacity of their sewage lagoons.

Next Meeting and Adjournment:

The next CRIC meeting will be held in the early part of the summer at the call of the chairs.