



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

Thursday, May 11, 2023
MS Teams Teleconference
Minutes produced by Mike Moroney

Attendees:

April White, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
Cathleen O'Brien, Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN)
Jason Vaillant, General Manager, Bluewater Association for Safety, Environment and Sustainability (BASES)
Kris Lee, Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC)
Mike Moroney, RAP Coordinator (SCRCA)
Stephen Marklevitz, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)
Ted Briggs, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)
Terry Burrell, City of Sarnia
Theresa Warren, Lambton Public Health

Regrets:

Trevor Robak, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
Naomi Williams, Walpole Island First Nation (Walpole Island First Nation)
Courtney Jackson, Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN)
Donna Blue, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA)

Actions Arising from Meeting

Outstanding Items

- a) April White to share an updated draft Assessment Report for BUI 3 – Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations to CRIC members – **Pending**. It has undergone a rewrite. It is still under review by an ECCC fish biologist. Focusing on making information on the fish section of the report a little more concise. Anticipate being able to speak to the updated report at the next CRIC meeting.
- b) Naomi to submit a request to Chief and Council for time on the agenda on January 24, 2023 for a presentation on BUI 9. – **Pending. Had to be rescheduled.**

New Items

- c) Mike to discuss with Donna on what approach has been used in the past to make the community aware of an opportunity to review and provide comments on a draft BUI status assessment report.

d) Mike to send out a doodle poll for a meeting some time in September 2023.

Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm

1. Welcome and Introductions:

April White chaired the meeting and welcomed CRIC members to the May 11, 2023 teleconference.

2. Approval of Agenda

The May 11, 2023 draft agenda was approved.

3. Review and Acceptance of Minutes from November 8, 2022

The minutes from the November 8, 2022 meeting were approved. Each of the action items from the meeting were completed with the exception of the following which will be carried forward.

- a) April White to share an updated draft Assessment Report for BUI 3 – Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations – **Pending**. It has undergone a rewrite. It is still under review by an ECCC fish biologist. Focusing on making information on the fish section of the report a little more concise. Anticipate being able to speak to the updated report at the next CRIC meeting.
- b) Naomi to submit a request to Chief and Council for time on the agenda on January 24, 2023 for a presentation on BUI 9. – **Pending. Had to be rescheduled.**

4. Status of Beneficial Use Impairments – April White, Ted Briggs

BUI 1- Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption (Impaired): Ted reminded members that making progress on both BUI 1 and BUI 6 is tied to the contaminated sediment work. There have been on-going discussions with Dow Canada and an agreement was signed between MECP and Dow which has Dow leading the implementation work and covering and the costs associated with it. Dow has retained a consulting firm for the project. The first step is to obtain the required permits for the work. MECP, with assistance from ECCC, will take the lead on the outreach activities. Once the timing for commencing the implementation work is known, MECP will also commence the outreach work. When the implementation work has been completed, the work on assessing the status of this BUI can also commence.

BUI 6 - Degradation of Benthos (Impaired): As explained in BUI 1, the ability to redesignate this BUI is also linked to work on the contaminated sediment in the three priority areas of the St. Clair River. There has been on-going work on benthos and this work will be incorporated into the assessment once the sediment management work is completed. Anticipate 2024/2025 for the assessment work to begin.

BUI 3 - Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations (RFA): As explained under remaining action items.

BUI 9- Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption, or Taste and Odour Problems

(Impaired): April explained that once a presentation has been made to Walpole Island First Nation Chief and Council on the recommendation to redesignate it to Not Impaired, it can then go to BPAC. **Action:** Naomi to submit a request to Chief and Council for time on the agenda for a presentation on BUI 9.

BUI 14: Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Impaired): April advised that Mike has been working with the Habitat Subcommittee on the preparation of the assessment report. The team is reviewing the initial draft. There is another subcommittee meeting next week at which time Mike will discuss the revisions to the report and seek additional input from the members.

5. Results of 2021-2022 Community Fish Consumption Survey

- Mike spoke to a presentation on the results of the Fish Consumption Survey conducted in 2021/2022. 172 surveys were completed. The information was summarized into 12 key findings followed by a number of recommendations.
- Recommendations:
 - Share results of survey with those that completed the survey and expressed interest in being provided the preliminary results.
 - For the 80 respondents that expressed interest in receiving the monthly Friends of the St. Clair River E-Newsletter, add their contact information to the distribution list.
 - Use the survey findings to support other aspects of the assessment of the beneficial use related to fish consumption.
 - Use the survey findings to promote the St. Clair River as a place that people enjoy to fish and to eat the fish that are caught.
- Ted explained that the Guide to Eating Fish in Ontario was once published as a hard copy document and available at local locations where it was visible and readily available. Now it is only available on-line so may not be familiar to those that do not readily go on-line to search for such a document.
- Stephen advised that the findings in terms of the preferred fish for catching and consuming (Walleye, Yellow Perch and Blue Gill) is in line with what MNR observes in this area of Ontario but he would have expected more individuals to be familiar with the Guide to Eating Fish in Ontario.
- Kris suggested that the bank of the channel in the St. Clair River may influence where individuals prefer to fish, as opposed to whether or not industry is located in the area.

6. Finalization of Workplan for 2022-2027

- Mike spoke to the updated workplan by presenting the final draft. Some edits needed to be made following the last CRIC meeting. The revised version had been

circulated to members in December 2022. Comments were received from Clint and Naomi. A meeting was held to discuss their comments and April provided a response in February 2023. Some of the comments could be addressed through editorial revisions to the workplan, while other comments needed to be addressed outside of the workplan.

- Mike explained that he made a presentation on the Workplan at the March 23, 2023 WIFN Heritage Centre Open House.
- For BUI 9, Kris explained that Wallaceburg is now considering expanding its water treatment plant. They decided to keep it operational. With respect to the status assessment report, Natasha communicated the initial version of the report and BPAC gave comments. There is a revised assessment report now that still needs to come to BPAC. Kris wanted to know what the plans are for making the Wallaceburg community aware. April advised that the process is to bring to the CRIC after WIFN and then take it out to the public by putting it on the FOSCR website, posting it in the Newsletter, and putting it out on social media to promote public input. It still needs to go to WIFN Chief and Council. **Action:** Mike to discuss with Donna on what approach has been used in the past. Kris advised that WATCH can help with creating awareness. Can be the conduit for creating awareness. Kris is willing to assist in that regard.
- BUI 14 – BUI redesignation should also be ECCC and MECP along with CRIC to lead the redesignation.
- April advised that she is good with this version of the workplan
- Ted asked if anyone needed more time to review the report. There were no requests for additional time.
- **Decision:** Consensus that the draft 2022-2027 Workplan be finalized and published.

7. Funding Updates – April White, Ted Briggs, Stephen Marklevitz, Trevor Robak

7.1. Environment and Climate Change Canada - April White

- \$420 million announced for the Great Lakes over a 10-year period.
- The money will likely start being available in 2024.
- Developing agreements with Aamjiwnaang First Nation and Walpole Island First Nation for funds to support engagement in the AOC over the next two years.

7.2. Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks - Ted Briggs

- Have a funding agreement in place for the St. Clair River RAP Coordinator until March 2024. Will start looking at renewing the agreement later this year.
- Funds have been provided to FOSCR for the work they are doing in 2023. There was a change in how the funds are provided to FOSCR. Funds are now going through one agreement with the Bruce Peninsula Association.

7.3. Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry- Stephen Marklevitz

- MNRF was able to get the Connecting Channels AOC program in place and will be doing the Detroit River this year. The St. Clair River will be next year.

7.4. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs- Trevor Robak

- No updates. Trevor was unable to participate.

8. RAP Coordinator Updates

Work Completed:

- Draft BUI 14 Assessment Report - Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat – Input from Habitat Subcommittee members on-going
- Draft Fact Sheet – Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat – will need updating
- Draft PowerPoint Presentation – Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat – will need updating
- Draft Summary Report on the results of the Fish Consumption Survey
- Draft PowerPoint Presentation on the results of the Fish Consumption Survey
- Published monthly E-Newsletters
- Held CRIC Outreach Subcommittee Meetings
- Supported the work of BPAC in updating the BPAC By-Laws

9. Member Updates:

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

- Terry confirmed that FOSCR have a new agreement in place with MECP for funding. FOSCR is currently focusing their efforts on the establishment of educational signs along the St. Clair River. Getting close to finalizing the signs. The initiative is being led by Ken Hall with input from members. The FOSCR E-Newsletter is still being published on a monthly basis. Kris informed the committee that, in support of the FOSCR work, she did a presentation at the Lake Huron “Is the Coast Clear” conference in Grand Bend. The presentation was well received.

9.2. Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) – Kris Lee

- Kris informed the committee that at the last BPAC meeting, there was: discussion around having a U.S./Canada science symposium; a presentation from a representative from DTE Energy on the decommissioning of coal fired plants; a discussion on the renewal BPAC’s By-Laws; and a discussion about ways in which to make BPAC more accessible to the public. Spill Notification procedures were also discussed and are expected to be discussed again at the next BPAC meeting after BASES has incorporated input from all stakeholders.

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

- In Donna’s absence, Mike explained that he will be working with Donna on a number of initiatives identified as a result of the recent CRIC Outreach Subcommittee meetings.

9.4. Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN) – Cathleen O’Brien

- Cathleen informed members that on May 24, 2023 there is a meeting being held on Aamjiwnaang First Nation with senior officials from the federal and provincial

governments. Discussions will mainly focus on air emissions but they will also be looking for a bigger role in monitoring and decision making. This is the first time for such a meeting with a First Nation community.

9.5. Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN) – Naomi Williams

- No updates.

9.6. Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) – April White

- ECCC has recently been reorganized. The Area of Concern unit has been moved from a Regional Program into a National Program, called Freshwater Management. April's duties will remain unchanged.

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

- Ted advised that there is currently an opportunity to apply for funding under the Ontario Community Environment Fund. There is over \$1M available for projects in Southwest Region. First Nation communities, municipalities etc. can apply. Can apply up until the end of May 2023. More information is available at the website: [Ontario Community Environment Fund](#)

9.8. Bluewater Association for Safety, Environment, and Sustainability (BASES) – Jason Vaillant

- Jason informed the committee of the work that is currently underway to develop a flow chart outlining notification procedures for spills to the St. Clair River. More information will be shared once it is finalized. Jason also made members aware that it was Emergency Preparedness Week and that BASES has completed an upgrade to the community notification system. It is now called Sarnia Lambton Alerts. An individual can choose what incidents they want to be notified of. BASES has just started the promotion of the upgraded community notification system.

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

- No updates at this time. Trevor was not able to attend.

9.10. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) – Stephen Marklevitz

- No additional updates.

9.11. Lambton Public Health – Theresa Warren

- No updates.

9.12. City of Sarnia – Terry Burrell

- Terry advised that the City of Sarnia is continuing with its sewer separation program and is continuing with shoreline restoration work in Bright's Grove, along with other environmental projects. In his role as a Board member for the SCRCA, Terry explained that the Board was made aware of challenges being experienced in the SCRCA's education outreach programs. Schools are having challenges trying to find

buses to take the students to the education programs. It is more of an issue this year than in previous years.

10. Other Business

- No other business

11. Next Meeting

- **Action:** Mike to send out a doodle poll for a meeting some time in September 2023. The main item for discussion will likely be the BUI 3 Status Assessment Report. Plan for a face to face meeting. Possibly at the Aamjiwnaang First Nation facility.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 pm