



Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Suite 311 - 360 Fairview Avenue West
Essex, ON N8M 1Y6 - 519-982-3722
postmaster@detroitriver.ca

Meeting Record: DRCC Steering & Implementation Committee

Wednesday January 30, 2019 10am-12:00pm
Teleconference

Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda

Introductions; Review of Action Items; Approval of Meeting Record from June 14, 2018

April began the meeting with roundtable introductions. The attendance list can be found as Appendix I. She noted that Jon Gee recently retired and Sara Varty is now the Acting Great Lakes Program Manager. The review of action items from June 2018 is in Appendix II. April noted there will be no presentation from MDEQ as their offices are closed because of weather today. The meeting record from June 2018 meeting was approved by consensus.

ACTION ITEM: DRCC staff to invite US EPA/MDEQ to present at the next SIC meeting in June 2019.

DRCC Structure Overview and BUI Status Update

Claire presented an overview of the DRCC and each working group. These slides are included as Appendix III of this meeting record and the DRCC Terms of Reference are included in Stage 2.

Canada Ontario Agreement (COA) update and DRCC RAP Coordinator Position

Canada Ontario Agreement

Ted noted that there has been no direction from the Ministry regarding COA funding allocations for 2018/19, which should only affect DRCC's outreach budget since the governance grant was negotiated prior to the election. He said that the Great Lakes and COA were noted as priorities in the new Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan and that the current COA agreement ends in 2019 so there will be negotiations between the federal and provincial government and other stakeholders over the coming year to determine priorities for the next agreement.

DRCC RAP Coordinator Position

Richard explained that Claire accepted another position at ERCA and that they are hoping for more information regarding provincial funding before posting the RAP Coordinator position. Gina will continue to provide support for the DRCC with some increased capacity per week and some additional internal support. Claire will continue to have oversight of the program and collectively this team effort will continue until the end of March at which time it will be reassessed.

Updates from COA Executive / GLWQA or Great Lakes Protection Initiative (GLPI); Four Agency Management Committee

Great Lakes Protection Initiative

April explained GLPI was formerly GLSF and is umbrella funding for Great Lakes restoration work. There were no applications to GLPI for the Detroit River for the current funding cycle.

FAMC

April noted that this is a binational committee of agency managers to help with information sharing and updates on BUIs and RAP progress. This group most recently met in October 2018. They are working on a domestic management document for AOCs but it will not be ready for a while.

Detroit River Habitat Projects (Collavino & Peche Island)

Kevin provided an update on two habitat restoration projects ERCA is currently undertaking. His presentation is included as Appendix IV of the meeting record.

Collavino Wetland Restoration Project

This existing wetland feature is in the River Canard watershed and is almost completely dominated by Phragmites. The scope of work includes elevating the dyke and installing pumping infrastructure to manage water levels. Groundwater infiltration and habitat quality will improve as a result. The expected cost is about \$330,000. The engineering for the project is complete, the MNRF SAR permit process is complete, and the DFO permit application has been submitted for review.

Discussion took place regarding management of phragmites. Discussion also took place regarding having CWS collect baseline data for this site prior to restoration. Kevin agreed this would be useful.

ACTION ITEM: April to ask CWS to survey the Collavino wetland in 2019.

Peche Island Restoration Project

This project is in partnership with City of Windsor and Swim Drink Fish, with funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation. The project will create a series of breakwall islands on the north west side of the island that will reduce erosion caused by freighter traffic and create refuge for YOY fish and habitat for SAR fish. ERCA is currently working through the permit process with DFO. They are also applying for additional funding to complete the project, as well as working with GLIER to create a monitoring program and secure funding for stewardship and outreach.

April asked if there was any confirmation for in-kind use of a barge/access to rubble to create those shoals. Claire noted they were working with Swim Drink Fish to confirm those partnerships. Kevin also noted that both the Collavino and Peche projects are underfunded currently as they would have been COA-eligible projects. He has made some changes to the scope of the projects due to reduced funding.

Working Group and Pathway to Delisting Updates

BUI #1 – Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption

Claire reminded everyone that the Monitoring & Research Work Group proposed a wording change to the delisting criteria at the last SIC meeting, which was approved. The changes were also presented to the EPI/PAC and FAMC. April said the DRCC is updating an angler survey to be rolled out this spring, which would provide additional information for a BUI assessment.

BUI # 3 – Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations

April noted that the DR-specific IBI calibration work by UWindsor is not yet complete but that it is anticipated it will be helpful, particularly for marsh birds. For this field season, CWS will survey additional wetlands this year to determine if these sites support marsh birds which could improve the marsh bird IBI score for the AOC. CWS was also asked to advise if wetland size is a limiting factor to the marsh bird.

BUI # 4 – Fish Tumours and other Deformities

Ken is working on a BUI assessment report, which will be completed by the end of March.

BUI # 5 – Bird or Animal Deformities or Other Reproductive Problems

April noted that the work plan for this BUI is on track. Tree Swallow monitoring will take place again in 2019. At the last Monitoring and Research Work Group, a discussion took place regarding monitoring Big Sister Island for colonial waterbirds as a surrogate for the DR, which was not supported by the group.

BUI # 6 – Degradation of Benthos

April noted that the St. Lawrence River Institute was hired to write a status report in 2017. The lines of evidence they included identified some limitations. In July, MECP, ECCC, and UWindsor experts met to address those challenges and the SLRI is now working on a new draft to be completed by the end of March.

BUI # 7 – Restrictions on Dredging Activities

April said that the assessment report is moving through the re-designation process and is currently with MECP for review.

BUI # 13 – Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations

April noted that DFO experts reviewed available phytoplankton data and consider it to be insufficient. They recommend doing one year of additional sampling.

BUI # 14 – Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat

ERCA's two significant habitat projects for this BUI are continuing over the next year. April explained that the working group is evaluating the current status of all of the projects and information available to approach this BUI and figure out what additional work needs to be done.

Communications Plan Update (Gina Pannunzio, DRCC)

Gina provided a brief overview of DRCC's recent engagement and outreach projects. Her presentation is included as Appendix V of the meeting record. Claire noted that without COA funding, some projects such as the Film Screening and the Detroit River Evening are on hold at the moment. The EPI Work Group is aware of this challenge for 2019. Discussion took place regarding attending City of Windsor, Town of LaSalle, and Town of Amherstburg council meetings in the near future and Claire agreed it was a priority to work towards.

Public Advisory Council Report

Tom provided an update. The PAC submitted a motion to the Windsor Essex County Environment Committee (WECEC) for the re-planting or restitution of funds from the destroyed tree planting project on the airport lands. This meeting will take place in the new year. The PAC remains diligent on the Ojibway Shores property issue and Tom noted that the PAC supports the City of Windsor's expropriation of the Dorian Property to swap with the WPA.

Tom noted that the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority's Community Benefits Program is committing to spending \$10M on both sides of the border for community programs. The PAC has suggested a pedestrian/animal bridge that could connect black oaks to Tom Joy Woods crossing the Ojibway parkway should be included. Claire noted that the Community Benefits Survey is still online and it can be shared with the SIC.

ACTION ITEM: Claire to share the WDBA Community Benefits survey with the SIC.

Claire also mentioned that the PAC and CEA have written letters to the current government encouraging them to continue funding AOCs through COA.

Round Table Updates

Ken noted that the Detroit River program has benefited tremendously from having a committed RAP Coordinator. The position has helped move a lot of projects and programs forward and keeps the working groups on track. Funding COA is vital for the health of the river. Ken offered to speak with the new director of GLIER to see if they can write a letter support for the importance of maintaining COA funding to the program.

April noted that ECCC is aware and senior managers understand the pressure.

April thanked Claire for all of her work and leadership to the DR RAP. The SIC wishes her all the best moving forward. She ended the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and said that the next meeting will likely take place in June 2019.

Other items/ Closing Remarks/ Next Meeting

ACTION ITEM: DRCC staff to set the next meeting date for the SIC in June and share progress on the Detroit River Evening details.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Shiver on the River – Saturday February 2 2019 – Belle Isle, Detroit, Michigan
- CLEARWATER: Detroit’s River Revival Film Screening – March TBD
- Little River Cleanup with DRCC Community Partners – April 2 2019 (rain date April 10)
- Walking in Her Footsteps: Ganatchio Trail Cleanup – Saturday April 13 2019
- Earth Day Community Planting – Sunday April 28 2019
- City of Windsor’s Earth Day Celebration at Malden Park – Sunday April 28 2019
- Essex Region Children’s Water Festival – Tuesday May 28 to 31 2019

Appendix I. Meeting Attendance

April White - Environment and Climate Change Canada
Sara Varty - Environment and Climate Change Canada
Sean Morrison - Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks
Ted Briggs - Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks
Rich Druin - Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources
Peter Berry - Windsor Port Authority
Neil Finnerty - Brighton Beach Power
Richard Wyma – Essex Region Conservation Authority
Kevin Money – Essex Region Conservation Authority
Paul Drca – City of Windsor
Ken Drouillard – Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research/University of Windsor
Courtney Jackson - Aamjiwnaang First Nation
Sharilyn Johnston - Aamjiwnaang First Nation
Tom Henderson – Public Advisory Council Chair, DRCC
Claire Sanders - Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Gina Pannunzio – Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Sam Dundas – Detroit River Canadian Cleanup

Appendix II. Action Items from June 14, 2018:

ACTION ITEM: Claire will present the Monitoring and Research Work Group’s recommendation to amend the delisting criteria for BUI#1 to the PAC. Done.

Claire or Ted to ask Rose Ellison to provide an update on the US EPA sediment remediation prioritization project at the next SIC meeting. Done.