

Meeting Record

DRCC Public Advisory Council & EPI Work Group

Tuesday, October 8, 2019 – 12:30 - 2:30pm

Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER) Conference Room 250
2990 Riverside Drive West, Windsor, ON

Welcome

Jackie called the meeting to start at 12:45pm and provided a brief introduction of the purpose of the public presentation and welcomed guests and media. The meeting attendance is included as Appendix I of this meeting record.

US Sediment Remediation Projects

Sam provided a presentation highlighting numerous sediment remediation projects on the American side of the Detroit River. He explained what contaminants are present and which project partners are working together towards sediment remediation goals. Currently, they are in the process of completing sediment remediation in the Upper Trenton Channel, Monguagon Creek, the McLouth Superfund site, and near the Detroit Riverwalk. Sam also presented the results of the sediment characterization project that began in 2012 to identify locations of contamination that require additional investigation and provide a preliminary estimate of the volumes of contaminated sediment present in each spot. The estimated total for sediment remediation on the U.S. side of the Detroit River is 6,673,338yd³ of contaminated sediment that needs to be removed along the entire shoreline. Generally, where sediments were present in the nearshore, they were contaminated and the contaminants were highest near historical industrial and municipal outfalls. Further delineation of contaminated sediments and identification of partners to work towards remediation for Detroit and River Rouge AOCs are next steps. Sam's presentation is included as Appendix II of this meeting record.

Discussion and Audience Questions

Some of the locations are designated as Superfund sites, which include in water shoreline as part of the requirements for those projects. Tom asked how a site qualifies for a Superfund site, and how is one funded? Sam said that the McLouth Superfund site was petitioned to be identified as a Superfund site because of the contaminants on site. The USEPA reviews all potential Superfund sites to ensure that they meet the list of criteria to be a Superfund site. The Superfund program is funded at the federal level and is litigation based. He mentioned that Rose Ellison of US EPA would be able to provide more details, if needed.

A discussion took place regarding the timeline for these remediation projects. Sam, Melanie and Rose explained that it is very difficult to prioritize each hotspot, as partners are needed to fund a portion of the remediation and the rest is covered by federal funding. Further, additional investigations will take place again before remediation begins. This takes several years, and while it seems long, the data from the initial investigation puts the sediment remediation team in a good position to begin the remediation process.

Ken drew connections to fish consumption restrictions, degraded benthos, and deformities and reproduction BUIs. He asked for a comment on these benefits as these remediation efforts move forward.

Melanie said that the sediment remediation work lays the foundation to address additional BUIs after sediment remediation takes place.

After the presentation, Tom thanked Rose, Sam, and Melanie for their continued efforts to restore the Detroit River and connecting with Canadian efforts with the same goal.

Introductions, Approval of agenda

Tom introduced the PAC/EPI meeting at 2:05pm. The agenda was approved by consensus.

Review of June 26 2019 Meeting Record and Action Items

The group reviewed the June 26 2019 meeting record, which was approved as well as the action items, identified in Appendix III of this meeting record.

PAC Update since February 2019

a. Ojibway Shores expropriation progress

Tom explained there have been no changes, since the last meeting in June and the expropriation process is proceeding. The Dorian property has a for sale sign on it, it is under expropriation order via the City of Windsor and whoever buys it, will need to remediate it. The cleanup cost would be subtracted from the purchase price. Hilary mentioned that anyone buying would not have to clean the site up unless they use it as something other than a park.

b. Ecopassage Presentation to Windsor Environment, Transportation and Public Safety Committee

Tom presented on July 4th to WECEC, where a motion was passed, which then went to the Transportation Committee. There, the motion was approved and went to Windsor City Council. On October 7, City Council met, and the motion Tom presented asked the Council to consider the ecopassage project that would span Ojibway Parkway in its capital works budget for 2020. Tom reminded everyone that \$1.5 million seed money from the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority was provided to the City in support of this project. This \$1.5 million will go towards a feasibility study to cost out and determine whether an ecopassage is feasible. Tom is unsure if the feasibility study will be completed in time for 2020 budget deliberations, but the report will go to council once complete.

c. Ojibway Urban Park meeting

On August 27, Brian Masse sponsored a well attended public meeting, regarding the support of designating the Ojibway Prairie Complex area as an urban park. Further progress on this will likely be determined after the election.

d. Premier Ford and Minister Yurek's COA Response

Tom wrote a letter to Premier Ford and the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks Minister Yurek regarding providing the final round of funding under the current COA agreement for DRCC RAP Governance. Ford responded and left it up to Minister Yurek to respond in more detail to the PAC. While the Minister did not personally respond, someone else in his office did and provided a basic letter without much information.

A discussion took place regarding whether this should be made into a public issue before the election highlighting that the government reneged on a contract that deals with environmental issues. There have been many activities the DRCC has not been able to do such as the Learn to Fish Day, host the annual Detroit River Evening, publish a 2018/19 annual report, provide funding support for the CEA boat tour and more.

MOTION: THAT Tom Henderson write a letter on behalf of the PAC regarding the issue of the Provincial government’s breach of contract with the current COA Agreement. This letter will outline the great work the DRCC does with the funds and what the DRCC is unable to do due to lack of funding that they have done in the past.

Moved by Hilary, Seconded by Andy.

CARRIED

e. CEA Boat Tour

Andy provided an update saying that several PAC members attended the Citizen’s Environmental Alliance boat tour. CEA was able to host it without the DRCC’s support this year as Rock Bottom Bar and Grill and Caesars Windsor provided funding.

DRCC Updates

a) Status of DRCC funding for 2019

Jackie explained there is no update from the Province regarding COA, and the federal funds run out in March 2020. There are plans to apply again through GLPI, opening up in December, pending new government.

b) Fish Consumption Survey

Jackie and Gina have been out on the river interviewing anglers, there about 60 responses. People mostly eat perch and walleye.

ACTION ITEM: Jackie to provide an update on the Fish Consumption survey at the next PAC meeting.

c) BUI Assessment Reports update

Jackie explained that both the fish tumour and benthos BUI’s public comment period closed, with no major concerns. They are both up for review on the American side via the US EPA and MI EGLE. There were some requested changes. Jackie is currently compiling comments, sending to authors and then will submit the updates through the chain of approval again.

d) GLRI and AOC Conference

On Friday October 18, the DRCC will be attending the GLRI Conference at the Henry Ford Museum to celebrate restoration works in SE Michigan. Some PAC members are planning on attending. Also, in September, Jackie attended the American AOC conference to learn about other American AOCs. Natalie Green, the RAP coordinator from Niagara River’s AOC, also attended.

Appendix I. Meeting Attendance

Sam Noffke	Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy
Melanie Foose	Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy
Hilary Payne	Public Advisory Council
Tom Henderson	Chair – Public Advisory Council
Andy Paling	Vice-Chair - Public Advisory Council
Jackie Serran	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Summer Locknick	Essex Region Conservation Authority
Ken Drouillard	UWindsor/Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research
Gina Pannunzio	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup /Essex Region Conservation Authority/Co-Chair of the Education and Public Involvement Work Group

Mike Walsh	Public Advisory Council
Pearl Bradd	Co-Chair of the Education and Public Involvement Work Group
Rose Ellison	US Environmental Protection Agency
Chris Hodare	Local 200 UNIFOR
Al Stephens	Public Advisory Council
Taylor Campbell	Windsor Star Reporter
Nick Brancaccio	Windsor Star Photographer

Appendix III. Action Items from June 26 2019 and Updates

ACTION ITEM: Jackie to share this motion with other AOC offices for consideration and follow up with Tom to work on creating a shared letter for signing with a two-week turnaround time. Was decided later that this was not going to occur.

ACTION ITEM: Jackie to forward this motion to Karen Kadour at the City of Windsor to request a PAC presentation at the July 4 WECEC meeting and be added to the agenda. (Done).

ACTION ITEM; Jackie and Gina to invite Melanie Foose and Sam Noffke from EGLE to present at the next EPI and PAC meeting. (Done).

ACTION ITEM: Jackie to share the online comment page on the DRCC website for both BUI #4 and #6 with the PAC and EPI after the meeting to solicit comments and feedback. (Done).