

Meeting Record
DRCC Public Advisory Council & EPI Work Group
Tuesday May 3, 2022 – 4:30-6:30pm
Virtual via Zoom

Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda, land acknowledgement

Gina began the meeting at 4:36pm. She began the meeting with a land acknowledgement and followed with a round table of introductions, which are both included in Appendix I of this meeting record. Paul Drca attended the meeting and introduced to the group. He accepted the RAP Coordinator position while Jackie Serran is on her maternity leave. Paul comes to the team with extensive knowledge of the DRCC RAP and has many years of pollution prevention experience as he worked at the Lou Romano Water Reclamation Plant with the City of Windsor before retirement.

Appendix II. Review of October 7 2021 Meeting Record and Action Items

There was only one change to the October 7 2021 meeting record, brought forward by Patricia. She requested to amend Canada South Land Trust as the name of the organization she represents in the action item list, Appendix II. This was amended and the meeting record was finalized.

PAC Update since October 7 2021

Tom provided the PAC and EPI members a few updates on some Canadian and American projects related to the Detroit River. The slides accompanying his talk are included as Appendix III.

Ojibway Shores/Urban National Park

On June 7, 2021 the Windsor City Council unanimously passed a motion supporting MP Brian Masse's private member's bill in Parliament calling for legislation to establish the Ojibway National Urban Park (NUP). On March 3 of this year on behalf of PAC Tom wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau urging the government to act on council's motion supporting Masse's park creating bill, copies to Brian, MP Irek Kusmierczyk and Mayor Dilkens. Following the outreach, in a rare occurrence, Tom received calls from both MPs. MP Irek Kusmierczyk said that MP Brian Masse's bill undermines the bureaucratic process to establish the park. MP Brian Masse maintains that legislation is the only way to secure the park. Any other method does not fully protect the park in the future. Tom wrote a letter following those conversations imploring the government to create the NUP and is hopeful another announcement will come soon, and that Ojibway Shores, will be included in this process. Derek Coronado mentioned that the City has received funding through the federal government to support the environmental consultation process.

Update on Ecopassage

Tom mentioned that on December 20, 2021, Windsor City Council endorsed the design concept for the animal crossing. From the City of Windsor website for the project, "*The study team will work to finalize the environmental study report regarding the preferred design and location.*" The City Council has yet to make a decision on whether to build the crossing. At the estimated cost of \$20 million, Tom is not certain it will happen.

A discussion took place regarding the shortfall of the preferred design, as it does not cross the Essex Terminal Railway. Due to the high estimated costs, the group does not foresee the City engaging with ETR to pursue a full crossing. Tom asked if Jonathan felt this project is feasible on whether the City of Windsor will follow through. He provided his perspective, as he has studied road mortality since 2010 in that area. He explained his studies are in areas other than Ojibway Parkway along Malden Road and Matchette Road with high road mortalities. There is a lack of clarity on what animals the preferred design will target and support. It is challenging to provide effective comment on the design elements depending on what fauna should be targeted, especially when road mortality information is not available for reptiles in that area. He recommends adding in fencing where mortality hot spots occur and continual monitoring for improved movement in that area. Patricia mentioned that there are mammals that use that area that should also be included in the design and movement safely across four lanes of heavy traffic. She encourages the group to support to build over and under passes to target all species needing to migrate through that corridor.

Update from Friends of the Detroit River PAC

Tom mentioned the next Friends of the Detroit River PAC meeting would be held on May 9 2022 at 1:30pm. The US team is implementing quite a few upcoming remediation and habitat restoration projects including the Monguagon Creek-Upper Trenton Channel site and South Hennepin Marsh. Updates to these projects and others can be found on their website www.detroitriver.org.

Revere Copper Dock update

Tom shared that according to an article in the Windsor Star from November 21, 2021 another collapse of the Detroit River Shoreline occurred at the same site west of the bridge on the US side almost two years to the day of the first collapse. Following the incident, water testing and spillage containment methods were put in place. The City of Detroit also issued a cease and desist order preventing Detroit Bulk Storage from operating until further notice. In April 2022, Detroit Bulk Storage began closing up on the Revere Dock and is expected to move all stored bulk materials by April 18 2022.

DRCC Updates

Gina provided the PAC and EPI members DRCC program and outreach updates. The slides accompanying her talk are included as Appendix III.

Update on BUI re-designations - Benthos, Fish Tumours, Phytoplankton and Zooplankton

As of March 2022, the Canadian Detroit River AOC has four remaining impaired beneficial uses and ten unimpaired (including nine whose status has changed from “impaired” or “requires further assessment” to “not impaired” since the start of the AOC program in 1987. In addition, the BUI status for the Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Beneficial Use Impairment changed from “requires further assessment” to “not impaired.”

Updates on DRCC Projects, Research, and Monitoring

Gina shared that the Pathway to Delisting updates in June. The DRCC is working with agency partners on RAP monitoring/research goals for 2022. Further, the DRCC received permission from MRWG to begin writing the BUI #5 assessment. In addition, the DRCC received funding from federal government, construction on Peche Island to begin again this summer.

Status of DRCC funding for 2022/23

The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) funding for the DRCC is secured for RAP governance and outreach until the end of the 2023/24 fiscal year. The DRCC submitted an application to Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and which is pending review.

GLWQA 50th Anniversary

On April 15, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) reached an important milestone, by turning 50 years. Derek mentioned that there is a video circulating on YouTube showing the historical signing of the agreement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0sIfZ-sIF0>.

Windsor Sportsmen's Club Video

A video highlighting the shared benefit of a healthy Detroit River, restoration initiatives and recreational opportunities was created in partnership with the Windsor Sportsmens' Club, the DRCC and ERCA. The Detroit River, a World Class Fishery can be viewed on YouTube by following: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqpcthDNUh8>.

State of the Strait

Gina shared that the State of the Strait conference will be held on May 11 2022. The DRCC is presenting on Canadian sediment remediation and the Benthos BUI re-designation.

DRCC Logo Sub Committee

Gina reminded the group that last meeting members of the PAC agreed to pursue a new DRCC logo that incorporates a Lake Sturgeon created by an Indigenous artist. Jackie and Gina undertook some background research on the history of the DRCC logo and some of the design iterations the program has seen over the years. Pearl explained that she and Ian began reaching out to Indigenous artists and local organizations to see if there was interest in working on this project. They did not hear back from the majority of their inquiries. The Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre did reach out to Pearl who sent them more information about the project, and they hope to hear from someone soon.

Further, Gina recapped the EPI/PAC members that the process and initiative still needs approval at the DRCC Steering and Implementation Committee (SIC) level before pursuing anything further. The DRCC does not have funding available for this initiative, and with this year being a transition year with a new RAP Coordinator, it would be a slow moving change that would take likely the rest of 2022 if not longer. Pearl, Ian and Mark agree that this is a very big undertaking but is timely and important to members of the EPI/PAC as it is reflective of the larger Truth and Reconciliation actions that are taking place across Canada. The next steps are to continue bringing awareness of this opportunity with Indigenous partners and artists locally and to prepare for sharing this project with the SIC at the next meeting. Patricia recommended considering offering a tender for the project and to change the language from 'stipend' to something else that reflects paying the artist for their artwork.

EPI Project Update since October 2021

Earth Month events and activities

Gina shared some of the stewardship activities the DRCC participated/hosted in April in celebration of Earth Month. On April 9 2022, over 200 volunteers across Windsor Essex came together to remove a total of 4,178lbs or 1,896kg of litter from two locations including Sandwich and a section of Little River by the Canadian Tire within the Detroit River watershed. This initiative is part of a broader Detroit River binational program celebrating Earth Month (April), hosted through the Detroit River Coalition.

Further, on April 24 800 volunteers planted nearly 2300 native trees and shrubs at the Earth Day site in Little River. Tree Canada, Enwin Utilities and CUPE 543 provided funding for the plant material. Volunteers planted following that weekend, 70 native trees and shrubs at Brock Park and College Avenue Bikeway as part of the Triple Tree Impact project ERCA partnered with the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority on. She mentioned there are going to be future environmental events throughout the summer as this project continues to roll out in Sandwich such as an environmental tour of Sandwich.

Questions and discussion

Reports from Member Groups

Little River Enhancement Group (Lil' Reg)

Ian mentioned early April the Windsor Essex Community Foundation (WECF) approached him to partner with Lil' Reg to celebrate their 40th anniversary via a tree planting event in the fall. Ian must prepare a proposal for their Board of Directors by end of May to outline scope of the event and a budget, and asked for ERCA's support on the proposal.

ACTION ITEM: Gina to prepare a project budget for Ian/Lil' Reg to submit to WECF before May 28th 2022 deadline. (done)

Mark mentioned the 30th/31st anniversary of Lil' Reg will be celebrated at Weston Park in the fall with the Town of Tecumseh and ERCA. This project is in the planning phase currently, with the hope of hosting in September.

Citizens Environment Alliance (CEA)

Derek shared the CEA shared the formation of a new organization called the Great Lakes Ecoregion Network (GLEN) in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the GLWQA. In addition, the CEA in collaboration with some other groups has put together an elections survey, hosted on the Green Prosperity website. He also mentioned that the Great Lakes Public Forum 2022 will be in Niagara Falls at the end of September. Derek shared some websites for these resources in the group chat, and Gina followed up with a post meeting e-mail to the EPI/PAC members with the website links as well.

Canada South Land Trust

Patricia encouraged members of the EPI/PAC to reach out to her if anyone sees any land being degraded locally.

Appendix 1. Land Acknowledgement and Meeting Attendance

Gina began with the following Land Acknowledgement: I'd like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie <pa-te-wa-temi:> Peoples.

To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honouring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original Peoples of Turtle Island - North America.

Meeting attendance included:

Tom Henderson	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, Public Advisory Council Chair
Gina Pannunzio	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Paul Drca	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Derek Coronado	Citizens Environment Alliance
Ian Naisbitt	Little River Enhancement Group
Mark Shafer	Little River Enhancement Group
Patricia McGorman	Canada South Land Trust
Jonathan Choquette	Wildlife Preservation Canada
Pearl Bradd	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, Little River Enhancement Group

Appendix II. Action Items and their Updates from October 7 2021 Meeting

ACTION ITEM: Jonathan to send Ojibway Prairie and surrounding land property maps to Jackie created by Wildlife Preservation Canada as well as to Patricia and the Canada South Land Trust. **Completed.**

ACTION ITEM – Gina to share any updates about the Conservation Authority Act regulatory changes and any future comment periods with the PAC when they become available. **(Ongoing)**

ACTION ITEM: Jackie to share a few of the most recent and approved DRCC Habitat Work Group meeting records with Jonathan. **Completed.**

Meeting record completed by Gina Pannunzio.