



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

**Thursday, April 25, 2024**

**10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**BASES Office, 1086 Modeland Road, Building 1020, Suite 100N, Sarnia  
and Zoom Meeting**

**Minutes produced by Mike Moroney**

**Attendees:**

April White, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)  
Courtney Jackson, Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN)  
Donna Blue, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA)  
Jason Vaillant, Bluewater Association for Safety, Environment and Sustainability (BASES)  
Kris Lee, Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) - Joined at 11:22 am  
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  
Tracy Krull, Bluewater Association for Safety, Environment and Sustainability (BASES)

**Regrets:**

Naomi Williams, Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN)  
Cathleen O'Brien, Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN)

**Actions Arising from Meeting**

- a) Mike to confirm what is currently permitted when constructing shoreline protection work – sheet pile walls vs armoured stone wall.
- b) Mike to confirm that wording is included in the BUI 14 draft status assessment report around limitations in tracking wetland loss and wetland gain.
- c) Mike to confirm how the 5-metre tributary buffer was determined in the assessment.
- d) April and Mike to have a discussion with Naomi to ensure that she has an opportunity to review and provide input on the BUI 14 draft status assessment report.
- e) Mike to finalize the draft BUI 14 status assessment report and share it with the CRIC for review.
- f) Mike to prepare a draft presentation for the IAGLR Conference and share it with Ted and April for review.

- g) Mike and April to follow-up with Courtney on a strategy for engaging Aamjiwnaang First Nation on BUI 14.
- h) Mike to send out a doodle poll to CRIC members for the next meeting.

## Meeting called to order shortly after 10:00 am

### 1. Welcome and Introductions:

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

### 2. Approval of Agenda

The April 25, 2024, draft agenda was approved.

### 3. Acceptance of Minutes from May 11, 2023 Meeting

The minutes from the November 7, 2023, meeting were approved.

### 4. Review of Action Items from May 11, 2023 Meeting

- a) Ted to keep CRIC updated on the status of the sediment work via email. **No updates.** Anticipating start-up in Summer 2024 subject to permits and approvals being in place.
- b) Mike to send out a doodle poll for a meeting in the new year and seek input on whether an in-person or virtual meeting is preferred. **Completed.**

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

**BUI 1- Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption (Impaired):** This BUI is linked to making progress on the contaminated sediment work. In terms of additional work to support the assessment of this BUI, there are several other AOCs around the Great Lakes that are getting to the point where this BUI also needs to be assessed. Discussions have been occurring on how to move forward with assessing this BUI. Looking at beginning the review of the BUI with the assistance of GLIER. Likely one year to two years for GLIER to conduct this assessment. There has also been more recent data collected in support of Ontario's Fish Consumption Guide and the local fish consumption survey that was conducted in 2021 and 2022. Targeting 2025 to have a draft status assessment report completed.

**BUI 6 - Degradation of Benthos (Impaired):** 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 will also be a need to collect benthos samples to support this BUI assessment. This work will likely occur after the work on BUI 1 has commenced.

**BUI 3 - Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations (RFA):** The draft status assessment report has been completed and the community engagement process has started. It has been presented to the Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Committee. Working with Naomi on the best approach for engaging the Walpole Island First Nation community.

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

**(Impaired):** Waiting for official confirmation that this BUI has been redesignated to Not Impaired.

**BUI 14: Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Impaired):** The draft status assessment report is nearing completion, a fact sheet has been drafted, and Mike will be briefing the committee on the outcome, which is the next item on today's agenda.

**6. BUI #14 Draft Status Recommendation Report and Fact Sheet – Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat**

- Mike spoke to a PowerPoint presentation that included an overview of the status of the beneficial use impairments, an explanation of why BUI 14 was considered impaired when it was first assessed, an overview of the seven delisting criteria for BUI 14, and details on the outcome of the assessment of each of the delisting criteria.
- April pointed out that the Swan Lake wetland project with Walpole Island First Nation was one of the largest projects funded by the federal government in the St. Clair River AOC.
- **Action:** Mike to confirm what is currently permitted when constructing shoreline protection work – sheet pile walls vs armoured stone wall.
- A question arose with respect to whether there is any monitoring of wetland loss within the AOC. The assessment of wetlands in the area was based on an assessment of projects related to the creation and restoration of wetlands over a given period of time. Monitoring of wetland loss on an on-going basis is difficult to track since municipalities have control over land use planning through the Official Plan process. For that reason, there is an on-going need to create awareness of the importance of protecting, creating, and restoring wetland areas within the AOC. The Aquatic Habitat Management Plan will help to provide information on additional opportunities to create, restore and protect wetlands in the area.
- **Action:** Mike to confirm that wording is included in the report around limitations in tracking wetland loss and wetland gain.
- **Action:** Mike to confirm how the tributary buffer was determined.
- **Action:** April and Mike to have a discussion with Naomi Williams to ensure that she has an opportunity to review and provide input on the BUI 14 draft status assessment report.
- **Action:** Mike to revise the draft BUI 14 status assessment report and share it with the CRIC for review.
- Mike will seek the support of the CRIC at the next regularly scheduled meeting to accept the report's recommendation so that community engagement on the recommendation can commence.

## **7. Funding Updates**

### **7.1. Environment and Climate Change Canada - April White**

- Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative - call for proposals for funding came out and the SCRCA applied for funding to support RAP coordination. All funding requests submitted are currently under review.
- The funding agreements with Aamjiwnaang First Nation and Walpole Island First Nation have been extended until March 2026. The annual amount was increased by \$50,000 to ensure that they have the resources to support the RAP program.

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

- A funding agreement for the St. Clair River RAP Coordinator, under the Great Lakes Workplan, has been finalized and is in place until March 2026.
- MECP just had a recent call for new workplan projects from partners that support the RAP program, such as the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (i.e. shoreline restoration work) and the Friends of the St. Clair River. Submissions are due at the end of May 2024.

### **7.3. Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry- Stephen Marklevitz**

- The St. Clair River fish community assessment for this year has been approved. Anticipate it to occur in July or August 2024.
- Anticipating announcement related to invasive Phragmites control in Ontario. Will share information with April and Ted when able to do so.
- There is also work happening right now with biological control of Phragmites. Agents have been released in the area through the University of Toronto. Monitoring for the success of this control method.

## **8. RAP Coordinator Updates**

- Updating the draft BUI 14 status assessment report and the draft Aquatic Habitat Management Plan has been the priority.
- Presentations were made to the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce and the Lambton Rural Game Protective Association on the progress in addressing the BUIs in the St. Clair River AOC. Mike mentioned a question that came up during one of the presentations related to efforts to enhance the Sturgeon population in the AOC. Stephen noted that the Sturgeon population is in good condition in the St. Clair River-Detroit River corridor, so no initiatives are underway to enhance that species in this area.
- Attended and presented at the Walpole Island First Nation Heritage Centre Open House. Used the event as an opportunity to create awareness of the completion of the status assessment report for BUI 1 Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations, and the recommendation to redesignate it too not impaired. Additional community engagement required and to be coordinated through Naomi Williams.
- The International Association of Great Lakes Research 2024 Conference is scheduled for May 2024 and a presentation on the status of the St. Clair River AOC will be made by Mike on May 24, 2024.

- **Action:** Mike to prepare a draft presentation for the IAGLR Conference and share it with Ted and April for review.

## 9. Member Updates:

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

- Mike provided an update on Terry's behalf. The educational signs have been completed and provided to the Village of Point Edward, the City of Sarnia and St. Clair Township. Need to confirm timing for each municipality being able to place the signs at the locations selected.

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

- Next BPAC meeting is scheduled for May 2, 2024. One of the main topics will be planning for a symposium in 2025. The meeting will also be used as an opportunity to approve the final version of the Spill Notification Fact Sheet.

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

- The annual canoe race is planned for Sunday, April 28, 2024. It is used as a fund raiser for the SCRCA education program. Details of the event are available on the SCRCA website.

### 9.4. Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN) – Courtney Jackson

- Cathleen will be leaving Aamjiwnaang First Nation to move on to another opportunity.
- Elections for Chief and Council likely happening on the third Friday in July 2024.
- If there is a need to present anything to Chief and Council, make Courtney aware.
- The Environment Committee still meets twice per month. They are booked up until the end of June 2024 with presentations. They might support going direct to Chief and Council to make a presentation on BUI 14 before the elections.
- **Action:** Mike and April to follow-up with Courtney on a strategy for engaging Aamjiwnaang First Nation on BUI 14.

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

- No updates. Naomi was not able to attend.

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

- No additional updates.

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

- No additional updates.

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

- BASES is in the process of installing new equipment at the water quality monitoring station in the St. Clair River, downstream of industry. Expect it to be completed

soon. The equipment will have some additional functionality. Additional details to follow.

**9.9. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)**

- 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**

- No updates. Terry was not present to speak to this agenda item.

**10. Other Business**

- No other business

**11. Next Meeting**

- April recommended a virtual meeting in June 2024, if possible, to discuss the BUI 14 report and to seek CRIC's support with the recommendation to redesignate BUI 14 to not impaired.
- **Action:** Mike to send out a doodle poll to CRIC members for the next meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.**