

## **Meeting Record**

### **DRCC Public Advisory Council & EPI Work Group**

Tuesday October 25, 2022 – 4:30-6:30pm  
Riverside Public Library, 6305 Wyandotte St E, Windsor ON  
In Person & Virtual via Zoom

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#### **Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda, land acknowledgement**

Paul began the meeting at 4:37pm with a land acknowledgement and followed with a round table of introductions, which are both included in Appendix I of this meeting record. He also welcomed Dr. John Hartig, Basia Pioro-McGuire, and students from GLIER and the Healthy Headwaters Lab to the meeting and shared that the second half includes a workshop focusing on outcomes of the recently held ecosystem approach conference held at the University of Windsor.

#### **Review of May 3, 2022, Meeting Record and Action Items**

The May 3, 2022, meeting record was approved with no changes, and there were no additional updates for the action items taken from that meeting. The action items are listed as Appendix II.

#### **PAC Update since May 3, 2022**

Tom provided the PAC and EPI members a few updates on some Canadian and American projects related to the Detroit River.

#### Ojibway Shores/Urban National Park

Tom shared that the Windsor Port Authority is working with Parks Canada to successfully transition Ojibway Shores to Parks Canada stewardship. Windsor-Tecumseh MP, Irek Kusmierczyk announced the anticipated date for opening the Ojibway National Urban Park (NUP) is December 2024. In addition, Andrew Dowie, recently elected to the provincial legislature, put forward a motion at Queen's Park to include the Ojibway Provincial Nature Reserve as part of the NUP. He hopes to get unanimous consent from all parties. Lisa Gretzky of the NDP has also expressed moving forward on the potential transfer. Last, on October 24, 2022, the PAC sent a brief to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainability in support of Bill C-238, which calls for legislation to create the Ojibway NUP, sponsored by Windsor West MP Brian Masse.

Derek mentioned that CEA and the Friends of Ojibway Prairie (FOOP) participated in consultation with Environment and Climate Change Canada recently about the NUP. Their announced deadline is anticipated to be in 2025, which is a different date than being reported by MP Irek Kusmierczyk.

#### Update from Friends of the Detroit River PAC

At the Detroit River Evening on September 14, 2022, Mary Bohling of the Friends of Detroit River Public Advisory Council provided some updates on behalf of our American partners and their restoration efforts. Lake Okanoka on Belle Isle is benefiting from 200-acre restoration of the woodlands. Further, there is a fishing pier and successful Lake Sturgeon spawning beds near the island. Downriver, Hennepin Marsh has

also undergone some large-scale restoration. These large-scale restoration efforts have been undertaken over the last ten years, with over 50 million dollars provided in funding by various state and federal agencies.

### Revere Copper Dock update

Tom shared in 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. Remediation of the site is underway.

### Airport woodlands and restoration

Tom recently spoke with the ERCA project manager leading the 2017 Airport Woodlands restoration project. This involved restoring fifteen acres of farmland, connecting the two forests. Shortly after the planting effort, the trees were confirmed to be plowed under for safety reasons. Five years later, there seem to be some remaining trees planted along the drain.

Phil shared that there are a few projects and opportunities aligning in Windsor that he is hoping the PAC can provide support for in various ways. They include:

- Stormwater concept for south Windsor and annexed lands around the airport;
- Battery plant development and potential impact the Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs) around the airport; and
- Connecting policies such as the City of Windsor Parks Masterplan and opportunities (including the Battery plant and south Windsor stormwater management and Little River naturalization plans) to create a green boundary of properties around the entire City of Windsor (including Ojibway Prairie Complex, Herb Grey Parkway, south Windsor, and the Little River corridor).

Some of these documents will be shared with the PAC for review, in addition any invitations to consultation meetings will be distributed to provide the PAC a platform to advocate for these opportunities. It would be beneficial to incorporate additional natural heritage policies such as ERCA's Essex Region Natural Heritage Systems Strategy, the DRCC's BUI # 3 Populations and BUI # 14 Habitat strategy as well as anticipate any of the Windsor Airport concerns with naturalizing to make a strong case to continue to work towards restoring these areas and connecting all the corridors and natural areas. He also suggested coordinating some face-to-face meetings with new councillors of the City of Windsor would help the cause. Tom agreed that these efforts are worthy of the PAC pursuing.

## **DRCC Updates**

### Updates on DRCC Projects and Research and Monitoring

Paul shared that there is a Monitoring and Research Work Group meeting scheduled for November 23, 2022. Further, a Habitat Work Group meeting will take place December 5, 2022. Recently, the Collavino Family donated the wetland property to ERCA to continue to manage, restore and share with the public. The media release is found here: <http://detroitriver.ca/collavino-family-donates-wetland-habitat-to-erca-to-create-collavino-conservation-area>.

A new project the DRCC is pursuing with partner agencies is the privately owned MMM Hunt Club, at the mouth of the River Canard near Collavino. The site requires some dyke repairs to protect the coastal wetland. Engineering review and budgeting is taking place currently with the goal to apply to Great Lakes Protection Initiative (GLPI) this year or early next to fund the project, adding an additional habitat project to the Detroit River. Paul also shared that additional sheltering islands were constructed at Peche Island this year. A map of that project and a video showing the islands is included as Appendix III. The Steering and Implementation Committee meeting was held on September 14, 2022, as was the Detroit River Evening. Last, the DRCC launched the 2021/22 Annual Report and the Pathway to Delisting, which are available on the website.

### DRCC Logo Sub Committee

Pearl shared that she met with Dennis Marier who curated a Truth and Reconciliation exhibit at the Gibson Gallery in Amherstburg about potentially providing a logo draft for consideration. Both Phil and David also had some recommendations for additional contacts and offered to follow up with Gina and Pearl following the meeting. Paul ended the conversation by reminding everyone that this process is still being figured out, and that no member of the PAC should be making promises to anyone about this opportunity as there are processes that need to be followed to undertake a logo rebranding exercise on behalf of the DRCC.

### **EPI Project Update since May 3, 2022**

Gina shared a variety of projects the DRCC supported in the spring, summer and fall including spring litter cleanups in the watershed, community tree planting events the Detroit River family fishing event, the Sandwich Environmental Tour and Detroit River Evening. There are two community tree planting events on November 5<sup>th</sup> at Queen's Dock Park and College Avenue Bikeway in partnership with ERCA, City of Windsor, and the Windsor Port Authority. Funding for these projects is provided by the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan. Her presentation is Appendix IV.

Phil asked whether the PAC will be able to vote on future outreach projects and if the DRCC would provide funding support for community restoration projects. Gina answered that the 2023 outreach work plan will be more robust than 2020/21/22 as she anticipates there will not be any further gathering restrictions which limited the DRCC's programs during the pandemic. She also shared that as the DRCC has made progress on terrestrial habitat goals, funding that previously went towards plant material is now being directed to support in river projects. Regardless of the DRCC not being able to fully financially support community based restoration efforts in the watershed, there are other funding models that she can tap into to plan for future projects with partners and municipalities in the watershed.

### **The Ecosystem Approach in the 21st Century: Guiding Science and Management**

Dr. John Hartig and students from the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER) and the Healthy Headwaters Lab led a workshop to share ideas and collect feedback from the members of the PAC and EPI titled, *The Ecosystem Approach in the 21st Century: Guiding Science and Management*.

An ecosystem approach accounts for the interrelationships among air, water, land, and all living things, including humans, and involves all user groups in management. An ecosystem approach recognizes that humans are in an ecosystem, acknowledges interconnectedness, pursues sustainability, works to

understand places, and integrate processes and involves all stakeholders. John's presentation is included as Appendix V.

He encouraged members to consider the following questions and led a discussion:

1. Why is an ecosystem approach important today and is it relevant to you on your work on the Detroit River?
2. In what ways is an ecosystem approach/ecosystem-based management valid, important, and actionable?
3. What is missing from our list of draft recommendations?

Some of the feedback from members included focusing on full life cycle costing of projects and development in the Detroit River watershed, focus on education and projects at the community level, emphasize importance of terrestrial habitat that creates a healthy blue economy and highlight projects such as the International Wildlife Refuge and Ojibway Shores as examples of using an ecosystem-based approach. Members are encouraged to visit their website <https://www.healthyheadwaterslab.ca/projects/ecosystem-approach> and share any further ideas to Basia at [ecosystemapproach@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ecosystemapproach@uwindsor.ca).

### **Wrap up and Round Table**

Elaine mentioned the Erie Situation film was being screened at the Windsor International Film Festival in November. Gina agreed to put that information in the November newsletter. Members of Lil' Reg planted 21 large stock trees at Weston Park with volunteers earlier this morning. Paul ended the meeting thanking everyone for attending and shared that the next meeting will take place in 2023 at the call of the PAC Chair.

### **Appendix I. Land Acknowledgement and Meeting Attendance**

Paul 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:

Paul Drca	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Gina Pannunzio	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Dr. John Hartig	Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research/University of Windsor
Emily Varga	Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research/University of Windsor
Amesh Wickramasinghe	Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research/University of Windsor
Emmanuella Uche-Orji	Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research/University of Windsor
Basia Pioro-McGuire	Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research/University of Windsor
April White	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Tom Henderson	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Public Advisory Council

Ian Naisbitt	Little River Enhancement Group
Mark Shafer	Little River Enhancement Group
Elaine Price	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Public Advisory Council
Phil Roberts	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Public Advisory Council
Patricia McGorman	Canada South Land Trust
Pearl Bradd	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Public Advisory Council and Education Public Involvement Work Group
Derek Coronado	Citizens Environmental Alliance
Carl Maiolani	Essex County Field Naturalists' Club and the Friends of Ojibway Prairie
David Hanna	Member of the public

**Appendix II. Action Items from May 3, 2022 and their updates.**

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

Meeting record taken by Gina Pannunzio.