

**Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council
Spring 2017 Business Meeting
June 12-13, 2017
Macomb County Public Library – North Branch
16800 24 Mile Road, Macomb, MI**

Attendees:

Clinton River

Anne Vaara, SPAC Vice
Chair
Amanda Oparka

Rouge River

Bill Craig
Sally Petrella
Dan Ballnik

MDEQ

Ginny Berry
Rachel Coale
Jon Doyle
Melanie Foose
Rick Hobrla
John Riley
Stephanie Swart
Jen Tewkesbury
Matt Tomlinson

Detroit River

Bob Burns

St. Clair River

Patty Troy
Paulette Duhaime

Kalamazoo River

Jamie McCarthy

Great Lakes Commission

Matt Doss

River Raisin

Dick Micka

MDHHS

Aaron Cooch

Hubbell, Roth & Clark

Prasad Gullapali
Diane Martin
Albert Mikalich
Derek Statelak

Welcome, Introductions and Review of Agenda

Anne Vaara, Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Vice Chair, Clinton River Area of Concern (AOC) opened the meeting. Anne announced that Lynne Seymour, PAC Chair for Clinton River, resigned as PAC Chair. This is her last week, and she had hoped to be at the meeting. She'll be working for Hubbell, Roth & Clark.

The agenda was reviewed. Rick announced that Tanya Cabala from White Lake would not be attending. Her presentation was pulled from the agenda and will be added to a future meeting.

The draft minutes for the March 28-29, 2017 SPAC meeting were reviewed. They were approved with a couple minor changes.

Report from the Great Lakes Commission

Matt Doss reported that Congress finalized the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) budget for FY17 at \$300,000,000. He noted there was strong congressional support. President Trump proposed elimination of the program in FY18 along with a cut to EPA's budget of 31%. He also proposed elimination of funding for Sea Grant. The group discussed the impact of the proposed cuts.

**Please note these minutes have been reformatted to meet accessibility requirements.
The original content has not been changed. 7/2022**

Matt advised SPAC members and other AOC leaders to reach out to their members of Congress to explain the value of the program, particularly as it relates to jobs and the local economies. He gave a presentation “The Great Lakes: A Vital Environmental and Economic Asset,” emphasizing the Great Lakes worth and the many jobs and successful projects resulting from the GLRI.

Report from the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes

Rick reported the OGL is operating with a three-year grant that started on April 1, 2016 and runs to March 31, 2019. EPA initially only committed to funding for one year, but the funding for the second year was recently awarded. Based on discussion between the States and the EPA, the OGL is expecting to receive an additional grant increase of 20-25%.

He reported that Sharon Baker of the OGL retired in February and the OGL is still considering whether to backfill the vacancy. The OGL has established and is in the process of filling an Economic Analysis position.

PAC support grants were delayed because of the delay by the EPA in awarding the second year of grant funding. The OGL hopes to have them in place by July 1. The next round of PAC support grants will run for a year. If there is another round of PAC support grants next year, they will be based on the last round of the and will probably run until February of 2019.

Water School

Anne reported that some local officials completed the two-day “Water School” offered by Michigan Sea Grant in southeast Michigan and were very impressed with the training. She mentioned that it will be repeated in the fall in Kalamazoo.

IAGLR

Attendees of the International Association of Great Lakes Research (IAGLR) annual conference in Detroit summarized the proceedings. Rick presented “Michigan’s Approach to Targets for Removing BUIs and Delisting AOCs” which was prepared for the IAGLR conference.

Clinton River Habitat Projects

Representatives from Hubbell, Roth and Clark provided presentation on the three Clinton River habitat projects that the SPAC members would be visiting later in the day.

The meeting adjourned about 3 PM and SPAC members were provided a tour of three Clinton River habitat improvement projects.

The meeting reconvened about 9 AM on Tuesday, June 13, 2017.

Reports from SPAC members

Kalamazoo River

Jamie reported the project to remove the Otsego Township Dam and remove the PCB-contaminated sediments upstream was proceeding. Work is ongoing to provide signage through the Eat Safe Fish program. The Department of Natural Resources has contracted with an engineering firm to design a plan for removal of the Trowbridge Dam.

John reported on sedimentation and navigation issues at Kalamazoo Lake.

Clinton River

Amanda reported that Lynne Seymour is stepping down as PAC Chair and that they hope to have a new Chair in place by June 15. She summarized work on several projects in the watershed. She pointed out that there are ongoing negotiations between the Public Advisory Council, the EPA and the State over funding for projects in the Red Run subwatershed. She also reported that State Representative Lucido held a public hearing and was criticizing the Department of Environmental Quality for not adequately protecting Lake St. Clair from muck issues.

St. Clair River

Patty reported that the Beach Closings BUI was removed on the Canadian side of the St. Clair River, the Bird and Animal Deformities BUI was removed on the U.S. side., and that the Fish and Wildlife Habitat BUI removal will be moving forward too.

She mentioned upcoming St. Clair AOC celebrations events in both the U.S. and Canada

River Raisin

Dick reported that the River Raisin has removed five BUIs and has four remaining. They are monitoring PCBs levels in fish to see how quickly they drop following several sediment remediation projects to remove or contain PCBs. He emphasized that the City of Monroe is heavily engaged in restoring the River Raisin and is prepared to play a role in protecting Lake Erie. He also provided information on their efforts to control invasive Flowering Rush in the river.

Rouge River

Bill reported the Rouge River is carrying out a PAC support grant through the Friends of the Rouge to monitor fish. They're particularly looking at the movement of the invasive round goby. They're working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine what can be done about channelized portion of the river. There is also ongoing work in planning sediment remediation for the old channel of the Rouge.

Detroit River

Bob reported that several habitat restoration projects are active or completed in the Detroit River. The Blue Heron Lagoon and South Fishing Pier projects are completed. They have received funding to do a feasibility study for Lake Okonoka project. The Stoney Island project started construction last spring. They are starting design work for the Celeron Island

and Sugar Island projects. They have also completed work on assessing contaminated sediments in the river.

St. Marys River

John reported on the completion of the Little Rapids habitat restoration project. He mentioned that a project celebration event is planned for August.

Manistique River

John reported that the only remaining work is to complete remedial dredging in the harbor. There is ongoing sediment sampling to identify remaining the PCB hot spots.

Saginaw River and Bay

John reported that the PAC is working to develop and propose local Beach Closings BUI removal criteria.

Menominee River

Stephanie reported that the Menominee AOC has completed all management actions needed to delist the AOC. Work on removing the Restrictions on Dredging BUI and the Degradation of Benthos BUI is underway. The PAC is supportive of quickly removing the remaining BUIs and beginning the formal delisting process.

Muskegon Lake

Stephanie reported that Muskegon lake is moving forward with removing the Aesthetics BUI this year. Work on remediating the Zephyr and Ryerson Creek sites is continuing.

Torch Lake

Rick reported that the DEQ Remediation and Redevelopment Division is continuing work to identify and control sources of PCBs along the northwestern shore of Torch Lake. The OGL is planning to organize a scientific summit to bring in experts to explore innovative techniques to address the widespread PCBs and metals contamination.

SPAC Reimbursement Policy

Rick announced that the OGL intends to draft a reimbursement policy for SPAC members to clarify which expenditures are reimbursable and at what rates. He plans to distribute a draft prior to the next meeting. He also mentioned that the State of Michigan is changing accounting systems and all reimbursements after October 1 will be through the new system, SIGMA.

PAC Support Grant Progress Reports

John reported that we are doing away with our standardized progress report form because it was cumbersome and difficult to use. In its place, the OGL is providing guidance to grantees on what needs to be include in progress reports and allowing grantees to choose their own format.

Rick noted that, in the past, we have been inconsistent in requiring grantees to report for quarters in which there were no charges. Going forward the DEQ will be requiring zero expenditure reports in these situations to ensure consistency and allow us to withstand an audit.

PAC Support Grant Financial Status Reports

Jon reviewed the new Financial Status Report (FSR) form. He noted that the financial calculations are built into the form. He emphasized that the allowable mileage reimbursement rate could change annually depending on changes to Internal Revenue Service regulations. There was some discussion regarding the advantages of having a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) in place for grants.

Need for follow up to CMI Bond

Rick reported that DEQ Director Heidi Grether did not anticipate that the current administration would be supporting a new bond prior to the end of Governor Snyder's term in 2018. There was discussion about the need for additional funding to support sediment remediation. It was generally agreed that the Detroit and Rouge AOCs and, possibly Torch Lake could benefit from additional funding.

Next SPAC Meeting

The next SPAC meeting is scheduled for the afternoon of October 10 along with a legislative breakfast briefing on the morning of October 11. We've reserved Mackinaw Room in the Anderson House Building for that. We will be seeking legislative sponsors. We will go back to Senator Pavlov to see if he's still available. We typically try to have balance with one republican, one democrat, and one east, one west.

There was some discussion of venues for future meetings with suggestions for the Raisin in the spring and Menominee in the summer.

Review Action Items

PAC members to contact Congressional representative regarding GLRI funding. THE OGL to draft and share SPAC reimbursement policy. The OGL to share directions for completing FSRs.

Rick expressed thanks to the Clinton River PAC for hosting and the meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.