

Meeting Agenda
DRCC Public Advisory Council & EPI Work Group
March 14, 2023 – 4:30-6:30pm
Riverside Public Library, 6305 Wyandotte St E, Windsor ON
In Person & Virtual via Teams Meetings

1. Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Agenda, Land Acknowledgement

Paul began the meeting at 4:47pm 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 Mike Fisher, President of the Friends of Ojibway Prairie to the meeting and shared that the second half includes a presentation focusing on recent endeavours relating to the National Urban Park process for the prairie. Paul mentioned he is covering Jackie Serran's maternity leave until June 16, 2023. He also requested to add one new item to the agenda regarding the PAC Chair and Co-Chair elections in the DRCC updates section.

2. Review of October 25, 2022, Meeting Record and Action Items

Paul reminded everyone that there were no action items recorded from the DRCC EPI/PAC October 25, 2022, meeting. The meeting record from October 25, 2022, was approved with no revisions.

3. PAC Update Since Oct 25, 2022

Tom shared some updates US partners have been working on in the Detroit River. On February 1, 2023, Doug Schmidt interviewed Dr. John Hartig in the Windsor Star. In the article John shared that there are legacy contaminants such as mercury and PCBs that have been in the sediment for up to a century, deposited over time during Detroit's industrialization and urbanization. Last year scientists presented at the State of the Strait a progress report urging the importance of remediating the sediment in the channel and in tributaries such as the Rouge River. On the American side, 5.1 million cubic metres have been targeted and prioritized in urgency for remediation. Federal commitments for funding can cover 65%, and additional funds are being sought out from state, local government, and private industry.

Following this article, Tom contacted John to prepare e-letters to lobby Michigan legislators (two state Senators and a House Representative) to provide funding support for this remediation. Derek mentioned that the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor published a sediment and fish sampling report identifying high levels of PFAS. Tom closed his talk by letting the group know he will continue to keep everyone updated on US efforts.

4. DRCC Updates

4.1. Item Added to Agenda - PAC Chair and Co-Chair Elections

Paul noted that the DRCC Terms of Reference pertaining to the PAC state, “A Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected or re-elected annually by members and shall hold office until replaced in a subsequent election.” and it has been several years since an election was held.

Subsequent discussion determined a quorum was present and led to nominations for the PAC Chair and Vice-Chair positions. The present PAC Chair, Tom Henderson was acclaimed PAC Chair and Pearl Bradd was acclaimed Vice-Chair.

4.2. Updates on DRCC Projects and Research and Monitoring

Paul shared that the federal Great Lakes Protection Initiative (GLPI) funding agreement has been signed with ERCA to continue with DRCC RAP and Governance until March 31, 2024. He reminded everyone that the Provincial COA agreement is secure with funds up until this time as well. There are four BUIs that remain impaired for the Canadian Detroit River AOC including BUI #1, Fish Consumption Restrictions; BUI #3, Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations; BUI #5, Bird or Animal Deformities or other Reproductive Problems and BUI #14, Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Agency partners are continuing monitoring and research efforts and preparing reports for the Monitoring and Research and Habitat Work Groups to continue gathering information and identify progress weighted against the selected delisting criteria for each BUI.

Phil asked whether the DRCC shared information publicly about the re-designation of BUI #6, Degradation of Benthos. Gina answered yes, the DRCC provided a public comment period, created communications to all work groups, social media, through our newsletter, our new video series and more. This was during the pandemic, and there was not an opportunity to engage the public in person like we normally have in the past when BUIs go through the consultation and redesignation process. The DRCC plans to tell this story and have resources for the public at the upcoming Detroit River Evening.

4.3. DRCC AOC Video Series

The DRCC launched a new AOC video series with five videos highlighting the RAP, Phytoplankton and Zooplankton, Degradation of Benthos and Fish Tumors and Other Deformities redesignations as well as a delisting video. These were shared in the newsletter, and on social media with the public. Derek mentioned in the video introduction, the narrator is describing the AOCs coming online in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) in 1987, but the video shows a picture of President Richard Nixon and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau signing the original GLWQA, taking place in 1972. He recommends changing the narration to the GLWQA 50th anniversary was celebrated in 2022.

4.4. Conservation Award Winners

Paul also mentioned in January that ERCA’s annual Conservation Awards were celebrated, and amongst the winners included the Collavino Family, Friends of Ojibway Prairie, Enwin Utilities Ltd. And more.

4.5. DRCC Logo Sub Committee

Pearl mentioned that she spoke with Dennis Merrier who is willing to produce a sample logo redesign. Paul reminded the group that there is an approval process whereby this needs to be brought to the Steering and Implementation Committee (SIC) before any changes take place.

5. EPI Project Update since October 25, 2022

Gina provided a brief presentation with some outreach activities that took place and those to come from now until spring. Her presentation is included as Appendix III. On February 16, 2023, the DRCC screened *The Erie Situation* twice at Imagine Lakeshore Cinemas. A morning screening was provided to 120 students from three Detroit River watershed EcoSchools and those who have participated in environmental Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) and stewardship activities including, Riverside High School, Catholic Central High School and W.F. Herman Academy Secondary School. Following the screening, a discussion took place with some very thought-provoking questions from the students.

In the evening, 100 people came out to watch the free screening, and hear from an expert panel at the end of the show. Thanks to Dr. Katie Stammler (ERCA), David Ruck (The Erie Situation Director and

Producer) and Kyle Davis (Municipality of Lakeshore) for providing great discussion and engaging the audience on such an important local and Great Lakes basin wide issue.

The spring and summer outreach activities includes the How To Crew Orientation for Earth Day on March 21, two litter cleanups in Little River and Sandwich on April 15, two Earth Day events (Malden Park and east Windsor tree planting) on April 23, the Detroit River evening sometime in June and Family Fishing Day, July 8.

Gina also announced that she is expecting a little one and will be going on maternity leave sometime in August. There will be some staffing changes coming up soon.

6. DRCC Roundtable Updates

6.1. Little River Enhancement Group

Mark shared that Deputy Mayor Joe Bachetti of the Town of Tecumseh is bringing forward a motion to the County of Essex to investigate establishing a tree cutting/alteration of natural heritage by-law as part of their Official Plan. With changes in the Conservation Authority Act, they are hopeful this may address challenges of cutting and removing natural heritage in the region.

6.2. Canada South Land Trust

Patricia shared that there are known dumping challenges in Marshfield Woods in the region, that reflect what Mark is talking about. She said if anyone notices any activities like this taking place, they can reach out to her with information so their group can advocate.

6.3. Citizen Environmental Alliance

Derek shared that the CEA annual general meeting will be held on April 29, 2023, at 2pm at their office on Howard Avenue.

6.4. Wildlife Preservation Canada

Kathleen mentioned WPC is continuing habitat restoration for at risk reptiles and they are looking at Ojibway Prairie and surrounding Detroit River habitat parcels to continue this work.

7. Guest Speaker – Friends of Ojibway Prairie, Ojibway Urban National Park

Mike began his presentation (Appendix IV) sharing that he is the President of the Friends of Ojibway Prairie (FOOP). FOOP has been very active in advocating for the National Urban Park (NUP) in Windsor and have taken an active role in sharing information with the public, encouraging residents to participate in the process and to provide feedback when the opportunity arises for the proposed NUP. There are two separate processes taking place to push this forward including the Parks Canada National Urban Parks Initiative which creates Ojibway NUP through Parks Canada policy and memorandums of understanding, and Bill C-248 which creates Ojibway NUP by amending it to the Canada National Parks Act Schedule. Both have different processes, including pros and cons, as well as potential NUP footprints of the various properties associated with the Ojibway Prairie Complex. Parks Canada timeline is currently in the feasibility stage, with potential designation in 2025. Bill C-248 is currently going to be presented as a Third Reading in the House of Commons in April, and if passed will move through the Senate.

Mike wrapped up his presentation by encouraging members of the EPI and PAC to attend any future open houses about the NUP and to engage and provide feedback to the City of Windsor through their Let's Talk online engagement tool. He recommended reaching out to local MP and MPP to share your support for the NUP and want to see the complex and surrounding properties protected. Last, if/when Bill C-248 goes to Senate, written submissions can be made to the ENEV Committee in support or opposition, with recommendations for amendments.

A discussion took place about additional sites that the group would like to see be added including Town of LaSalle natural heritage lands, old Windsor Raceway lands and Oakwood Bush. Mike is hopeful these properties are added in at some point during the process. Phil agreed and said having surrounding lands that can be restored and part of the park footprint will help buffer the existing Ojibway Prairie Complex. Both Phil and Tom commended Mike and all of FOOP for pushing through all of these pieces on behalf of the NUP, and they look forward to seeing it fully protected in the future.

A1. Appendix I. Meeting Attendance and Land Acknowledgment

A1.1 Land Acknowledgement

The Essex region is the traditional territory of the Caldwell First Nation, members of the Three Fires Confederacy, comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi Peoples. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all the Original Peoples of Turtle Island - North America who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

A1.2 Meeting Attendance

Paul Drca	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
Gina Pannunzio	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, EPI Co-Chair
Mike Fisher	Friends of Ojibway Prairie
Tom Henderson	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, PAC Chair
Pearl Bradd	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, PAC, Little River Enhancement Group
Kayla Jakobszen	University of Windsor/Essex Region Conservation Authority
Mark Shafer	Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, PAC, Little River Enhancement Group
Cindy Davey	Friends of Ojibway Prairie
Bob Losier	Friends of Ojibway Prairie
Kathleen Woodhouse	Wildlife Preservation Canada
Frank Butler	Citizens Environment Alliance
Derek Coronado	Citizens Environment Alliance
Michael Schnieder	Citizens Environment Alliance

Phil Roberts Citizens Environment Alliance, Essex County Field Naturalists' Club

Patricia McGorman Canada South Land Trust

Mike Fisher Friends of Ojibway Prairie

Griff Evans Friends of Ojibway Prairie

A2 Appendix II. Action Items from October 25, 2022, Meeting

There were no action items recorded from the DRCC EPI/PAC October 25, 2022, meeting.