

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

Monday, December 9, 2019
Teleconference

Participants:

April White	Courtney Jackson	Kris Lee
Destiny Rogers-James	Naomi Williams	Sara Varty
Stephen Marklevitz	Ted Briggs	Vince Gagner
Terry Burrell	Donna Blue	

Regrets:

Jake Lozon	Theresa Warren	Trevor Robak
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ITEMS:

Welcome and Introduction:

April White chaired the meeting and welcomed CRIC members to the teleconference.

Review and Acceptance of the Agenda and Previous Minutes:

The draft agenda and minutes from the June 20, 2019 meeting were accepted.

Actions from the Meeting of June 20, 2019:

Actions from the previous meeting were discussed:

1. Taking into account possible funding shortfalls for the current year (2019/2020) Kelly Johnson will explore low-cost options for a re-designation celebration and begin planning an event.

Carried Forward

- With the pending re-designation of the “*Fish Tumours or Other Deformities*” Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI), it was recommended that a celebration event announcing all the recent re-designations be scheduled for the spring/summer.

2. Kelly Johnson will circulate an updated BUI status chart from Ted Briggs.

Completed

3. A short summary/communication piece regarding BUI progress will be developed by Ted Briggs, April White and Kelly Johnson.

Completed

4. Kelly Johnson, along with April White will work to develop a fact sheet to address some of the concerns and questions surrounding this [*Fish Tumours or Other Deformities*] BUI (e.g., internal vs. external lesions).

Carried Forward

- April White advised CRIC members that additions to the BUI status assessment report were completed that provided clarification on the purpose of the BUI and difference between internal vs. external lesions.
- April White advised that a similar factsheet has already been prepared by the Detroit River Canadian Clean-up that could likely be used as a model for the St. Clair River.

- Stephen Marklevitz reported the when the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) captures fish that have external lesions, the fish are sent to the University of Guelph for analysis.

ACTION – Stephen Marklevitz will look into whether studies have been conducted internally by the MNRF regarding external skin lesions on fish.

5. Kelly Johnson will develop an addendum to the Accomplishments Report stating current BUI status and noting work referenced in the report is only for a time period up to March 31, 2017.

Not Completed

- April White and Ted Briggs advised that after further discussion, it was decided that an addendum to the Accomplishments Report was not required. Instead, a note can be made on the website that advises that three BUIs have been re-designated to “Not Impaired” since 2017 but are not reflected in the Accomplishments Report as it is current only to March 31, 2017.

6. Kelly Johnson will begin preparing a new work plan based on the Accomplishments Report

Completed

- Further discussion occurring later in the CRIC meeting.

7. Kris Lee will request at the next BPAC meeting that a letter be sent to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) to ask that each agency keeps the other aware of activities surrounding decommissioning of the DTE Energy plant and provide contact information within each agency should an issue arise.

Completed

8. Ted Briggs suggested having the Conservation Authority deliver a presentation regarding the [Sydenham River Phosphorus Management] Plan at the next CRIC meeting.

Carried Forward

GLPI/COA Updates – April White, Ted Briggs

Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA) Funding:

Ted Briggs reported that MECP was releasing COA funds and developing Agreements. COA Agreements are currently being developed with the SCRCA for RAP Coordination and shoreline protection works along the St. Clair River. An agreement is also being developed with the Friends of the St. Clair River for outreach and education activities for the St. Clair River AOC.

Great Lakes Protection Initiative (GLPI) Funding:

The Great Lakes Protection Initiative (GLPI) funds AOCs throughout Ontario (formerly called the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund (GLSF)). There are eight different funding streams, one of which is dedicated to Great Lakes AOCs. April White advised that the call for proposals is anticipated to occur in early January and are to be submitted online. Any organization interested in applying for the 2020-2021 fiscal year for AOC funding are encouraged to contact April to discuss their projects.

Discussion – There was some discussion among CRIC member about the availability of COA and GLPI funding after the St. Clair River is delisted as and AOC.

ACTION – Kris Lee will look into her files to find the “Life After Delisting” document developed for the St. Clair River.

2017-2022 Work Plan – April White, Ted Briggs

The draft 2017-2022 Work Plan was circulated to CRIC members prior to the teleconference for their review and comment. April White, Ted Briggs and Donna Blue walked CRIC members through the actions identified for each BUI and for the Public Outreach and Education component of the AOC program.

Discussion:

- Recommend including a disclaimer stating that the actions required to re-designate the St. Clair River AOC may go beyond the 2022 end date identified in the work plan.
- Include all CRIC members involved in the committee from 2017 in the acknowledgement section of the document.
- It may be beneficial to conduct another Fish Consumption Survey to ensure those fish that are being eaten from the St. Clair River are considered under the “*Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption*” BUI status assessment.
- An Appendix outlining the re-designation process for BUIs would be beneficial addition to the document.
- Recommend including a reference to the work being conducted on the American side of the St. Clair River (e.g., major projects, timelines, BUI status, etc.)

ACTION – CRIC members will review the work plan and submit any additional comments to Donna Blue by December 20, 2019.

ACTION – CRIC members will review the list of individuals identified under the acknowledgement section of the work plan and provide Donna Blue with any missing members, etc.

ACTION – April White, Ted Briggs and Donna Blue will update the draft 2017-2022 Work Plan based on CRIC comments and recirculate to the committee.

Status of Beneficial Use Impairments – April White, Ted Briggs

April White and Ted Briggs updated CRIC members on the current status of Beneficial Use Impairments for the St. Clair River AOC.

- Three BUIs were re-designated in 2018 (“*Restrictions on Dredging Activities*”, “*Beach Closings*” and “*Bird and Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems*”).
- The next two BUIs anticipated to be recommended for re-designation are the “*Fish Tumours or Other Deformities*” and the “*Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems*” BUIs.
- Two other BUIs (“*Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat*” and “*Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations*”) are anticipated to have status assessment reports prepared in the next year.

Updates:

Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR) – Terry Burrell:

- FOSCR is holding their Annual General Meeting on December 11, 2019 at 6:30 pm. The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm. CRIC members are welcome to attend.
- Enbridge granted FOSCR \$3,000 in funding. A cheque presentation will be held on the afternoon of December 11, 2019.

Rural Lambton Stewardship Network (RLSN) – Jake Lozon:

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

Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) – Kris Lee:

- BPAC had a meeting on November 14, 2019 at the Maawn Doosh Gumig Community Center at Aamjiwnaang First Nation.
- The recommendation to re-designate the “*Fish Tumours or Other Deformities*” BUI to “Not Impaired” was accepted by BPAC members.
- The new St. Clair River AOC website has been launched. It can be accessed via www.friendsofstclair.ca.

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) – Donna Blue:

- The SCRCA has been granted federal funding through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) to support shoreline protection work along the St. Clair River and Lake Huron. The grant will provide \$8 million dollars over ten years.
- Field work has wrapped up for another year (e.g., fish surveys, water sampling, etc.). Staff are now working on analyzing the data sets.
- A flooding event that occurred on October 31, 2019 resulted the operation of the W. Darcy McKeough Dam for the second year in the row. To date, there have been 15 different events resulting in the issuance of 40 bulletins.
- The provincial government hired a third-party flood advisor earlier in the year to review the current status, roles and management with regards to flood monitoring and response in the province. The importance of Conservation Authorities was highlighted several times throughout the report.
- Work continues on the Sydenham River Watershed Phosphorus Management plan. A number of workshops and a soil health conference are scheduled for early 2020.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN) – Sharilyn Johnston:

- Courtney Jackson reported on behalf of Sharilyn Johnston, who was unable to participate on the teleconference.
- The environment department is currently assessing the status of the shoreline along Aamjiwnaang First Nation to identify areas of erosion and prioritize future shoreline protection and enhancement projects.
- Destiny Rogers-James will be filling for Courtney Jackson who is due to go on maternity leave in December.
- April White attended the AFN Environment Committee meeting on December 6, 2019 to discuss the “*Fish Tumours or Other Deformities*” BUI.

Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN) – Naomi Williams:

- The Walpole Island Heritage Centre will be holding their Annual Open House on December 17, 2019 between 12 pm and 3 pm. The event will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Heritage Centre and will include guest speakers and tours.

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

- ECCC staff are currently working on preparing final reports and wrapping up planning meetings with science teams (e.g., Department of Fisheries and Oceans, etc.) to plan and prioritize monitoring work for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) – Ted Briggs:

- Work continues on the Detailed Engineering and Design Plan phase of the sediment management project for the St. Clair River. The engineering firm PARSONS has been hired to develop the plan and have sub-contracted Anchor QEA and Pollutech to conduct additional sampling work in support of the project. A monitoring plan has been completed with sampling occurring this fall/winter and continuing into the spring. The project team recently held community meetings at Walpole Island and Aamjiwnaang First Nation in October. Presentations and other supporting documents related to the sediment management project are available online at www.stclairsediment.ca.

Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association (SLEA) – Vince Gagner:

- The SLEA offices will be moving the Western Research Park in January 2020.
- SLEA is working towards improving strategies and engagement with the community which includes highlighting work related to the AOC program.

Discussion:

- CRIC members inquired about the status of the triad studies (e.g., benthic, water quality, etc.) that have been administered by SLEA in the past.

ACTION – Vince Gagner will refer to past minutes and discuss with the SLEA board the status and potential continuation of this program.

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

- Trevor Robak was unable to attend the teleconference. No report was available.

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

- MNRF staff are working to develop programs that will look at fish populations throughout all connecting channels in the Great Lakes to ensure consistent programming and monitoring throughout the province.

ACTION – Stephen Marklevitz will share the results of this streamlined programming once it becomes available.

Lambton Public Health – Theresa Warren:

- Theresa Warren was unable to attend the teleconference. No report was available.

City of Sarnia – Terry Burrell:

- Shoreline protection work will be conducted at priority areas throughout the City of Sarnia with support from the DMAF funding granted to the SCRCA.
- The building located at Ferry Dock Hill will be demolished as a result of the high water levels along the St. Clair River.

Other Business:

None

Next Meeting:

The next CRIC meeting will be scheduled at the call of the Chairs.