

Meeting Record
DRCC Public Advisory Council & EPI Work Group
Wednesday June 24th 2018 – 4:30-6:30pm
Windsor Airport Conference Room, Windsor, ON.

1. Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda (T. Henderson)

Tom called the meeting to order at 4:30pm with roundtable introductions. The meeting attendance is included as Appendix I of this meeting record. The agenda was approved by consensus.

2. Review of January 24, 2018 Meeting Record and Action Items (T. Henderson)

The meeting record from January 24th was approved by consensus. Action item updates are included as Appendix II of this meeting record.

3. DRCC Updates (C. Sanders)

a) Annual Report and Pathway to Delisting

Claire provided an update on the annual Detroit River Evening, which took place on June 14th with over 80 people in attendance. Andy Paling said he received good feedback about the DRCC Annual Report and evening. Claire noted that we were pleased with the turn out and thought the presentations were informative and enjoyable.

Claire also noted that the updated Pathway to Delisting is available for download (or a printed copy upon request) and reminded the group that it is the DRCC living work plan that outlines next steps for each BUI.

b) Recommendation from Monitoring & Research Work Group to amend Delisting Criteria for the Restrictions on Fish Consumption BUI

Claire presented a recommendation from the Monitoring and Research Work Group recommending an amendment to the delisting criteria for the Restrictions on Fish Consumption BUI. Claire provided background on the BUI and current criteria (see Appendix III).

Current criteria:

When consumption advisories for indicator fish species (e.g., walleye, brown bullhead, and smallmouth bass) given for the sensitive population in the AOC are similar to upstream **and** downstream non-AOC Great Lakes reference areas.

Proposed amended criteria:

When consumption advisories for indicator fish species (e.g., walleye, brown bullhead, and smallmouth bass) given for the sensitive population in the AOC are similar to upstream **or** downstream non-AOC Great Lakes reference areas.

Claire noted that the Monitoring and Research Work Group recommends that the DRCC change the criteria to be upstream **or** downstream, since most fish advisories are equivalent to one and not both reference areas. This is because Lake St. Clair is a mercury source while Lake Erie and the

U.S. side of the Detroit River are high in PCBs. She noted that the mandate of the AOC program is to address sources of contamination that can be controlled within the AOC boundaries. In the Detroit River, we have determined that there are no more sediment cleanup actions on the Canadian side that would influence the consumption guidelines for our indicator species.

Claire noted that this BUI likely won't be re-designated right away anyway and the next steps are to do a shoreline angler consumption survey to determine what people are eating and if their consumption habits are compromised because of the AOC.

Key Discussion Points

Naresh asked what action would the DRCC take if we found contaminated fish in the river? Claire noted that there will always be consumption advisories in the Detroit River, like the rest of the Great Lakes basin, and said that researchers are confident that there are no sources of contamination on the Canadian side of the river that are influencing consumption advisories for our indicator species. She noted that when we write up the assessment for this BUI, the PAC will have the opportunity to review the research and provide feedback. The MOECC also continues to monitor sport fish and put out their guide biannually so fish will continue to be monitored through that program.

Dave asked whether the contamination from the US River Rouge could also affect the Canadian side of the Detroit River. Claire noted that Ken Drouillard does fish mobility modeling using mercury isotopes, which is why he feels confident in saying that our consumption advisories are not being driven by sources of contamination on the Canadian side. There is also on-going research at GLIER using radio tags, which suggests that the shipping channel is a barrier to many species. Claire said that there is a sediment task team on the US side that has now determined priority clean up locations. Since it has been a few years since we received an update about the US clean up projects, it would be helpful to have an update at the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Claire to invite Melanie Foose, MDNR, or Mary Bohling to the next PAC and EPI meeting to present an update on US sediment cleanup progress.

Ian asked whether there is a program addressing Bald Eagle toxicology. Claire said there was a volunteer program through Bird Studies Canada that monitored Bald Eagle nest productivity but the program ended in 2011. She noted that, if we can find volunteers, it would be useful to start gathering this data on the Canadian side of the river again. Michigan continues to collect data on Bald Eagles and Osprey, and did a forage fish study several years ago in the Detroit River.

Tom ended the discussion by noting the amount of sediment clean up work to be done on the American side is extensive. It is up to the PAC to continue asking questions and reaching out to the groups focusing on the recovery of the river, so we have a better understanding of what is happening over there.

4. PAC Update since January 2018 (T. Henderson)

a) Airport Woodlots Planting

Tom noted that several PAC members had recently learned that the trees planted in 2013 by ERCA as Phase 2 of the Windsor Airport project have been removed or mowed down by airport staff. Tom asked Councillor Payne to contact the airport to find out what happened to the trees. Carolyn

Brown, CEO of Windsor airport, replied in an email that was circulated to the PAC that, in the opinion of operations staff in 2015, the trees did not survive and were full of weeds.

Claire noted that Kate Arthur said the tree survival rate was at 88% in 2013 and 83.9% in September 2014 and that, based on similar planting sites, the 'weeds' that had grown at the site were more likely native grasses and flowers from the native seed mixture. Tom reminded the group that ERCA had been denied access by Steve Tuffin, YQG Director of Operations, repeatedly (and as recently as the fall of 2017) to follow up with survival assessments and maintenance of the project. Tom said he requested ERCA provide the PAC with the total cost of the project. Claire noted that Kate is still reviewing records but that costs were likely around \$30,000, including over \$13,000 for the machine-planted trees alone. Funding sources for the plant material for this project included DRCC MOECC and ECCC funding (for the community plantings in 2013 and 2014), ForestON, and ECCC Great Lakes Sustainability funding.

Andy Paul suggested they might be concerned with habitat creation and an increase of bird and other wildlife populations. Claire agreed and said that this was mentioned as the reason for no longer supporting future plantings however, when this project was initially approved by City Council, it was stated by the Director of Operations at the time that this was not a concern.

Discussion took place regarding what kind of restitution the PAC would like to see from Windsor Airport for these trees. The consensus was that, ideally, everyone would like to see the trees replaced with a long-term plan in place and commitment to stewardship from the airport and management by ERCA.

MOTION: THAT the PAC writes a letter to Windsor City Council to seek restitution of the planted forest at the Windsor Airport.

Moved by Pearl, Seconded by Ian.

The motion was discussed but not voted on. It was suggested that the PAC might get more traction if a motion goes through WECEC, like the Ojibway Shores resolution did. If approved by WECEC, it automatically goes to council and someone can go as a delegate to speak to the issue. Furthermore, once it goes to council, it becomes public record so a media release will not be necessary.

MOTION: THAT Tom Henderson create a resolution to bring to WECEC requesting that the City of Windsor to replace the 2013 trees at the airport that were removed by airport operations staff, and that ERCA be allowed access to conduct all necessary maintenance.

CARRIED

Councillor Payne reminded everyone that this is not a quick process, but it is important to follow the city's procedures. Claire noted that the next WECEC meeting is in July and we can request that this item to be added to the agenda.

Mike Walsh requested that the DRCC PAC send congratulations to the City of Windsor for initiating a ferry service to Peche Island.

ACTION ITEM: Tom to send a letter of congratulations to the City of Windsor for offering a ferry service and public access to Peche Island

b) Ojibway Shores update

Tom noted that last fall WECEC passed a resolution to request that the Government of Canada conserve Ojibway Shores. This resolution then went to City Council who also adopted the resolution at its January 29, 2018 meeting where Tom and Derek were delegates. ERCA adopted a similar resolution at a Board meeting in February. Currently, there are discussions taking place between the city and Windsor Port Authority regarding the fate of Ojibway Shores.

c) Bicycle trails and the Herb Gray Parkway

Andy Paling said he visited the Gordie Howe Bridge Canadian plaza site with members of the PAC and SIC several weeks ago. A 3m wide bike/pedestrian path will be part of the new bridge and Andy noted that there is a well-connected bike trail system on the American side already, but this is lacking on the Canadian side. Andy has been trying to get in touch with the City of Windsor to determine what plans are in place but has not heard back from them.

Cathy noted her frustration with the lack of action and engagement on the opportunity to connect existing and potential new bike trails as part of the new construction of the bridge as well as creating ecotourism and wildlife passages within the Herb Gray Parkway system. There is also a Detroit River kayak route on the American side, and she thinks we are missing an opportunity to do something similar on the Canadian side.

d) Windsor Port Authority Annual General Meeting – June 21 highlights

Tom attended the WPA AGM on June 21. At the meeting George Sandala, Chair of the Windsor Port Authority said, *"In recent years, the 30 acre Ojibway Shores has been identified for development as one of our major initiatives and a future source of significant income. However, due to concerns raised by the community about the development of all or a portion of the site, the Port Authority has listened and put any development on hold. We will continue to work with all levels of government, most importantly the City of Windsor and The Federal government, to find a solution which best suits the needs of all parties."* The WPA provided Tom with thanks to the PAC on all efforts so far and said that the group's approach has been presented very well.

Pearl mentioned that there is an article in the Earth Watch section of the recent ON Nature magazine on Ojibway Shores.

Andy closed the conversation by noting that the Director of Finance and Administration for the WPA is retiring soon. It will be important to inform the new CAO of the issues surrounding Ojibway Shores.

5. EPI Project Update since January 2018 (Gina & Pearl - 30 min)

Gina provided a brief update on the DRCC Communications Plan and progress on planned outreach projects. Her presentation is included as Appendix VII. She noted that DRCC reached over 10,000 people in the last year by participating in 44 events, and there has been an increased effort with social media. The new DRCC display has been successful and used in outreach events. Claire and Gina invited everyone to attend the upcoming Detroit River Family Fishing Day on Saturday July 7 in LaSalle. This event is expected to draw in over 100 people and also includes an open house of the new Freshwater Restoration and Ecology Centre and a free open swim at the public pool.

Discussion took place regarding new projects for 2018/19. Claire noted that, because of the recent change in provincial government, the MOECC outreach grant is still pending so no projects can be started until approval is granted.

Discussion took place regarding Peche Island Day. Claire noted that this event is a lot of work and is a big commitment from the partners that provide boats. Her concern with continuing with the event is that there won't be as much interest anymore since people can now get to the island for a small fee via the new City of Windsor boat. Councillor Payne suggested talking directly to Mayor Dilkens about his interest in continuing this event since he has been driving the Peche Island improvements and boat purchase. There was a general feeling expressed from Andy, Tom and others that it might be time to pass the torch to the city but the group consensus was to leave it up to Claire and Gina to decide the value of running Peche Island Day in 2018.

ACTION ITEM: Claire to continue the conversation about Peche Island Day with the EPI Work Group and other project partners to determine if there is still an interest and value to continuing to undertake this event.

Claire noted that the CEA has requested that \$5000 be included in the 2018/19 budget for their July boat tour again which will take place on July 21st. Other project suggestions brought forward included a bus tour of Humbug Marsh, contributing to the River Canard Canoe Company's Earth Day cleanup, and 'Keep Your River Clean' signs for Turkey Creek and River Canard.

Andy Paling mentioned that the seedlings planted at Earth Day struggle to survive on the current planting site and wondered if there is an opportunity to change the ratio of seedlings to large stock? Ian agreed and said that people enjoy planting larger trees. Discussion took place about initiating an Adopt an Acorn (or seeding) tree program where classes could be responsible for raising trees on school grounds in preparation for Earth Day.

ACTION ITEM: Gina to work on a new Earth Day 2019 approach to improve tree survival and share with the PAC and EPI.

As was recommended by Mary Alikakos (MOECC), Claire said that she sent out letters to the five First Nations that were signatories to the McKee Treaty of 1879: Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Bkejwanong (Walpole Island) First Nation, Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, and Caldwell First Nation. A letter also went to Oneida Nation of the Thames as they are the closest nation to the Detroit River included in the Nanfan Treaty of 1701. She and Kevin met face-to-face with Caldwell in April, where she provided a brief overview of the program and provided them with a Stage 2 and Pathway to Delisting. A letter was also sent to Delaware First Nation as they requested engagement with the Detroit River RAP during a Canada Ontario Agreement Executive meeting in the Niagara area in May. The letters explained the program and included an offer to meet in person to determine how they would like to engage with the Detroit River RAP.

6. Next Meeting and Meeting Adjournment

The next meeting will be in the fall at the call of the chairs.

Appendix I. Meeting Attendance

Tom Henderson	PAC Chair
Andy Paling	PAC Vice Chair
Cathy Greenwell	
Chris Hodare	
Ian Naisbitt	
Pete Thomas	
Naresh Manku	
Pearl Bradd	EPI Co-Chair
Mike Walsh	
Dave Munro	
Steve Marks	
Hilary Payne	
Andy Paul	
Claire Sanders	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Gina Pannunzio	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup

Appendix II. Update for Action Items from January 24, 2018

ACTION ITEM: Claire will circulate the date and times for the City of Windsor mountain bike park public meetings. Done.

June 24 Update: Tom mentioned that a cleanup sponsored by the Friends of Black Oaks, the City Windsor, and mountain bikers from the community and the WPA. Peter Berry asked Tom and Andy to help with an OS cleanup, which would be closed to the public. There was a homemade ladder that they found in the woodlot that hunters/trespassers would use to hunt game. Andy also said they got to see the damage to the snake hibernacula which was pulled apart to make a ramp to the river.