



Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC)

Meeting Minutes

May 2, 2024 – Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and BASES Office)

Minutes Prepared by Mike Moroney

Attending Members:

Paulette Duhaime	U.S. Co-Chair, Citizen at Large	Mike Moroney	St. Clair River RAP Coordinator
Kris Lee	CAN Co-Chair, Wallaceburg Advisory Team for Cleaner Habitat	Terry Burrell	CAN Co-Vice Chair, City of Sarnia
April White	Environment and Climate Change Canada	Ted Briggs	Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Carla Rosenfeld	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Sheri Faust	Friends of the St. Clair River (U.S.)
Jason Vaillant	BASES	Mollie Brown	Environmental Health Educator, St. Clair County Health Department
John Jackson	CAN Env. Sector	Vince Gagne	Citizen at Large
Naomi Williams	Walpole Island First Nation	Bela Trebics	Education
Donna Blue	St. Clair Region Conservation Authority	Melanie Foose	Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
Lyne Sabourin	International Joint Commission, Canadian Section	Colin Graf	Independent Journalist

Actions Arising from the Minutes

- a) Carla to provide a copy of her presentation to Mike for distribution to BPAC members.
- b) Anyone with suggestions for a keynote speaker at the symposium that is planned for 2025 is to contact either Paulette or Kris.
- c) Any BPAC members that are aware of other groups that may have an interest in applying to MECP for funding for Great Lakes related work should inform Ted.
- d) Kris and Paulette to update the BPAC membership roster and bring it back to BPAC for review and approval.
- e) Mike to send out a doodle poll to BPAC members to see which date works for most for the next BPAC meeting - Wednesday August 7, 2024, or Thursday August 8, 2024.

BPAC Meeting Minutes – May 2, 2024

1.0 Call to Order, Introductions and Land Acknowledgment

Meeting called to order by Kris Lee at 6:35 p.m. and land acknowledgement statement read.

2.0 Adoption, Additions or Corrections to Draft Agenda

Moved by: Paulette Duhaime

Seconded by: Terry Burrell

That the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

3.0 Review of Action Items and Approval of January 31, 2024 Minutes

- **Moved by:** Terry Burrell
Seconded by: Paulette Duhaime

That the January 31, 2024 Meeting Minutes be approved.

CARRIED

Review of Action Items from Previous Meeting

- a) Naomi to seek input from the Heritage Centre Committee on ways to capture additional members of the community in the Fish Consumption Survey. **Revised** – Naomi explained that she will work with her staff to get out hard copies of the survey to the community. They might simplify the survey and include an incentive for community members to complete it.
- b) Mike to amend the BPAC By-Laws to reflect that the two-year time frame for election of officers starts when the last elections were held on February 16, 2023. – **Completed.**
- c) Mike to make amendments to the spill notification flow charts as per the items listed in the meeting minutes. **Completed.**
- d) Mike to contact MECP Sarnia District Office to make them aware of the discussion held at BPAC and the request of Aamjiwnaang First Nation to be included on MECP's spill notification list for spills to the St. Clair River. **Completed.**
- e) Janelle to arrange for a discussion with their Emergency Planner to confirm how their community is notified of spills to the St. Clair River and will include Jason in that discussion. **Pending.**
- f) Kris and Paulette to prepare a letter to the Ontario Spills Action Centre, with a copy to St. Clair County Homeland Security, Michigan State Police, and Michigan EGLE, recommending that whenever SAC initiates a notification to Michigan State Police of a spill to the St. Clair River, they also notify St. Clair County Homeland Security as part of their routine notification process. **Completed.**

4.0 Approval of Spill Notification Fact Sheet – M Moroney

- Mike provided an overview of the final version of the Spill Notification Fact Sheet based on comments received at the last BPAC meeting. Only the pages with the notification flow chart for Ontario and Michigan required revisions. Mike pointed out the revisions that had been made.
- **Moved by:** John Jackson
Seconded by: Paulette Duhaime

BPAC Meeting Minutes – May 2, 2024

That the Spill Notification Fact Sheet be finalized and posted to the Friends of the St. Clair River website.

CARRIED

5.0 Letter to Ontario Spills Action Centre from BPAC – P. Duhaime, K. Lee

- This item was previously discussed under “Action Items” at which time the letter to the Ontario Spills Action Centre (SAC), dated April 12, 2024, and signed by the Canadian and U.S. BPAC Co-Chairs, was shown to meeting participants.
- SAC confirmed receipt of the letter. It is under consideration.

6.0 Draft Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan IV – Carla Rosenfeld

- Carla spoke to a PowerPoint presentation on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Draft Action Plan IV for fiscal years 2025-2029.
- The public comment period was open until May 24, 2024
- Focus Area 1 was the focus of the presentation – Toxic substances in Areas of Concern.
- The plan outlines objectives, commitments, and measures.
- The measures have quantitative targets for each fiscal year.
- By FY2029 the goal is to have 14 AOCs delisted, 168 BUIs removed, and 23 AOCs where all management actions necessary for delisting have been implemented.
- There is a large emphasis in the plan on Environmental Justice and Climate Resiliency
- Melanie commented that the plan has been posted on the US EPA website and that she made the Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council chairs and subcommittee members aware when it was posted and available for public comment. A State of Michigan forum is planned for June 2024 and comments received on the plan may be part of the discussions during that forum.
- **Action:** Carla to provide a copy of the presentation to Mike for distribution to participants following the meeting.

7.0 Planning for a Technical Symposium in 2025 – P. Duhaime, K. Lee

- Information symposium planned for September 2025. Topics being considered based on input to date include fish consumption advisories, drinking water protection, benthos and sediment remediation, energy projects, sturgeon research, mussels research, Michigan Wild Rice restoration initiative, life after delisting, landscape architecture with native species, Indigenous representation, and beach closures.
- It would likely be a one-day event, 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with a possible field trip the day before.
- Would like to plan for 100 to 150 participants.
- There would be a registration fee associated with the event.
- Target audience is the public, media, and elected officials.
- **Action:** Anyone with suggestions for a keynote speaker should contact either Paulette or Kris.

8.0 Agency Updates

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks – T. Briggs

- MECP just signed an agreement with SCRCA for RAP coordination for the next two years.
- Targeted competitive funding recently opened for various groups around the Great Lakes. Ted has reached out to the FOSCR to make them aware of the opportunity. SCRCA’s Water Resources Department has also been made aware.

BPAC Meeting Minutes – May 2, 2024

- MECP is considering providing funding to support the work of GLIER in their assessment of BUI 1 Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption.
- **Action:** Any BPAC members that are aware of other groups that may have an interest in funding for Great Lakes related work should contact Ted.

Environment and Climate Change Canada – A. White

- The federal government is still moving ahead with the new agency that will be dedicated to freshwater issues, using more of a national approach.
- There has been a second reading of the legislation to put the agency in place. Once finalized there will be a transition period until the agency is fully separated from ECCC.
- In terms of funding, ECCC has received an application from the SCRCA for funding for the RAP program for another two years. The funding request is under review.
- ECCC has increased the amount of funding provided to both Walpole Island First Nation and Aamjiwnaang First Nation. The additional funds should enable them to recruit additional staff for RAP related work. The agreements are in place until the end of 2026.

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) – M. Foose

- Michigan EGLE's new Area of Concern (AOC) Coordinator is expected to start on May 13, 2024.
- The AOC Coordinator should be able to participate in the next BPAC meeting that is planned to occur on the U.S. side.
- Melanie will be taking time to introduce the new AOC Coordinator to individuals involved in the AOC program and will brief the individual on local AOC related issues/initiatives.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – C. Rosenfeld

- No updates other than the Action Plan IV document, that Carla spoke to as a previous agenda item, is open for public comment.

9.0 Committee Reports

i. Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) – P. Duhaime

- No updates. SPAC has not met since the last BPAC meeting. The next SPAC meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2024, as a virtual meeting.

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

- The next meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2024 to finalize a workplan in support of a funding application to MECP.
- There has been a change in how the funding is being managed. FOSCR are once again dealing directly with MECP.

iii. Friends of the St. Clair River (USA) – Sheri Faust

- The Sturgeon Festival is Saturday June 1, 2024. There is a land portion and a sea portion.
- It is being held from 10 am to 3:00 pm. About a dozen baby Sturgeon are to be released at the end of the festival. The event is a significant fund raiser for FOSCR.
- The Bluewater River Walk was one of the more significant fish and wildlife habitat projects completed on the U.S. side. It will be 10 years old in June 2024. Planning is underway to celebrate the milestone. The event will likely be held in September 2024, in the evening. Additional information to follow as details are finalized.

BPAC Meeting Minutes – May 2, 2024

iv. Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC) – K. Lee

- The last meeting was held on April 25, 2024.
- A presentation was provided by Mike on the outcome of the assessment of BUI 14 Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat. The status assessment report is close to being finalized, subject to input from Naomi, and then will be shared with the CRIC members for review and their endorsement of the recommendation to redesignate it to not impaired. After which community engagement on the recommendation will commence.

v. Four Agency Managers Work Group – M. Foose

- Melanie explained that the next Four Agency meeting will be on the U.S. side along Lake St. Clair.
- A Lake St. Clair Conference is being planned for November 14, 2024, on the U.S. side, at Macray Harbor. It will be an in-person event. More information to follow as details are finalized.

10.0 Other Business

- Great Lakes Ecoregion Network - John Jackson spoke about the Great Lakes Ecoregion Network (GLEN). They are looking for a transformational strategy. What is needed for the long term? What is needed for the next 50 years? Also looking at what they should focus on in the coming year. John mentioned that after every third report that the IJC publishes, there is to be a review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. GLEN plans to focus on this review in the coming year. They will be making recommendations to the government on how the review should be conducted (i.e. how to involve the public). Then GLEN will be providing comments on suggestions for revisions to the agreement.
- Great Lakes Day - Lyne Sabourin (IJC) made members aware that Great Lakes Day is being held in Ottawa on Monday May 6, 2024. The IJC Great Lakes Regional Office will be there and will be showcasing the Science Plan Collaborative – designed to look at a plan focusing on science gaps. Comments from the public are welcome.
- BPAC Membership Roster – Kris Lee informed members that the BPAC membership roster needs to be updated. Kris will be updating the Canadian membership list and Paulette will be updating the U.S. membership list, and then will bring it back to BPAC for comments and approval. **Action:** Kris and Paulette to update the BPAC membership roster.

11.0 Next Meeting Date and Adjournment

- The next meeting will be held on the U.S. side at the FOSCR office location. It will be a hybrid meeting. Proposed dates are Wednesday August 7, 2024, or Thursday August 8, 2024. Members of FOSCR (Canada) will also be invited to attend. One of the agenda items will be to discuss life after delisting.
- **Action:** Mike to send out a doodle poll to see which date works for most.

Moved by: Bela Trebics

Seconded by: John Jackson

That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.