

DRCC Steering Implementation Committee Meeting
Draft Meeting Record

Tuesday, November 15, 2011 – 1:00pm

Essex Civic Centre – Committee Room E, Essex Ontario
(Hosted By: Essex Region Conservation Authority)

1. Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Agenda

Jon Gee, meeting Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm. He welcomed all in attendance and roundtable introductions were held. The November 15, 2011 Agenda was reviewed and accepted by consensus. *(Meeting attendance follows in Appendix A)*

2. Review of Action Items and Approval of January 25, 2011 Meeting Record

Jon reviewed the action items listed in the January 25, 2011 Decisions and Actions summary document. Sandra noted that all action items were completed. Jon reviewed the Detroit River Evening format for the Annual General Meeting and compared it to events that are held in other Areas of Concern. He asked the group for feedback on this format for the Annual General Meeting. The group agreed by consensus to continue with this Detroit River Evening format for the 2012 Annual General Meeting. The January 25, 2011 Meeting Record was accepted by consensus.

DECISION: The format of the 2012 Annual General Meeting will be a Detroit River Evening.

ACTION: All members of the Steering and Implementation Committee are asked to email the RAP Coordinator if they have suggestions for Detroit River Evening speakers.

3. Update on Stage 2 RAP Report

In December 2010, Jon Gee sent the Detroit River Canadian Stage 2 RAP Report to the IJC for review. Comments were received from the IJC in spring 2011, and these were sent to the Stage 2 RAP Report writing team. Ted explained that comments have been addressed and a response was sent to the IJC. He noted that many of the comments received were to be considered for inclusion in future reporting, for example in the Stage 3 RAP Report. The revisions required included highlighting key projects and identifying clear project leads for recommended remedial actions, when applicable. These revisions have been completed and the Stage 2 RAP Report will be sent to members of the writing team for a final round of editing. The official release of the document will occur in January 2012. Ted asked the group if they thought the announcement should tie in with another event, or if the release event should just highlight the RAP Stage 2 Report. He mentioned that the Stage 2 Report release is a good opportunity to draw media attention to the RAP.

The committee discussed venues and attendees for the Stage 2 RAP Report release event. Sandra H. suggested the Riverdance site at Laurier Drive in LaSalle. She explained the site chosen for the event should be related to the DRCC and appropriate for a winter release event. Gord Harding suggested somewhere along the river in Amherstburg, perhaps linking the release to the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812. Jon Gee stated that this event could be attended by Cabinet Ministers, and recommended inviting Federal Minister of the Environment Peter Kent and Ontario Minister of the Environment Jim Bradley. He also noted that there may be an opportunity for the Ministers to announce funding at the event. Raj Bejankiwar suggested the Children's Aid Society Building along the Windsor Riverfront. Peter Berry suggested the Walker Distillery Building.

Matthew noted that the Hiram-Walker property has been selected for a shoreline restoration project and it may be a good opportunity to announce funding for this project. Jon Gee agreed that tying the release of the Stage 2 RAP Report to a funding announcement is a good idea.

ACTION: Steering and Implementation Committee Members interested in obtaining the IJC comments to the Stage 2 RAP Report and DRCC Response should contact Sandra H.

4. Roundtable Project Updates

Sandra noted that a full report of project updates was provided to the Co-Chairs and copies are available to others by request.

a. Work Groups

(full details are available for each item in the complete report)

i. RAP Governance

Sandra H. reported that RAP Governance continues to support DRCC office administration and the RAP Coordinator position. This includes ensuring the DRDIS is updated and maintained regularly, supporting outreach and communications for the DRCC, finalizing the Stage 2 RAP Report, maintaining and implementing the DRCC work plan and supporting the implementation of DRCC E&PI projects. Completed details of the work of the Acting RAP Coordinator can be found in Acting RAP Coordinator progress reports presented to the Supervisory Group. Jon Gee noted that the funding from EC has been committed to for a four year term.

ii. Monitoring/Research

Ted Briggs reported that an expert's workshop regarding 4 BUIs (*Restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, Degradation of fish and wildlife populations, Fish Tumours or other deformities, Bird or animal deformities or reproductive problems*) was held at the end of September at the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research jointly with the St. Clair River AOC. He explained that Sandra H. developed a report from the workshop; the finalized report will be brought to the S&IC in January.

Sandra H. reported that the fish indicator species program to determine the appropriate fish age group for indicator species had taken a different approach than was outlined in the 2011-2012 Work Plan. The approach changed because work by Ken Drouillard (GLIER) indicates that using the percent lipid in pectoral muscle is a stronger predictor of PCB concentrations than age. Sandra H. reported that reports are pending for both the frog reproductive success and black-crowned night heron reproductive viability studies.

She explained that the brown bullhead collection to assess the BUI *fish tumours or other deformities* continued in 2011 and 22 bullheads were sampled. This program will continue during 2012-2013 to ensure a sample size of 100 before the assessment of tumour incidence rate.

Sandra K. had contacted Public Works and Government Services Canada and has obtained sediment quality data for 2003 and 2007.

Sandra H. obtained *E. coli* data from the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and ERCA for the 3rd and final sampling season in 2011. She has presented the data to the Monitoring and Research Work Group and it appears this BUI is not impaired. She is working with the Monitoring and Research Work Group to prepare a re-designation report.

A draft report assessing the status of the BUI *Degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations* has been forwarded to the Monitoring and Research Work group for review. This report recommends changing the status of the BUI to not impaired.

Finally, Sandra K. reported that the Thames River 'tracer' study to obtain information on the impacts of Canadian tributaries to the Detroit River had inconclusive results. This project will not be continued into the future because selenium was not an effective tracer.

iii. Habitat

Rich Drouin reported that the Habitat Work Group is compiling data to develop a Habitat Management Strategy. The Essex Region Conservation Authority completed a shoreline survey in 2011 which assessed the type and quality of structures found on the Detroit River shoreline. Rich reported that they are compiling data and other information for management strategies for aquatic habitat. Matthew Child noted that with support from the Towns of LaSalle and Amherstburg, the Essex Region Conservation Authority is in the permitting phase of the Canard River Park soft shoreline restoration project and construction will begin by the end of the fiscal year. He will provide the concept design plan to the Steering and Implementation Committee as an informational item. The project in the 2011-2012 work plan regarding shoreline restoration sites in West Windsor has been delayed due to property challenges.

ACTION: Matthew Child will provide Sandra H. with a copy the concept design plans for the Canard River Shoreline Restoration Project to distribute to the Steering and Implementation Committee.

iv. Education/Public Involvement

Sandra H. gave a brief overview of all items in the work plan. Additionally, the DRCC partnered with the City of Windsor and the Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority to produce EnviroTips, which is an environmental flyer sent to all households in Windsor-Essex County.

v. Point/Non-Point Source

Matthew reported as the Co-Chair for the work group. He noted that this work group relies on municipalities and industry to aid with work plan items. Antonietta Giofu noted that the Town of Amherstburg secondary wastewater treatment system should be working by early next year. Matthew noted the City of Windsor completed its Retention Treatment Basin recently which will have a huge benefit to the river as far as municipal infrastructure.

Teri Gilbert (Ontario Ministry of the Environment) and Sandra H. have engaged and communicated with direct dischargers and those with Permits to Take Water (PTTW) and Certificates of Approval. Peter Berry noted that there are significant mobile takings with trucks along the river taking water directly from the river. Matthew suggested that we bring this issue to the attention of Teri. Peter Berry noted it is likely due to the increased construction and the water is being used for dust suppression and concrete mixing on site. He explained that while each truck is under the limit the company total may not be under the limit. He expressed concern that trucks were dropping pumps into the water from aggregate docks and boat launches, including at McKee Park, directly into fish habitat. Mark Dunn noted that the area office of MOE should be contacted about the particular truck or company. He suggested that if a company is taking under 50,000 L/day they should be directed to an appropriate location where they will not impact restoration sites or known fish habitat.

Matthew noted that the Town of LaSalle is on a completely separated sewer system and that Amherstburg has only about 200m of combined sewer remaining.

Matthew explained that the Annualized Agriculture Non Point Source modelling has been completed for both the Canard and Little Rivers in partnership with the University of Windsor. This modelling will help target NPS remediation projects to areas where they will have the greatest potential to reduce loadings to the watershed.

He stated that the rural NPS pollution program continued to provide technical and financial support to landowners for projects such as rock chutes and buffer strips that help reduce NPS pollution.

Finally, Matthew and Sandra H. worked to develop a draft septic management strategy that should be ready to present at the next Point/Non-Point Source Work Group meeting. Matthew hopes that the strategies outlined in this document will be implemented in the upcoming fiscal year.

b. Public Advisory Council

Tom Henderson reported that the group has been very active since January. Tom reported on his contact with councillors regarding the airport woodlots. PAC members attended a Friend's of the Detroit River seminar on Belle Isle regarding a fish habitat restoration project. Tom explained many PAC members attended the DRCC sponsored CEA Boat Tour of the Detroit River. Members of the PAC were able to talk to John Hartig, the guest speaker on the tour, and he suggested that US Congress has grants available for restoration, even on Canadian lands. The PAC has been following the progress of the Detroit River International Crossing and are interested in compensatory lands for the Provincially Significant Wetlands affected by the project. The PAC has contacted Mr. Andreas Stenzel for information regarding plans for compensation. The PAC will attend open houses where these plans will be presented and plan to arrange a meeting with Mr. Stenzel. Finally the PAC sent a letter to Minister of the Environment Peter Kent, expressing concerns regarding staffing cuts at Environment Canada, however as of yet no response has been received.

c. Member Organizations

Town of LaSalle - Larry Silani reported on the Canard River shoreline restoration project. He explained that the Town of LaSalle has developed a Natural Areas Management Plan for naturally significant areas (wetlands, forests, prairies) with assistance from ERCA and government funding. He noted that more assistance will be needed from foundations or senior levels of government to move forward and implement the Natural Areas Management Plan; specifically, funding is needed to acquire key pieces of privately owned land. Matthew Child suggested that a copy of the management plan be available to members of the Steering and Implementation Committee for review. Brett asked if the Natural Areas Management Plan lines up with the Nature Conservancy of Canada Master Plan. Matthew noted the plan is in line with the NCC Plan and the area is Species-at-Risk rich.

ACTION: Matthew will provide Sandra H. with a copy of the Town of LaSalle Natural Areas Management Plan to upload to the Detroit River Delisting and Information System.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources - Rich Drouin noted that Bruce Hawkins, who participated in the Wheatley RAP process, is now in the position of Lake Manager for the Lake Erie Management Unit.

5. Status of Beneficial Use Impairments

Jon noted that the re-designation report for the BUI *Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavour* has been reviewed by the Four Agency Managers. He stated that Ted has received comments regarding this report. Jon explained to formalize the change in status the Ministry of the Environment and Environment Canada will review the report and the U.S. Comments. Through the Canada-Ontario Agreement there is a procedure to formally institutionalize the re-designation. Once finalized, it may be able to coincide with the release of the Stage 2 RAP Report.

Raj noted that the impaired status of some BUIs do not have recent data to support the impaired status designation and should really be designated as require further assessment. Sandra K. explained that the status is entrenched in history and it is difficult to change at this time. Sandra K. added that this detail could be noted in re-designation reports. Sandra K. sent the re-designation report to Walpole Inland First Nations to ensure inclusion.

Sandra Hogan reviewed the list of BUIs and provided an update (where applicable):

1. Restriction of Fish and Wildlife Consumption

This BUI is considered impaired for fish, but not wildlife. In the Detroit River AOC there is little information about the amount of wildlife consumption. In his recent work, Ken Drouillard has found that PCB concentrations in fish, which cause fish consumption advisories, are related to PCB contamination in sediment. Specifically, the driver which causes fish consumption advisories is high concentrations of contaminants in sediment on the lower US side (Trenton Channel) of the Detroit River. His work suggests that little can be done to influence fish consumption advisories on the Canadian side of the Detroit River.

2. Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavour

The re-designation to not impaired has been endorsed by the Steering and Implementation Committee and the PAC. Please see above for more details.

3. Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations

Both fish and wildlife populations are considered impaired in the Detroit River AOC. Sandra H. explained that Sandra K. contacted Bird Studies Canada to compile and analyze data from a number of sources, such as the Marsh Monitoring Program and the Breeding Bird Atlas, to provide information about the status of wildlife populations. Sandra H. explained this approach was used in the St. Clair AOC and results indicated that wildlife populations are healthy. She explained that the Monitoring and Research Work Group is trying to link methods with St. Clair River to follow a corridor wide approach.

4. Fish tumours or other deformities

Sandra H. explained that a minimum sample size of 100 is required to analyze Brown Bullhead for tumour incidence rates in the Detroit River. The OMNR and GLIER will continue to collect fish in 2012-2013 to reach a sample size of 100.

5. Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems

Sandra H. explained that this BUI was considered impaired based on two years of data on herring gulls from Environment Canada. The data set is inconclusive because in the first year of the study data indicated that the reproductive success of the Detroit River colony was significantly different from a reference population. However, in the subsequent year there were no significant differences between the Detroit River and reference population. However, this study cannot be continued or replicated because herring gulls no longer live in the Detroit River AOC. Therefore a new indicator species, the black-crowned night heron, has been selected as an indicator species for reproductive problems. Dave Moore (Environment Canada) will compile available data on contaminant threshold levels causing reproductive impairment in black-crowned night heron for the Monitoring and

Research Work Group. Brett Groves asked if another species was considered, such as canvasback. Sandra H. explained that this was a common indicator species used in the U.S. Brett suggested that this may be used as an indicator based on large data sets available.

6. Degradation of Benthos

Sandra H. explained this BUI is currently impaired. In the DRCC 2012-2013 Monitoring and Research Work Plan a workshop is planned to invite experts to report on current AOC research and provide recommendations for re-designation or further remedial actions.

7. Restrictions on Dredging Activities

Sandra H. stated this BUI is considered impaired. Sandra K. has learned that sediments dredged from the Canadian navigational channel in the Detroit River are disposed of in confined disposal facilities. However, she explained that we do not know why sediments are disposed of in this manner, and it may be the preferred disposal method because of ease. Matthew noted that there is also maintenance dredging in the Detroit River. Sandra H. commented that the delisting criterion specifically refers to the dredging of navigational channels rather than maintenance dredging. A discussion began about the definition of the word 'navigable'. Sandra K noted the need to define navigational dredging in the assessment report. Jon Gee noted that the definitions used should be consistent with other AOCs.

8. Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae

Sandra H. stated this BUI is not impaired.

9. Restrictions on Drinking Water or Taste and Odour Problems

Sandra H. stated this BUI is not impaired.

10. Beach Closings

Sandra H. explained this was the third year of *E. coli* collection from 4 beaches; 2 beaches within the AOC and 1 upstream and 1 downstream reference beaches. The data indicates there is not a difference between beaches within the AOC and reference beaches outside of the AOC. Sandra H. is working with the Monitoring and Research Work Group to draft a re-designation report recommending the status be re-designated as not impaired. She noted that the rate of beach closings is below 10%, which was the target level suggested in the PAC Beach Closings Report Card. Karina Richters noted that this may be misleading and confusing to the public. She expressed concern that the DRCC may lose integrity if the public feels misled. Larry Silani suggested we discuss the issue with the Medical Officer of Health. Sandra H. commented that the Area of Concern program involves comparing our area with other areas in the Great Lake. Ted noted that Health Unit was involved in developing the delisting criteria for this BUI. Further, it was noted that there are no official beaches on the Detroit River monitored by the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, as Sandpoint is considered outside of the AOC. Two locations in the Detroit River have been monitored by ERCA the past three years to collect the *E. coli* data.

11. Degradation of Aesthetics

Sandra H. explained that this BUI is currently designated as impaired. In 2011 she developed and implemented a survey to assess this BUI. The majority of deposits she observed were natural (foam, vegetation, turbidity). She stated the survey will be continued in 2012 to provide a larger data set. She anticipates that this BUI may be re-designated to not impaired in the coming year, depending on data collected in 2012.

12. Added Costs to Agriculture or Industry

Sandra H. stated this is not impaired.

13. Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations

Sandra H. stated this BUI is current designated as requires further assessment. She noted that a draft re-designation report is currently being reviewed by the Monitoring and Research Work Group recommending that the status be re-designated as not impaired.

14. Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Sandra H. explained this BUI is considered impaired. She noted that the Habitat and Monitoring and Research Work Groups are meeting in January to discuss monitoring and research needs related to this BUI and appropriate methods to assess this BUI. Jon Gee expressed concern about the delisting criteria for this BUI because in the St. Lawrence AOC the delisting criteria set very high targets that are unrealistic.

In conclusion, Matthew noted that the BUIs we can hope to make progress on in 2012 include *Restriction on Dredging Activities, Beach Closings, Degradation of Aesthetics and Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations.*

6. Presentation of Proposed 2012-2013 Work Plan

Sandra H. explained that this was a draft version of the Annual 2012-2013 Work Plan. A finalized version will be presented at the January meeting of the Steering and Implementation Committee. She noted that the work plan is a living document that continuously changes as progress is made. Sandra gave an overview of each project. For more details regarding the projects, please contact the RAP Coordinator for a copy of the work plan.

Specific Comments

- RE: DRDIS – Sandra H. explained that \$2500 was required to support the purchase of DRDIS server hardware to change to the Community Portal hosting service.
- RE: Conduct a study to determine impacts of phosphorus loadings from the Detroit River on the western basin of Lake Erie – Ted noted that this project falls more in the realm of the Lake Erie LAMP, and therefore should be removed from the Detroit River Canadian RAP work plan.
- Sandra noted that the funding for the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup total budget was approximately \$140 000. This funding covers the cost of RAP Administration and Education and Public Involvement projects. Monitoring & Research, Habitat and Point/Non-Point Source Projects are generally funded by external agencies or through in-kind support.
- Raj suggested adding a column to the work plan to include information about the BUI addressed by each detailed action/project. Jon commented that this would benefit funding agencies to justify support for projects.
- Raj suggested adding a project to the monitoring and research work plan to continue monitoring in the AOC.

ACTIONS

- Sandra H. will remove the study to investigate phosphorus loadings to Lake Erie from the Detroit River from the Monitoring and Research section of the Work Plan.
- Sandra H. will revise the work plan to include a column which lists the related BUIs for each project.
- Sandra H. will include continued monitoring of the AOC in the Monitoring and Research section of the Work Plan.

DECISION

- Support was given by consensus to support the DRDIS hardware purchase in the amount of \$2500.

7. Other Business

Jon provided an update on the re-negotiation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) . He explained a new GLWQA will be released in the next year. Also, the Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA) will be renegotiated for another 5 years. He expects the new COA will have a significant impact on the DR AOC. COA sets goals to delist specific AOCs over a 5 year term. The Detroit River will likely be put forward in the COA as a priority AOC with the objective to finish action items and delist in the next 5 year time period. This will help us to move along and gain some priority and the funding that will be needed to move the delisting goal along.

8. Closing Remarks – Next Meeting, January 24, 2012 at 1:00 pm.

Jon Gee adjourned the meeting at 3:37pm with consensus. The next meeting will take place January 24, 2012 at 1:00 pm; the meeting location is to be determined.

Appendix A
Meeting Attendance

Steering and Implementation Committee Members

Mark Dunn	Ontario Ministry of the Environment (S&IC Co-Chair)
Jon Gee	Environment Canada (S&IC Co-Chair)
Peter Berry	Windsor Port Authority
Matthew Child	Essex Region Conservation Authority (<i>on behalf of Richard Wyma</i>)
Rich Drouin	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Antonietta Giofu	Town of Amherstburg (<i>on behalf of Pamela Malott</i>)
Tom Henderson	Public Advisory Council (Chair)
Karina Richters	City of Windsor (<i>on behalf of Mario Sonogo</i>)
Larry Silani	Town of LaSalle (<i>on behalf of Kevin Miller</i>)

Resource/Support Staff

Rajesh Bejankiwar	International Joint Commission
Ted Briggs	Ontario Ministry of the Environment (<i>via teleconference</i>)
Brett Groves	Essex County Stewardship Network
Gord Harding	Public Advisory Council (Vice Chair)
Sandra Hogan	Acting RAP Coordinator (DRCC)
Kris Ives	RAP Assistant (DRCC)
Sandra Kok	Environment Canada

Regrets

Paul Drca	City of Windsor
Giovanni Grande	Honeywell
Doug Haffner	University of Windsor – Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research
Saad Jasim	International Joint Commission
Pamela Malott	Town of Amherstburg
Kevin Miller	Town of LaSalle
Mario Sonogo	City of Windsor
Richard Wyma	Essex Region Conservation Authority