

Meeting Record: DRCC Steering & Implementation Committee

Wednesday, October 26, 2016 – 12:00pm to 4:00pm

Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER), University of Windsor
2990 Riverside Drive West, Windsor ON

Teleconference Number: 1-888-289-4573

Access Code: 8475559

12:00pm LUNCH

12:30pm Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda (J. Gee / T. Briggs)

Ted Briggs called meeting to order at 12:55pm. Round table introductions were held (for meeting attendance, see Appendix 1). The agenda was approved by consensus.

Review of Action Items; Approval of Meeting Record from December, 2015

There is no meeting record from December 2015.

12:40 am Update on GLSF / COA funding (J. Gee / T. Briggs)

Great Lakes Sustainability Fund (J.Gee)

- 30 projects underway. 30-40% multi year projects
- [2017/18 GLSF](#) looking for proposals; Call for proposal is mid November, with the deadline being mid January
- Roughly \$1.5 million budget
- City of Windsor needs formal council approval before application can be made (Paul Drca)
- Let Jon Gee know if applicants are having trouble with deadline

Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund (T. Briggs)

- \$25,000 fund available – application is open until December 1st 2016
- Site link [here](#)
- Application Guide download [here](#)

COA funding (T. Briggs)

- Around \$15 million available

- Provides funds for DRCC coordination and outreach activities
- MNRF is providing COA funding to ERCA on habitat projects

Update on GLWQA (J. Gee)

- Great Lakes Public Forum was held on Oct 4 to 6 in Toronto, and progress on all 10 annexes was provided. The Forum is the Parties (federal governments of USA and Canada) commitment under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) to report on progress on the Great Lakes to the public.
- Jon Gee (ECCC) and Wendy Carney (USEPA) provided AOC Annex update.
 - There were a lot of questions on the binational AOCs and how to move forward with binational delisting.
 - Nutrient targets are being given lots of attention.
- Presentations and progress report are viewable online → binational.net (Progress Report of the Parties 2016 is on the web site, but not the AOC Annex documents (Area of Concern in Recovery Guidance, and the Situational Analysis))
- Doug Haffner Question: What is the IJC's role in the RAP Process?
 - Oversight role/review and provide comments on RAPs
 - RAPs deal with historical issues, not so much on more current issues such as microplastics/beads, endocrine disruptors, emerging contaminants of concern and phragmites

Discussion about Binational Delisting

- Delisting both or only one side of a binational AOC has not been done before but requires coordination between the US and Canada. Providing robust science is important so both sides need to work together to find commonalities and achieve delisting
- Sandra Kok: can we delist if beneficial uses have been restored on one side only?
 - J. Gee: we have yet to test this. St. Lawrence River at Cornwall shows the river is hydraulically different on both sides but this may not be the case with Detroit River.
 - Concerns for binational AOC's may arise where there are opposing views on the same BUI particularly for fish and wildlife, which go back and forth between the two sides.
 - The Area of Concern in Recovery (AOCIR) Guidance document (developed through the GLWQA Annex 1 working group) doesn't address binational delisting but some guiding principles were discussed in the context of binational delisting. The AOCIR guidance document sets some time frames for consideration.
 - E.g. If the delisting on both sides is only 5 years apart, it may be reasonable for one side to wait until the other side is ready to delist and approach delisting together. If one side is going to require much more than 5 years, the question is whether one side can delist while the other side continues to implement actions to clean up their side of the AOC.

Four Agency Management Committee Update (S. Kok/ T. Briggs)

- The Four Agency Management Committee is made up of senior managers and staff (working group) from USEPA, ECCC, MOECC, MDEQ representing St. Marys River, St Clair River, Lake St. Clair, and Detroit River.
- The FAMC face to face meeting will be held on November 3rd 2016, in Windsor at the University of Windsor's GLIER facilities. The meeting will include a presentation by GLIER staff on the Geospatial data portal, and a tour of the City of Windsor's shoreline projects and CSO Retention Treatment Basin by City of Windsor staff.

Sediment/Benthos/Hazard Mapping on US side of the Detroit River

- The US - Friends of Detroit River will begin working with a number of partners to identify priority zones for sediment remediation on the US side of the river. GLIER will provide an update on the Geospatial data portal that maps sediment contaminants and benthos at the Sediment technical workgroup meeting on Tuesday Nov 15th 2016. The utility of the Geospatial portal for assisting with the contaminated sediment project will be discussed.

12:50 pm *Presentation: DRAFT Outreach and Engagement Strategy for the Detroit River Area of Concern: 2016 – 2020* (D. Breault-Stuebing)

- There is not much understanding by the general public of progress being made towards the delisting of the Detroit River as an AOC outside of the people directly involved in the process and the DRCC would like to change this. The communications plan represents a more formalized progress to outreach/ engagement by identifying all audiences, stakeholders and a variety of tools that can be used to increase outreach.
- The strategy identifies five key messages which include:
 1. The Detroit River is a special place – a waterway connecting two countries; a watershed in the most biologically diverse part of Canada; the source of drinking water for 5 million people; a history buff's dream; one of the best walleye fisheries in the world and a recreational playground for millions.
 2. Following nearly three decades of work on the River through the RAP process, about half of the delisting criteria have been met and the Detroit River is on target to be desisted within the next decade. Delisting involves the removal of the designation 'Area of Concern', and is based on the removal of Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs).
 3. Beneficial Use Impairments *<this message should be collectively developed by RAP Coordinators> (not sure what is trying to be said here?)*
 4. Delisting means the Detroit River is no longer more polluted than other Great Lakes Areas. However, it does not mean that the River will be restored to a pristine, pre-settlement state.
 5. Once the AOC is delisted, monitoring and project implementation will continue under the Lake Erie Lakewide Management Plan and/or other existing programs.

- Ideas discussed after presentation:
 - Engage non traditional audiences such as Rotary or Lions clubs, elder college.
 - P. Drca: [Wastewater: Where does it go?](#) Video has over 200,000 hits and can be found on The City of Windsor's YouTube channel. The comments are great to read. DRCC should make another video!
 - Toronto AOC – the waterfront has signs providing information on fish consumption restrictions [that could be considered for the Detroit River.](#)
 - Hamilton Harbour AOC has sponsors to support a [fishing derby](#) in the spring for disadvantaged kids.
 - “fishable, swimmable, drinkable” is still a public friendly message.
 - Toronto AOC: hosts Lake Ontario Evenings, which is similar to Detroit River evenings but is held more than once a year.

- There are obligatory requirements outlined in the GLWQA to consult with many different groups. This element needs to be included in the Communications Plan. The AOC's Outreach and Engagement Strategy needs to keep in mind and be consistent with the review and comment requirements in Annex 1 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement - which is to solicit comments from provincial governments, First Nations, Metis, municipal governments, watershed management agencies, local public agencies, the public and the IJC. Each of these should be identified as engagement targets in the strategy as the DRCC will eventually have to go to these groups when it comes time to review the RAP delisting report. As well, each of these groups should be targeted for review of BUI re-designation reports.

- Bureaucratic terms such as delisting and beneficial use impairment are not easily understood by the general public so it is important to manage expectations about what delisting means and looks like from their perspective.
 - Life After Delisting: what is it going to be like? Will it fold into the Lake Erie LAMP? What type of funding will be available for PACs, implementation projects and long term monitoring along the Detroit River? It's great to engage different audiences on all River efforts, but the delisting process may sound like it's an 'end' to everything that has been established. The public may not want to join the DRCC as it works to finish with the RAP, would likely want to see this continue since there will always be things happening with the Detroit River.
 - Not convinced “delisting” is right word, since it sounds like once it's taken off the list, it's no longer a concern for the government. Maybe focus on something more positive such as “The Detroit River has been restored,” or describing beneficial use impairment delisting criteria as “restoration criteria.”
 - There should be an element of continuity to community involvement after delisting to encourage the next generation to advocate for the Detroit River. Nipigon Bay PAC is going through this at the moment

ACTION ITEM: Identify one or two BUIs (e.g. Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption) and develop the BUI specific outreach and engagement strategy for them, as a test pilot.

ACTION ITEM: Gina to share the Draft Communications plan with the Steering and Implementation Committee and request feedback within one-month via e-mail. The Communications plan should be finalized before the new year.

1:20 pm Working Group Updates (S. Kok, R. Drouin and G. Pannunzio)

Monitoring and Research Work Group (S. Kok)

Restrictions on Dredging Activities (BUI #7)

- Coast Guard will be dredging in the next few weeks. Border process issues with disposal of the dredged sediments at the Point Mouillee Confined Disposal Facility have been resolved.
- Coast Guard continues to work on a long term dredgeate management strategy. One option for dredgeate disposal is putting the dredgeate in geotubes, identified as part of river specific habitat projects (?) which could help offset the costs habitat projects.

ACTION ITEM: Given that open water disposal will never be an option for dredgeate disposal, the decision was made to proceed with finalizing the draft BUI Assessment Report and to initiate the process for it's redesignation to Not Impaired.

Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations (BUI #13)

- The data is ready for assessment for Zooplankton. Zooplankton samples were analysed by the University of Toledo.
- Dr. Ken Drouillard (GLIER) will be providing a proposal to ECCC for a contract to write up the BUI assessment for Zooplankton.
- Sue Watson, ECCC, is working on writing up the Phytoplankton portion of the BUI assessment.

ACTION ITEM: ECCC (S. Kok) will contract work to GLIER to write up the Zooplankton BUI Assessment

Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption (BUI #1)

- Ken Drouillard (GLIER) will analyse fish contaminants for fish collected this summer and fall to augment the previous data sets on brown bullhead, walleye and small mouth bass.
- Report will be ready sometime in spring, maybe even by the time the next SIC meeting is hosted

Degradation of Benthos (BUI #6)

- A team comprised of K. Drouillard (GLIER); Kerry McPhedran from the University of Saskatchewan and Mark MacDougall (St. Lawrence Institute for Environmental Science) will be assessing the data for this BUI and writing up a BUI assessment report.
- Report will be drafted by end of March 2017.

Habitat Work Group (R. Drouin)

- ERCA- Kevin Money outlined some potential habitat projects in the works .
- Initial Fish Habitat Analysis identified 27 sites, and the Habitat Work Group has narrowed them down to two sites(Peche Island and Fighting Island)
- Landmark Engineering Report showed project options costs range from 1.2-4.7 M (\$). The cost of barge and construction work offshore largely drives the cost
- J. Gee: [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) is an American fund and could be an opportunity for funding for habitat projects as Detroit River is a shared AOC and projects will benefit both sides of the River.

Loadings (P/NPS Pollution) Work Group (S. Kok)

- Haven't met since before 2014

ACTION ITEM: Sandra and Gina will set up meeting with the work group to determine priorities for the WG.

Education and Public Involvement Work Group (G. Pannunzio)

- Closely following engagement tools outlined in the DRCC Communications plan to drive EPI work. Some new projects on the go include setting up a new Ojibway Nature Centre Display and purchasing a Detroit River interactive model that can be brought to classrooms, events etc.
- P. Drca: there is an opportunity to set up a DRCC/DR display at City Hall. Look into setting up display at City Hall. The content used for the State of the Strait Gallery could be brought over.

ACTION ITEM: Gina to follow up with Karina Richters at the City of Windsor and inquire about this opportunity

1:35 pm DRCC Activity Update (G. Pannunzio)

Gina presented on the DRCC activity that has been taking place over the past year. She mentioned some of the outreach initiatives such as community cleanups and plantings, [World Rivers Day Celebration](#), the CEA Boat Tour, tree planting and cleanups in the DR watershed, Project:ICE Film Screening, Benthic Education Program, the [2015/16 Annual Report](#) and the [Detroit River Evening](#).

She also provided a brief presentation of the new Geonetwork project proposed by Alice Grgicak-Mannion from GLIER. This Geonetwork will be a repository of databases and maps that

hold AOC data for different BUIs. The user will be able to combine data, compare sampling and information and look for commonalities and gaps. Next steps for DRCC is to begin the inventory of publications and information that will be put onto the Geonetwork.

Last, Gina presented an update on the DR RAP progress to date. Two BUIs have been redesignated to Not Impaired; these are Beach Closings and Degradation of Aesthetics. There are six BUIs that are no longer impaired within the DR AOC, while Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations is under review/assessment. There are still seven BUIs within the DR AOC. Monitoring for, Fish Tumours or other Deformities (BUI#4), Bird or Animal Deformities (BUI#5), and Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations (BUI#3) is ongoing.

BREAK

2:00pm Proposed Work Priorities (S. Kok)

Habitat (K. Money)

- There are several ERCA managed wetland projects which will be completed soon within the Detroit River watershed
- A stormwater management review is underway, with all municipalities engaged. It deals with climate change adaptation and regional standards for Low Impact Development (LID) practices, as well as developing pilot LID projects for local solutions.
- The City of Windsor's, Mark Winterton, expressed the need to develop solutions to overcome local constraints such as tight soils.
- Habitat and Rural Landowner Community Based Social Marketing Project
 - Kevin provided some insights into ERCA efforts at engagement and outreach to landowners potentially putting habitat projects on their property. One barrier is the tax treatment for farmland vs. conservation land. ERCA is also changing delivery of its grant program towards a more turnkey basis and easier process whereby ERCA carries out all aspect of the BMP project.
- Detroit River Habitat Feasibility
 - Outlines fish habitat requirements and costing for projects that are very expensive. The Habitat Work Group is trying to figure out how to move forward with these projects. Some potential projects in the works right now include the Caron Avenue site for fish habitat and shoreline softening. There is a challenge to finding suitable partnerships – they are very limited. Peche Island does not seem to be an option anymore. Fighting Island could be an option to explore with Coast Guard, and BASF Chemical. These types of projects in areas that have industry involvement could be a way to support corporate stewardship. Some projects don't necessarily need to be along the water either.

Discussion around seeking funding opportunities for the habitat projects ensued. It was suggested that a small group, comprised of members from the City of

Windsor, ERCA, and Windsor Port Authority identify potential private sector organizations/companies/individuals and motivating factors (eg. corporate greening, carbon sequestering) that could support shoreline and habitat restoration projects in the Detroit River. Additional funding opportunities/ideas discussed include: Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority: waterfront owner/families in Windsor, an auction for highly visible specific projects to fund; banks such as TD and RBC. Business savvy/marketing expertise would be helpful. Note: Mark Winterton suggested that the Economic Development Office from the City of Windsor could sit on this group.

ACTION ITEM: Gina and Sandra to form a small group comprised of members from the City of Windsor, ERCA, and Windsor Port Authority to identify potential private sector organizations/companies/individuals that could be approached to support shoreline and habitat restoration projects in the Detroit River.

City of Windsor (M. Winterton)

- Investigating opportunity for shoreline softening and fish habitat as part of deep water sheet pile replacement west of Caron Avenue. The project is in the EA process
- Initiating a LID test site for corporate projects. Project managers to consider LID for all new development.
- Council approved several infrastructure projects worth \$21M for application to the federal/provincial Clean Water and Wastewater Fund (CWWF).

2:20 pm Public Advisory Council Report (T. Henderson)

- At the previous PAC meeting there were new attendees from Caesars Windsor.
- Attended the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority's environmental focus group meeting in February .
- Continues advocating for Ojibway Shores
 - At the September 2016 meeting PAC passed a motion to have their chair (Tom) write letter to local MP Brian Masse about purchasing Ojibway shores.
 - Presented at a Windsor Port Authority meeting to educate the group about the ecological and environmental significance of the property and urged them to protect the site
- Essex County Field Naturalists hosted a bioblitz throughout the Ojibway complex and identified new species. The Windsor Port Authority is waiting for the official report from ECFNC still.
- Remains hopeful that the City of Windsor will re-zone Ojibway Shores and Black Oak Heritage Forest to make a connected passage of land preserved between both sites.
- Tom provided some background information on the Kennette property, explaining that Francis Kennette owns a 15-acre Riverfront property adjacent to Ojibway Shores. He is

seeking the necessary permits to construct a deep water dock on his property, which he achieved from the DFO. The permit has expired but can be renewed at anytime. Construction was not permitted to take place during spawning season which ended in July 2016. As of the Detroit River Evening 2016, Tom Henderson, Chair of the DRCC Public Advisory Council announced that Kennette has received the permit and has already infilled.

- Mentioned that the Windsor Airport won't be doing more community tree planting activities on site for safety reasons.

2:40 pm Round Table (ALL)

Deferred due to time constraints

3:00 pm Other items/ Closing Remarks/ Next Meeting

NEXT MEETING: spring meeting – date to be determined, possibly March/April.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Detroit River Evening: October 26, 2016 - 6:30-9:00pm

Meeting Record Prepared by Duncan McTaggart (ERCA) and Gina Pannunzio (DRCC)

APPENDIX 1

Meeting Attendance

Steering and Implementation Committee Members

Jon Gee, Co-Chair Environment and Climate Change Canada

Ted Briggs, Acting Co-Chair Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change

Tom Henderson, Public Advisory Council

Mark Winterton, City of Windsor

Neil Finnerty, Brighton Beach Power

Richard Drouin, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Doug Haffner, Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research

Resource/Support Staff

Gina Pannunzio (DRCC RAP Assistant)

Duncan McTaggart (Essex Region Conservation Authority)

Sandra Kok (Environment and Climate Change Canada)

Paul Drca (City of Windsor)

Kevin Money (Essex Region Conservation Authority)

Danielle Breault-Steubing (Essex Region Conservation Authority)