



Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC)

Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2022- Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Minutes Prepared by Mike Moroney

Attending Members:

Kris Lee	CAN Co-Chair, Wallaceburg Advisory Team for Cleaner Habitat	Paulette Duhaime	U.S. Co-Chair, Citizen at Large
Terry Burrell	CAN Co-Vice Chair, City of Sarnia, Friends of St. Clair River	Patty Troy	U.S Co-Vice Chair, Env. Sector
Mike Moroney	St. Clair River RAP Coordinator, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority	Theresa Warren	Lambton Public Health
John Timar	City of Sarnia Representative	Alexandra Beveridge	Walpole Island First Nation
Amber Falkner	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Donna Blue	St. Clair Region Conservation Authority
April White	Environment and Climate Change Canada	Ted Briggs	Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Michael Hennessy	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Sheri Faust	Friends of the St. Clair River (U.S.)
Debbie Krukowski	Citizen at Large		

Guests:

Jay Vanklinken, County of Lambton
 Ron Realesmith, City of Sarnia
 Justin Westmiller, St. Clair County, Michigan
 Jennifer Meharey, Suncor
 Todd Murray, Suncor

Actions Arising from the Minutes

- Paulette Duhaime to follow-up on registering for MYCNN again. Previous attempts have been unsuccessful.
- Mike Moroney to convene a sub-committee meeting to work on creating a Fact Sheet on notification procedures when spills occur to the St. Clair River. The Fact Sheet should include a list of agencies and responsibilities, as well as a flow chart if possible.
- Anyone willing to work on the Spill Notification Fact Sheet sub-committee is to inform Kris Lee and Mike Moroney.
- Paulette Duhaime to email Ted Briggs and April White to see if they can provide the fish contaminant information for discussion at the next BPAC meeting.
- Kris Lee to finalize letter to Transport Canada, obtain required signatures, and send it to Transport Canada.
- Patty Troy to provide information on Ohio Sea Grant Webinar – Monitoring New Contaminants in Public Drinking Water Sources to Mike Moroney to circulate to BPAC members.

1.0 Call to Order, Introductions and Land Acknowledgement

Meeting called to order by Kris Lee at 6:35 pm.

Housekeeping:

- Notice to committee that the meeting would be recorded to assist with minutes production.

2.0 Adoption, Additions or Corrections to Draft Agenda

- Correction to Agenda – Amber Falkner is the U.S. EPA representative on the Four Agency Managers Committee
- Other Business – Add the following items:
 - Kris Lee requested that an item be added - Drinking Water Restrictions BUI - discussion about marine traffic and questions for Transport Canada.
 - Paulette Duhaime requested that an item be added - Fish Consumption BUI - summarizing fish contaminant data for both the U.S. and Canada for the next BPAC meeting.

Moved by: Kris Lee

MOTION to approve the agenda.

No objections.

CARRIED

3.0 Review of Action Items and Approval of June 23, 2022 Draft Meeting Minutes

- All previous action items have been addressed. Paulette Duhaime to follow-up on registering for MYCNN again to confirm that it is available to residents in Michigan as well. Previous attempts have been unsuccessful.

Moved by: Terry Burrell

Seconded by: Paulette Duhaime

MOTION to approve the minutes of the last meeting of the BPAC on June 23, 2022.

CARRIED

4.0 Spill Notification Procedures - Suncor – Todd Murray and Jennifer Meharey

Suncor provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Suncor Wastewater Treatment Overflow event that occurred in August 2022 and the subsequent communications.

The company explained that on August 3, 2022 they experienced an overflow in the refinery Wastewater Treatment (WWT) facility as a result of a heavy rainfall event. The overflow was brief, lasting approximately four minutes; however, due to the nature of the material involved (untreated wastewater) the resulting impact was a sheen on the St. Clair River.

Despite the weather conditions at the time, the company was able to quickly deploy their boom to try and capture any residual material. The Eastern Canada Response Corporation (ECRC) responded early the next morning to assess the river and shoreline. There was no evidence of an ongoing sheen and no material accumulation along the waterfront requiring clean-up.

The overflow occurred as the result of a restriction in water flow from the WWT facility to the refinery's secondary storm water impounding basin. The primary basin was out of service for maintenance.

Incident learnings and corrective actions moving forward include ensuring the route to the secondary storm water basin is kept free of obstructions and developing a procedure to conduct maintenance while both the primary and secondary stormwater impounding basins are online. The company met with Emergency Management officials with the City of Sarnia, County of Lambton and Aamjiwnaang First Nation to discuss the event and areas for improvement in communication during future events.

5.0 Spill Notification Procedures – City of Sarnia – Ron Realesmith

Ron Realesmith, Manager, Emergency Management and Corporate Security for the City of Sarnia, explained that there is a CAER code system in place to create awareness amongst

industry and the community when there is an incident. Members of CAER meet on regular basis. CAER recently reinstated a Code 10 for a spill or leak to the St. Clair River. Now that there is a MYCNN notification system in place for internal and external communications, on-going enhancements to the notification system have been taking place. Suncor was in the process of reinstating the Code 10 notification code into their notification procedures when the incident in August 2022 occurred.

On the evening of the Suncor incident, Ron received a call from Suncor to make him aware of the incident and advised that he would be kept updated. Ron began communicating with his counterparts in St. Clair County, Michigan (Justin Westmiller, Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management) and the County of Lambton (Jay Vanklinken, Emergency Management Coordinator). The communication with these other parties occurred as a courtesy, such notifications are not mandatory under the circumstances.

Suncor requested the use of the Everbridge (MYCNN) notification system so that they could more readily communicate with more stakeholders. Ron assisted the company and they were able to use the notification system successfully.

Ron explained that whenever a company has a spill, it is required to notify MECP's SAC. When a company issues a Code 10 through the CAER notification procedures, the notification also goes to 911 Dispatch in Sarnia. The dispatch centre is legislated to notify MECP's SAC. Issuance of a Code 10 also results in notifications to municipal staff, senior managers and the mayor. The notifications occurred as required on the date of the Suncor incident.

Ron informed BPAC that a spill simulation exercise is anticipated in mid to late 2023. It will involve a spill to the St. Clair River that affects the Canadian and American sides and the downstream drinking water treatment plants. The simulation will help to test spill notification procedures.

To help clarify roles and responsibilities during spill incidents, Ron explained that SAC works with local MECP staff in responding to an environmental incident. The local MECP staff are often in direct communication with the company. SAC/MECP staff also work with Lambton Public Health (LPH) when there are incidents that have potential health implications. LPH can issue community advisories regarding drinking water, if necessary. If there are any water supply issues, contingency plans are in place to ensure that alternate water supplies can be made available. Ron advised that there are agreements already in place to support such contingency plans.

Ron addressed a few questions that followed his presentation:

Q. Is there a written policy of communication when staff leave and new staff come on board.

A. The city has an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and it is Ron's responsibility to make sure that the chairs of the EOC are properly trained and know their role when an emergency occurs. The City of Sarnia also has an Emergency Response Plan that was approved by Council.

The plan outlines roles and responsibilities in an emergency and that information can readily be shared with any new staff.

Q. Is there a flow chart that outlines how communications occur once a Code (e.g. Code 10) has been issued in response to an incident?

A. For the City of Sarnia, the Emergency Operations Centre and EOC procedures deal with any type of emergency, not just Code 10s. The CAER codes are with CAER. CAER has their own notification system in place. For spills, SAC/MECP is the lead and they decide who to notify once they are made aware of an environmental incident.

Q. Where is the information on who SAC notifies?

A. LPH is the authority for drinking water issues. They would work with SAC on addressing any concerns over impacts to drinking water. If decisions are made that might impact water supplies to a community, that is when Ron might get involved. LPH confirmed that they work closely with SAC. The local MECP office in Sarnia conducts inspections following an incident and they work closely with the LPH staff if there are any health-related concerns. LPH staff participate on the EOC as well.

6.0 Spill Notification Procedures - St. Clair County (Michigan) – Justin Westmiller

Justin explained that on the day of the Suncor incident, he was in communication with Ron and was advised to contact Suncor directly for more details on the spill. Suncor recommended that water intakes on the Michigan side, downstream of Suncor, consider closing their intakes as a precautionary measure until more information was available about the spill. Justin subsequently contacted the 13 water intakes on the Michigan side and recommended temporary closure of their water intakes as a precautionary measure until more information was available. Since almost all of the water intakes normally close their intakes at 11 pm each day and open again between 5 am and 7 am the next morning, they had no concerns with closing and relying on what was in their storage towers.

Justin then notified the US Coast Guard and the Michigan State Police Emergency Operations Centre, who in turn notified Michigan Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (MEGLE) and State Police Operations. The next day the US Coast Guard reported observing a minor sheen on the river that dissipated within the hour.

MEGLE is the agency that is responsible for ensuring the necessary actions are taken when a spill impacts a waterway. The U.S. EPA or U.S. Coast Guard are the federal on-scene coordinators. Justin's role normally is to provide resources for whatever is needed, including working with MEGLE and the State of Michigan to secure alternate water supplies, if needed. He is responsible for the first 72 hours after an incident, until other federal and state agencies are able to get involved.

Q. How does the Michigan Pollution Emergency Alert System (PEAS) work?

A. PEAS is Michigan's 24-hour Pollution Emergency Alert System that is administered by MEGLE.

7.0 Spill Notification Procedures – County of Lambton – Jay Vanklinken

Jay explained that Lambton County oversees service delivery for program areas that, in many cases, are distinct from lower tier responsibilities (i.e., social services, public health, etc.) though some services (i.e., public works) are delivered at both levels. Municipalities also have separate services that they are responsible for delivering. In the event of an emergency, the county has a plan that can be activated under three circumstances:

- If the event needs to be coordinated across multiple municipalities;
- If the local municipality is out of resources and needs help; or
- If it is an event impacting multiple municipalities.

The County will provide assistance but will not take over as the lead. In the event of a drinking water event, the county's role is to monitor and update their stakeholders. If, for example, arrangements need to be made for alternate drinking water supplies, the county might be called in to assist.

Q. If a spill was going to impact Walpole Island First Nation, who connects with them about health issues?

A. LPH advised that Walpole Island First Nation is covered by Health Canada. LPH would, however, still call Walpole Island First Nation to make sure they are aware and would also be in contact with Health Canada to see if any assistance is needed. It is MECP's SAC that does the initial notifications to private users, the Walpole Island First Nation water intake and the Wallaceburg intake. Chatham-Kent Public Health has responsibility for addressing health related issues for the Wallaceburg area.

Q. Are the notifications to Walpole Island First Nation timely enough?

A. This is a question that needs to be addressed by Walpole Island First Nation. Normally there is a period of time (hours) before a spill could potentially reach the Walpole Island First Nation intake.

Q. Are there systems in place to ensure knowledge transfer when there is a turnover in emergency management staff?

A. Every municipality is encouraged to have alternate Emergency Management Coordinators. The County of Lambton has an alternate and the both of them communicate on a regular basis. Justin advised that St. Clair County also has redundancies in their organization.

8.0 Panel Discussion/Qs and As – Spill Notification Procedures

Q. Can Suncor share information on timing and communications?

A. Todd explained that it was around 7:45 pm when notification went out to the City of Sarnia EOC by way of the CAER notification system. There was not a lot of time between when the event occurred and when the notification went out.

Q. How are the basin connections inspected to ensure there is no blockage? Are the clean-outs done on a regular schedule?

A. Todd advised that the clean-outs are done on a scheduled basis. The company has a preventative maintenance schedule. As a result of the August 2022 incident, procedures have been put in place to also cleanout the lines as part of the overall basin cleaning to ensure they are not becoming blocked by sediment or other material.

Q: Were there any lessons learned from the August 2022 incident at Suncor? Are lessons learned from the incident shared with other companies in the area?

A: Todd advised that in terms of sharing lessons learned, it is the SLEA technical review committee that is likely the best forum for those types of discussions. He acknowledged that weather conditions do need to be monitored and may need to be taken into consideration when determining timing for basin or line clean-outs. The best method for conducting basin clean-out also needs to be assessed. Need to look at methods that will allow the basin to remain in service. For example, will the use of skimmers assist in keeping basins in service.

Action: Mike Moroney to convene a sub-committee meeting to work on creating a Fact Sheet on notification procedures when spills occur to the St. Clair River. The Fact Sheet should include a list of agencies and responsibilities, as well as a flow chart if possible.

Action: Anyone willing to work on the Spill Notification Fact Sheet sub-committee is to inform Kris Lee and Mike Moroney.

Theresa Warren, Lambton Public Health, offered to participate on the sub-committee.

9.0 Agency Updates

- i. **Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks - Ted Briggs**
No updates since the last BPAC meeting. Ted Briggs had to leave before the agenda item could be discussed.
- ii. **Environment and Climate Change Canada- April White**
No updates since the last BPAC meeting. April White had to leave before the agenda item could be discussed.
- iii. **Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) - Melanie Foose**
No updates. Melanie Foose was unable to participate in the meeting.
- iv. **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Michael Hennessy/Amber Falkner**
 - Michael Hennessy introduced himself as the U.S. EPA contact to replace Rose Ellison who will be retiring soon.
 - No updates to add from Amber Falkner

10.0 Committee Reports

i. **Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC)- Paulette Duhaime/Patty Troy**

- Patty Troy reported that the last SPAC meeting was in Munroe for 2 days. Contaminated sediment issues in the River Raisin AOC and remedial measures was the primary focus.
- There will be some staffing changes occurring at Michigan EGLE. Rick Hobrla is expected to retire at the end of 2022. Michelle Selzer will be leaving Michigan EGLE for another opportunity.
- Submissions for grant funding from US EPA will need to consider diversity, inclusion, equity and environmental justice.
- The next AOC conference is scheduled for Sept 2023 in Green Bay, Wisconsin.
- Paulette added that the new Chair for SPAC is Brian Egen from River Raisin PAC and the Vice Chair is Eric Diesing from Clinton River PAC.

ii. **Friends of the St. Clair River (Canada) - Terry Burrell**

- Provided funds for the Children's Water Festival that was held recently in the Chatham area.
- FOSCR will be getting a new President. Will be decided at the next FOSCR Annual General Meeting planned for December 2022.

iii. **Friends of the St. Clair River (USA) - Sheri Faust/Paulette Duhaime**

- Sheri Faust explained that they are currently without any PAC support grant funding but plan to submit soon.
- The public is noticing how low the water levels are now compared to when they were previously so high. FOSCR is trying to create awareness about water cycles and climate change. Impacts that are occurring on the entire watershed.
- Some properties along the St. Clair River shoreline are developing green infrastructure plans. Just concept plans for now. Then need to look at getting grants for implementation of the plans. There are opportunities if they relate to addressing climate change issues.
- Completed a project this summer involving murals on storm drains along the St. Clair River shoreline. Fate of stormwater and where water goes. Was a grant funded project and very successful.
- Have two Lake Sturgeon in the office that will be raised and released next June 2023 into the St. Clair River during the Sturgeon Festival.

iv. **Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC) – Kris Lee**

- Next CRIC meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2022

v. **Four Agency Managers Work Group – Ted Briggs/April White/Amber Falkner**

- Amber Falkner advised that they just had their first in person meeting. Focus was the St. Mary's AOC. Next meeting likely to occur in Spring of 2023.

11.0 Other Business

- **Action:** Paulette Duhaime to email Ted and April to see if they can provide the fish contaminant information for the next BPAC meeting
- SPAC encouraged to start meeting face to face and perhaps BPAC should start considering that as well.
- Marine Traffic – Kris Lee explained the letter that has been drafted to send to Transport Canada for information on shipping traffic along the St. Clair River corridor. The issue has implications for “Life After Delisting”. **Action:** Kris Lee to finalize the letter, obtain required signatures and send it to Transport Canada.
- Patty Troy advised that there is a Ohio Sea Grant Webinar – Monitoring New Contaminants in Public Drinking Water Source. On Nov 15th. **Action:** Patty to share information with Mike Moroney to circulate to BPAC members.

12.0 Next Meeting Date and Adjournment

- Will be on the U.S. side. Likely in January 2023.

MOTION by Kris Lee to adjourn the meeting.

No Objections

CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.