

## Meeting Record

### Detroit River Canadian Public Advisory Council

### DRCC Education and Public Involvement Work Group

Monday, June 24, 2013 – 4:30 to 6:30 pm  
Airport Conference Room, Windsor, ON

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#### 1. Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda

Tom Henderson called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm. He explained that the PAC invited representatives from the Windsor Port Authority to present their plans for their Ojibway Shores property adjacent to the Detroit River. He noted that immediately following their presentation, Phil Roberts (PAC Member), would also have the opportunity to give the PAC's view on the site. Questions would be allowed after each presentation. The agenda was approved by consensus. Attendance is list in Appendix 1.

#### PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

#### 2. Invited Guest Speaker: Windsor Port Authority

Tom welcomed Charles Pingle and David Cree of the Windsor Port Authority (WPA) and thanked them for attending the meeting and agreeing to present. Mr. Pingle addressed the group and provided copies of his presentation (Appendix 2).

##### Key Points:

- The WPA cannot sell land; they can lease or land swap.
- There is a plan to develop Ojibway Shores while leaving the shoreline untouched and provide up to 300 ft "conservation area" for connection to the riverfront.
- The WPA plans to clear the land, use clean fill to bring it up to the 1:100 year flood zone, and begin temporarily stockpiling construction fill from the Windsor-Essex Parkway project (short-term goal) until a developer is found for Port purposes (long-term goal).
- The goal is to have the Ojibway Shores property cleared by September 1, 2013.
- Dillon Consulting was retained to conduct an environmental inventory of the site (late summer & early fall 2012 and spring & early summer 2013).
- The Public Open House for the project is set for Wednesday, July 3, 2013 (6:30 pm) at Mackenzie Hall.

Phil Roberts followed-up with the Detroit River PAC's vision for Ojibway Shores. There were no questions from the WPA Representatives. They left immediately following Phil's presentation.

The PAC discussed the presentation by WPA and decided on a path forward (letter writing campaign and promote public participation in the Open House) in order to protect Ojibway Shores as an important ecological link between the Detroit River and other inland natural areas. The WPA's plans to store construction fill is in direct contradiction of the response received from Minister Lebel (Appendix 3).

**ACTION:** A small subgroup of the PAC will meet on June 27 at 1 pm to draft a letter in response to the letter from Minister Denis Lebel regarding the WPA's development plans for Ojibway Shores (DONE).

### **3. Approval of April 8, 2013 Meeting Record and Review of Action Items**

The group reviewed the action items from the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting: (1) sponsorship of State of the Strait and U.S. Detroit River Water Festival, and (2) notify Phil of next Habitat Work Group meeting. Natalie confirmed that DRCC sponsorship in the amount of \$500 was provided to State of the Strait Conference and Detroit River Water Festival. Natalie noted that the Habitat Work Group last met face-to-face in October 2012. Phil requested that the action item be removed as it is no longer required. Meeting Record was approved by consensus.

### **4. PAC Update since April 8, 2013**

- *Airport Swamps Restoration Planting Event*

Tom reported that the large-scale machine planting (8 acres) was completed by ERCA on May 30, 2013 and that the community planting (0.5 acres) event was held on June 4, 2013. Appendix 4 for written report by Ian Naisbitt.

- *Tour of the DR International Wildlife Refuge*

Tom explained that the Windsor-Essex County Environment Committee (WECEC) organized a bus tour to the U.S. Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge – Humbug Marsh Unit on June 14, 2013. PAC members in attendance included Tom Henderson, Dave Munro, and Phil Roberts. During the visit, the group received a presentation and brief tour of the site by Dr. John Hartig, Manager of the IWR. Phil reported the option to have lands added to the Canadian Registry was discussed to add a Canadian component to the International Wildlife Refuge. Tom, Phil and some members of WECEC are planning to invite Dr. Hartig and Richard Wyma (ERCA) to a meeting in Windsor to discuss this potential opportunity. Phil added that, thanks to Tom, a report is going to City of Windsor Council to add Pêche Island to the registry.

## **DRCC EDUCATION & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT WORK GROUP**

### **4. Project Updates**

Natalie noted that several projects are currently underway or were recently completed. The group received a verbal update on new (2013-2014) projects that have just started. A written update on completed 2012-2013 projects is provided in Appendix 5.

### **5. Steering Committee/Technical Work Group Update**

Natalie reported that the Steering Committee met on June 19, 2013. The SIC has requested that a Delisting Strategy be developed for the Detroit River Canadian AOC. Natalie is working with technical experts to develop the Strategy which (amongst other things) will provide a detailed list of actions /projects required to achieve delisting as per the new GLWQA. In addition, the SIC received proposed guidance from the Canada-Ontario Agreement group on the *Restrictions on Dredging BUI*. Natalie noted that both the Delisting Strategy and BUI Guidance will be presented to the PAC when they are completed.

Natalie explained that most of the Technical Work Groups met in January to develop this year's work plan. The Monitoring and Research Work Group met in April to discuss recent scientific data and process for conducting BUI Assessments which will feed into the Delisting Strategy. The Habitat Work Group will meet soon to begin developing its short- and long-term habitat goals for the AOC.

### **6. Upcoming events**

- Detroit River Boat Tour – July 13, 2013 (citizensenvironmentalliance.org for more info)
- Peche Island Day – September 28, 2013
- Film Screening Event (To be organized by Marcia, Pearl, Elizabeth, Natalie and Kris)

### **7. Meeting adjournment**

Tom and Marcia adjourned the meeting at 7 pm. The next meeting will be at the call of the Chairs.

# APPENDIX 1

## Attendance

Marcia Valiante	EPI Chair
Tom Henderson	PAC Chair
Gord Harding	PAC Vice Chair
Caroline Biribauer	Essex Region Conservation Authority
Pearl Bradd	EPI/PAC Member
Jesse Gardner Costa	Essex County Field Naturalists Club
Elizabeth Munn	Friends of Canard River
Dave Munro	EPI/PAC Member
Phil Roberts	Essex County Field Naturalists Club (alternate)
Derek Coronado	Citizens Environment Alliance
Rick Coronado	Windsor Labour Council
Mike Walsh	EPI/PAC
Ralph Benoit	PAC Member
Natalie Green	RAP Coordinator
Kris Ives	RAP Assistant
Charles Pingle	Guest, Windsor Port Authority
David Cree	Guest, Windsor Port Authority

## **APPENDIX 2**

Presentation by Windsor Port Authority

## **APPENDIX 3**

Letter to Minister Denis Lebel  
(June 28, 2013)

## APPENDIX 4

### Connecting Airport Swamps – Project Report

By: Ian Naisbitt, Caroline Biribauer and Kathryn Arthur

Inside the fence of the Windsor International Airport (YQG), three separated woodlands survive: Jefferson (west woodland/ close to Jefferson Avenue), the Shooting Range (middle woodland) and the East Perimeter (east woodland/ close to Lauzon Parkway). The Little River Enhancement Group (Lil' Reg) realized the value of these woodlands and in a February 1998 letter to the City of Windsor stated, "*Lil' Reg is requesting that the three woodlots be preserved and protected. Furthermore, we are recommending that they be connected to create a mega-woodlot (interior forest).*" Interior forest habitat does not exist in the Little River Watershed, so we saw this site as the only opportunity to establish one. Volunteers have attended myriad meetings, open houses, spent hours on the phone and wrote dozens of letters to accomplish our goal of connecting these woodlands.

In April 2008, a letter from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) stated that the woodlands had been evaluated and designated Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs). The OMNR listed them as the, "Windsor Airport Swamps." A swamp is a wetland that is forested; the Airport Swamps are essentially a forest frequently submerged in water, especially during Spring time. The three PSWs are now preserved and protected with an adjacent buffer zone by the Province of Ontario through the Provincial Policy Statement. As a result of OMNR's designation, Lil' Reg believed the foundation had been set to connect the swamps.

On Tuesday, June 4, 2013, Essex County Nature participated in a significant planting event! Volunteers joined employees of the City of Windsor, Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) and the YQG to plant trees, shrubs and wildflowers on the airport property. 3 hectares/ 8.5 acres of retired agricultural field was machine planted by ERCA and effectively "connected" the Shooting Range and East Perimeter Swamps. As well, Grade 5 and 6 students from David Suzuki Public School helped plant 120 potted trees, shrubs and wildflowers along the Rivard Drain that flows into the Little River.

Morning temperatures began at 13C and by 1 p.m. they were up to 19 C. Skies were blue with light cloud cover and a slight breeze was welcomed. Volunteers diligently dug holes, placed the trees and shrubs into the holes, returned the soil and mulched the base of the plants with woodchips. Plastic guards were applied to help reduce animal chewing on the bark of the plants and thus increase the survival rate.

Trees hand planted included: Sycamore, Black Walnut, Shagbark Hickory, Burr Oak, Swamp White Oak, Pin Oak and Basswood. These species were obtained, because there were plenty of them already growing in the swamps. Shrubs planted included: Silky Dogwood, Nannyberry, Staghorn Sumac and Elderberry. Wildflowers planted included: Joe-pye weed, Boneset, Swamp Milkweed, Arrowhead and Sweet Flag.

A special thank you to Bill Roesel/ City of Windsor Forester and Phil Roberts/ YQG for leading student tours through the middle swamp. Luckily the ground was dry and we could walk through the area and experience the cool shade and dappled sunlight. Thanks also to Caroline Biribauer and Kathryn Arthur/ ERCA for providing lunch for all the volunteers and especially for coordinating the machine and student planting events.

Wildlife observed during this event included: an Indigo Bunting singing it's heart out and distracting the bird watchers from the speeches, a Giant Swallowtail Butterfly fluttering about in the understory, a Turkey Vulture soaring high above us on the updrafts, a Red-shouldered Hawk gliding on the warm currents of air, a Great Crested Flycatcher roosting high on a dead ash tree branch and entertaining us with song and last, but not least, evidence of Wild Turkey in the area – a small pile of leftover feathers!

On behalf of our Windsor-Essex community, I would like to thank the City of Windsor, ERCA, YQG and Detroit River Canadian Cleanup/ Environment Canada for the leadership, organization and funding to make this project happen. We are eagerly looking forward to participating in the next phase!

A Burr Oak was planted to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Essex Region Conservation Authority.

# APPENDIX 5

## Project Updates

**April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 (Past Fiscal Year)**

ITEM	UPDATE
Tree plantings	<b>Completed.</b> Caroline Biribauer (lead person for DR, CR and TC community planting events) completed several spring planting projects in partnership with local groups and schools. The 2013 Earth Day tree planting in the Little River watershed was co-funded by the DRCC (total amount \$4,000).
E-newsletter, DRDIS & Website hosting	<b>Completed.</b> This item includes the cost of the DRCC's electronic communication with the public and stakeholders through a monthly E-newsletter, website and the delisting system.
Detroit River Evening & Annual Report	<b>Completed.</b> Approximately 50 people attended our 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Detroit River Evening on Wednesday, June 19, 2013. The keynote speaker, Dr. John Howard, was very well received. The Annual Report was released that evening and is now available on our website.
Cleanup/Volunteer Event Supplies	<b>Complete.</b> This item will support the cost of hosting community cleanup and other volunteer events. Costs include supplies such as gloves, garbage bags and tools, rental of restroom facilities, and providing refreshments for volunteers.
Sign @ Lauzon Parkway	<b>Almost complete.</b> Awaiting installing by ERCA.
Detroit River Boat Tour	<b>Completed.</b> The DRCC sponsored (\$5,000) Sponsorship of the Detroit River Boat Tour to be organized by the Citizens Environment Alliance (CEA) in Spring 2013. The CEA will provide an update as we approach the date of the tour.
Water Bottle Reprinting	<b>Completed.</b> As requested, 2000 water bottles were ordered and have been delivered. Bottles will be distributed at DRCC events. Ten boxes were donated to the volunteers at the Windsor Essex Water Festival, 6 boxes were donated to the CAW Local 200 to distribute at events and 3 boxes were given to the CEA for the Boat Tour.
Bookmarks	<b>Almost completed.</b> One bookmark and poster were completed in April. The others (bald eagles, lake sturgeon, and native plants) are in progress. We have confirmed partnership with the Essex County Library, Windsor Public Library and University of Windsor library to distribute materials to young readers.
Signage @ Riverdance Park	<b>Not started.</b> This funding will support the cost of design and production of public-friendly, interpretive signage to educate about recent projects at (or near) the LaSalle Riverdance Park such as the fish spawning reefs and shoreline restoration in the Detroit River and/or the Retention Treatment Basin site in Windsor.
Lesson Plans	<b>In progress.</b> Two lesson plans were developed by a Teacher Volunteer in 2012. The Windsor Science Centre may be utilizing the lesson plans as a testing group. Mike Walsh is working with Natalie, Pearl, and Kris to develop a lesson plan to compliment the sewerage video.