



Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
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Meeting Record: DRCC Steering & Implementation Committee Meeting

September 14, 2022, 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm
Zoom Meeting

Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda

Review of Action Items (see page 2); Approval of Meeting Record from June 24, 2021

Steve Clement began the meeting at 1:05pm with a round table of introductions. The meeting record from June 24, 2021 was approved with no changes. All action items have been marked complete.

Canada Ontario Agreement (COA) update and Updates from COA Executive / GLWQA or Great Lakes Protection Initiative (GLPI); Four Agency Management Committee

Canada Ontario Agreement (COA)

Steve mentioned that the GLPF is taking place in 2 weeks in Niagara Falls. In person registration is closed, and virtual participation is still available. Further, the Canadian Ontario Agreement or COA is coming close to its one year milestone, and ECCC is assessing the program so far. Ted mentioned that in March 2022, MECP completed a transfer payment agreement with ERCA for DRCC coordination for 2 years. They are currently developing a work plan for 22/23 funding.

Four Agency Management Committee (FAMC)

Ted shared that MECP is hosting the next meeting taking place at the end of October. This will be the first in person meeting in the last three years. Representation from ECCC, MECP, MIEGLE and USEPA meet 3 to 4 times a year to discuss binational AOCs including St. Clair, St. Marys and the Detroit River.

BUI Status Updates

April provided an update to the remaining four BUIs for the Canadian side of the Detroit River. Her presentation is Appendix III of this meeting record. Most recently redesignated to not impaired was BUI #13 Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations.

BUI #1 – Restrictions on Fish Consumption

GLIER hosted a series of workshops to go through the assessment framework to support RAP teams for AOCs across the province, assessing the status of this BUI. Using the framework, Dr. Drouillard has written a report on the status and is under review by the MRWG. Last, the DRCC launched an angler survey to provide an additional line of evidence to support the BUI assessment. Ted and Ken provided a brief overview of the details within the four-tiered framework for the SIC. Ted shared that there are no longer any sediment remediation efforts that the Canadian side of the DR can implement to improve fish consumption advisories. This BUI could be redesignated to not impaired based on the evaluation that has

been completed. There is still more work to be done for this BUI, and this has been one of the more challenging BUIs to assess.

BUI #3 – Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations

April shared that the Habitat Work Group has developed sub-criteria metrics to help the group facilitate decision making on the status of this BUI. The metrics include fish populations, wildlife populations, particularly for marsh bird abundances and diversity through evaluating IBI scores. There will continue to be monitoring through ECCC CWS for the next two to three years.

BUI 5 – Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems

Both bird and animal indicator species studies have concluded. The working group aims to consolidate all the studies with a due date of March 2023 to recommend a not impaired status for this BUI.

BUI 14 – Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat

The Habitat Work Group has also established metrics and sub-criteria for delisting this BUI. Some of the recent projects include ERCA digitizing habitat projects within the AOC and larger watershed to assess the terrestrial delisting component. In addition, major projects implemented include Peche Island and Collavino in the River Canard watershed. In addition, the team is working on potential projects with MMM Hunt Club and Fighting Island. If we proceed, we can make an evaluation on whether terrestrial, shoreline, aquatic and riparian criteria have been met.

Pathway to Delisting

Paul provided an update on the recently updated Pathway to Delisting document, this document is reviewed and updated annually and is considered a 'living' workplan to identify necessary actions to achieve BUI status change for the Detroit River to be delisted as an AOC. It also documents the work that has been undertaken by partners and agencies and supports decision making and work planning for monitoring and other projects in the future. The DRCC makes this document available on the website under the publications/technical reports tab and was sent it out as part of the meeting package. Paul's presentation is included as Appendix IV of the meeting record.

Detroit River Habitat Projects (Peche Island, Collavino wetland, MMM and Fighting Island)

Kevin provided a habitat restoration project update to the SIC. His presentation is Appendix V of the meeting record.

Peche Island

Significant erosion has occurred to Peche Island due to wave action from freighters passing and high water levels. A rock revetment project with fish habitat protection project has been implemented over the last few years by partners in different phases. Reduced wave energy due to fish reefs provides nursery habitat for fish, calm back water areas and submerged aquatic vegetation growth became established very quickly. Monitoring from a biological and physical perspective has been part of the project deliverables during construction and after construction. Creating fish habitat contributes to healthy and productive fisheries in the Detroit River. Twenty new native fish species not previously recorded in past surveys were captured and 13 native species were caught in their juvenile and adult life stages, notably Northern Mad Tom a Species at Risk.

Peter Berry wondered about navigation protection in relation to the north side of the island for Peche Island. Has anything been submitted to navigation protection during the time of construction and new structures? Kevin mentioned beacons have been installed, and permits have been submitted for the project, with the charts to be updated in the future.

Collavino Wetland

The property is a 30.2ha/75 acre wetland at the mouth of the Canard River. It was completely dominated by Phragmites when this project began. Although dyked, a culvert was in place to promote water flow. ERCA's overall goal is to implement hydrological control of the site to enhance Phragmites control and improve overall wetland habitat. Plans were drawn up to build a water level control structure to manipulate water levels to manage Phragmites and to be able to induce revegetation of native plants through the existing seedbed onsite. ERCA also developed a management plan and prescribed burn plan for the site. A burn took place at the site in spring 2021, followed by flooding the wetland cell. This past spring, the cell has more open water, which needs to be maintained for about a year to keep the Phragmites from growing back into the seedbed.

Detroit River Communication & Outreach Update

Gina shared that the DRCC participated in 10 virtual and 4 in person outreach events between the spring of 2021 and end of winter 2022. Her presentation is included as Appendix VI. Some notable projects include virtual habitat restoration presentations shared jointly with the Friends of the Detroit River, Learn to Fish virtual resource and hosted in person in July 2022 and a new program delivered in partnership with the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority Community Benefits Plan, the Sandwich Environmental Tour delivered in August 2022 jointly with the Windsor Port Authority.

Update on Indigenous Engagement

In Gina's presentation (Appendix VI) she also included an update to the SIC on the various ways the DRCC has engaged with Indigenous groups on the RAP. Most recently, a sub-committee of the PAC, the DRCC Logo Sub-Committee requested to change the logo. They also would like to see an Indigenous artist provide the new design.

Other Working Group Updates

Research and Monitoring

There were no additional updates as they were discussed in April's presentation. Current focus continues to address the four BUIs and key priorities outlined in Pathway to Delisting.

Habitat

April mentioned that the main focus is to continue working on the sub-criteria and metrics with consensus on how to evaluate the wetland and riparian habitat delisting criteria. Further, the group will figure out the terrestrial target through additional GIS work and continue to assess aquatic and riparian efforts through DFO monitoring and modeling. Further effort will continue to go towards two new projects. One aimed to restore the finger dyke to protect the largest wetland complex in the AOC at MMM Hunt Club and continue discussions with BASF to get them into a position to apply for funds to recreate wetland at fighting island, like the Peche Island approach.

Public Advisory Council Report

Tom shared an update with the SIC on some of the issues the PAC has been following. Regarding the National Urban Park, the Windsor Port Authority is working alongside Parks Canada to successfully transition Ojibway Shores to Parks Canada stewardship. Thanks to the Prime Minister, Ojibway Shores was transferred from port to Parks Canada. In the meantime, MP Irek Kusmierczyk sent a note to his constituents setting the potential opening for the NUP for December 2024, if studies and transfers of property are completed. Another issue the PAC followed for a few years is the Revere Copper Site Spills. Remediation is underway, there was an ordinance passed (not on time) by Detroit City Council to prevent the second 2022 spill. Last, on behalf of the PAC, Tom wrote letters to the Windsor Star and Dr. Mike McKay recently, to provide praise for GLIER’s wastewater analysis program.

Ken mentioned that a team at GLIER also published an op-ed regarding sediment movement ramifications to the spill, as MIEGLE monitoring only addressed water. Future sediment quality surveys should take into consideration that sediment movement due to recent high-water levels should be addressed. April mentioned that what happened at the site has been addressed and the shoreline has been restored. Tom agreed, but there isn’t enough information available to date of progress.

Atura Power (formerly Brighton Beach Power) Presentation

Tom and Geoff provided an update about Atura Power and their presentation is Appendix VII. Atura owns and operates Ontario’s largest fleet of combined cycle natural gas turbine power plants with 2715 MW of capacity across four facilities.

Round Table Updates

None

Other items/ Closing Remarks/ Next Meeting

The next SIC meeting will take place in the new year.

Appendix I. Meeting Attendance

Carolyn O’Neil	Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks
Kevin Money	Essex Region Conservation Authority
Paul Drca	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Kevin Webb	City of Windsor
Dennis Plain (filling in for Cathleen)	Aamjiwnaang First Nation
Geoff Saunders	Atura Power
Steve Clement (acting for Kate Tallion)	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Ted Briggs	Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks
Tom Henderson	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Public Advisory Council
Ken Drouillard	University of Windsor/Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research
April White	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Stephen Marklevitz	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Richard Drouin	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Peter Berry	Windsor Port Authority
Gina Pannunzio	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Tom Lumley	Atura Power
Naomi Williams	Walpole Island First Nation

Alexandra Beveridge
Darius Sokal

Walpole Island First Nation
Atura Power

Appendix II. Action Items from Steering & Implementation Committee Meeting June 24, 2021

ACTION ITEM: April to send Tom information re: renewal of COA that he can share with the PAC.
Completed

ACTION ITEM: Gina to present update on the 20 year monitoring report of the Canadian Heritage River at next SIC meeting.

Completed - Item is on this meetings agenda (Communications & Outreach Update)

ACTION ITEM: Reach out to Kevin W. to discuss role of City of Windsor on SIC

Completed – no further action needed

Action Items from Steering & Implementation Committee Meeting August 17, 2020:

ACTION ITEM: DRCC continue with re-designation process for the Phytoplankton and Zooplankton BUI.

Completed

ACTION ITEM: Kevin Money to reach out to Terry at OMECP to discuss revisiting the Point and Non-Point Source Pollution Work Group and discuss commitments and actions to meet delisting criteria.

Not completed, Carried forward*

Update: Kevin said there are no actions relating to delisting existing BUIs that link back to this work group and would like direction on this. Paul mentioned that he was on the committee when he was working with the City of Windsor. There were only a handful of meetings with the intention of looking at point and non-point sources of discharges to the Detroit River. The major ones are covered through MECP Certificates of Approvals. It was determined that there were no other actions linked to impairments, and a decision was made to park the committee until needed in the future. Ted agreed and said he didn't think the committee was required. April mentioned that when the sediment cleanup was taking place in Turkey Creek, she wondered whether this committee was addressing non-point sources to the river, were they involved in this project? Ted said yes, in 2008, partners involved removed contaminated sediments. Ken D. also mentioned there is some ongoing work regarding a settling pond near Devonshire Mall, but for the most part the point source aspect to Turkey Creek and high contaminated soils by the embankment are remediated. The engineering and removal work are mostly complete. Paul mentioned the culvert pipes below the Howard Avenue onramp near the mall are still filled with contaminated sediments, but these sediments have not been identified to be causing impacts on aquatic species and habitats. There is a plan in place, but nothing has officially been moved forward to remove sediments and dewater them.

***Complete**