

**Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

Mary Bohling, Detroit River Area of Concern (AOC) (Chair of SPAC)  
Horst Schmidt, Torch Lake AOC (Vice Chair of SPAC) (elected Chair at this meeting)  
Patty Troy, St. Clair River AOC (elected Vice Chair at this meeting)  
Mary Bednar, Clinton River AOC  
Bob Burns, Detroit River AOC  
Christine Kosmowski, Kalamazoo River AOC  
Cheryl Vosburg, Kalamazoo River AOC  
Keith West, Lower Menominee River AOC  
Kathy Evans, Muskegon Lake AOC  
Brian Egen, River Raisin AOC  
Dick Micka, River Raisin AOC  
Bill Craig, Rouge River AOC  
Marie McCormick, Rouge River AOC  
John O'Meara Rouge River AOC  
Dennis Zimmerman, Saginaw River/Bay AOC  
Paulette Duhaime, St. Clair River AOC  
Aubrey Maccoux-LeDuc, St. Marys AOC  
Mike Ripley, St. Marys AOC  
Evelyn Ravindran, Torch Lake AOC  
Matt Doss, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative  
James Polidori, University of Michigan  
Amy Pelka, United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)  
Carolyn Koch, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)  
Jeremy Waechter, DHHS  
Rick Hobrla, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)  
Mike Alexander, EGLE  
Melanie Foose, EGLE  
Gary Kohlhepp, EGLE  
Kimberly Passick, EGLE  
John Riley, EGLE  
Stephanie Swart, EGLE  
Jennifer Tewkesbury, EGLE  
Matt Tomlinson, EGLE

**Welcome Mary Bohling**

Mary welcomed everyone and expressed her appreciation for everyone meeting virtually even though we would prefer to be face to face.

**Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

**Roll Call/ Review of Agenda – Mary Bohling**

Mary verified the attendance by AOC and/or agency affiliation and then reviewed the agenda reminding everyone that there was a separate meeting ID for the afternoon session which was scheduled to begin at 1:30 PM.

**Review/Approve Minutes from July 23, 2020 SPAC Virtual Meeting – Mary Bohling**

There were no comments on the previous minutes. Dennis Zimmerman made a motion to approve, it was seconded by Bill Craig. All were in favor.

**Review of Action Items – Rick Hobrla, EGLE**

One action item was that Rick would make contact to inquire about who would be interested in running for SPAC officer position and that will be addressed later in this meeting.

Rick was also to follow up with Torch Lake and St. Clair to formalize the SPAC designees which has been completed.

A poll was to be sent to determine topics of interest for this meeting. That was not completed but a previous poll and discussion with the SPAC officers was used to set the agenda for the current meeting.

Presentations from the previous meeting were to be sent out and that was completed.

That concluded the action items.

**SPAC officer elections – Mary Bohling, Rick Hobrla**

Mary has been serving as chair for an extended period with Horst serving as Vice Chair for roughly a year. Rick spoke with Horst who would like to stand for election as Chair and also with Patty Troy who expressed interest in running for Vice Chair. Rick then asked for nominations and Bill Craig nominated Horst for the position of Chair. The nomination was seconded by Brian Egen. There were no other nominations. A voice vote was held affirming Horst Schmidt as the new Chair.

Moving on to the Vice Chair position, Mary asked for nominations and Bill Craig nominated Patty for the position of Vice Chair. The nomination was seconded by Paulette Duhaime. There were no other nominations. A voice vote was held confirming Patty Troy as the new Vice Chair.

Mary then turned the meeting over to the new Chair, Horst Schmidt. Bill Craig thanked Mary for her extended service as SPAC Chair. Many others echoed the sentiment.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

Horst expressed that he hoped he would do as well as Mary had serving as Chair and then handed off to Rick for the next agenda item.

### **EGLE Update – Rick Hobrla, Stephanie Swart, EGLE**

Teleworking – State staff have long been working from home with occasional trips into the office and will continue to work from home at least through the end of the year. This does not mean staff will return to work in January, just that no one will return to work before that time. For those that follow the coronavirus statistics, things are trending up with the number of new cases and increased numbers of deaths. This means the teleworking situation may continue for quite some time.

Funding/budget – we are about halfway through a three-year grant from USEPA that runs through March 2022. At the current time the grant is somewhat underspent and ways to use that surplus are being explored. It is anticipated that in March 2022 the unit will receive another three-year grant but that will depend on what occurs at the federal level. Overall, at the state level things look good.

PAC Support Grants – most of these are in place with the exception of Torch Lake and Saginaw. They should continue working with their AOC coordinator to develop a proposal. There have been some delays in payments and the unit has been working with the administration unit to resolve issues and it appears there have been improvements. If receipts have been submitted for reimbursement and you feel that it has taken longer than it should to receive payment, you should let your AOC coordinator know so they can look into it.

Horst asked if the underspending of the grant was from delays due to coronavirus. Rick responded that was part of it. One reason was that for a 10-week period all staff were laid off one day per week, reducing staffing expenses by 20% for that period. Also, there were positions that the unit had hoped to fund but were unable to due to a hiring freeze.

Horst also asked how much the grant was for and how much had been utilized to date. Rick did not have the exact amounts but did respond that the grant is \$3.5 million per year for each of three years. The way USEPA funds the grant is interesting; although it is awarded for three years, they only commit to funding a year at a time. So even though the grant runs through 2022, only funding through March 2021 has been disbursed. The process for adding the funding for the next year is generally simple and automatic. Barring a major change in the federal budget it is anticipated that it will occur. Based on current expenditures the grant looks to be underspent by approximately \$1 million so there have been internal discussions on how to use that. This should not affect the PACs, however if they have good justification on increasing their grant amount it can be considered and should work with their AOC coordinator.

Melanie added that payments for second quarter had been sent last week for one PAC and she imagines that others waiting on payment should be receiving them shortly.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Menominee AOC Delisting - Stephanie Swart, Menominee AOC Coordinator, shared that the Lower Menominee River AOC was officially delisted in August 2020. They had six Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) and five of those were removed between 2017 and 2019 due in large part from a push from USEPA and other federal agencies to complete the final management actions. At this point there are discussions between numerous entities to determine next steps in the delisting plan such as merging into a larger watershed group or continuing to make the final few miles of the Lower Menominee a priority; doing clean up by picking up trash and planning events to create buzz around that section of the river. No plans have been finalized yet. Due to the coronavirus, the idea of an in-person celebration has been postponed in the hopes that an event can be planned for the coming spring or summer. Kudos go to the local action committee members, some of whom have been active for 25 years or more and have done a great deal of work in the area. It was very exciting to receive the official letters.

Rick added that this was the first delisting of a bi-state AOC which added an additional level of complexity. Neither Michigan nor USEPA had faced that challenge before but regardless, the final steps of the process went remarkably quickly. Previous Michigan delistings had a long period of time before official word was received. This time the process was completed in weeks, not months. Much appreciation to USEPA and the State Department.

Saginaw reassignment – a change in staffing that was made and the prime responsibility for the Saginaw Bay AOC has been transferred from John Riley to Jen Tewkesbury. John is helping her transition as she is spending time and effort getting up to date. John has become heavily involved in some of the natural resources damage assessment work in Kalamazoo and Saginaw. He will continue to be available to Jen and Saginaw to give them support with Jen the primary contact moving forward.

Another item that Rick wanted to mention that is not on the agenda; many of you may have heard about the Governor's announcement of the MI Clean Water plan; a \$500 million investment to rebuild Michigan's water infrastructure. This is a combination of programs that involves primarily drinking water and to some extent the wastewater treatment plant process. This will be funded by new and existing funds and overseen by EGLE. The Governor's announcement it can be found at

[https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499\\_90640-541156--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90640-541156--,00.html).

Additional info can also be found at [Michigan.gov/CleanWater](https://www.michigan.gov/CleanWater).

Horst asked if there was any reason for PACs to look at the MI Clean Water program as part of their programs. Rick responded that it seemed to be targeted more toward government officials and water treatment/ wastewater treatment officials. The PACs could perhaps act in an advisory capacity.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

### **EPA Update – Amy Pelka**

Amy shared that her main responsibility is to manage the AOC program under Marc Tuchman and also budgeting. She shared a presentation with an updated AOC map showing Menominee as delisted, and management actions complete AOCs Manistique, Eighteenmile, and the Black River. Amy has the updated maps available for those who would like one. There are a lot of accomplishments to celebrate from fiscal year (FY) 2020.

Overall, there is a budget of approximately \$100 million per year with the AOC program receiving about \$94 million. Over ten years that has added up to approximately \$900 million which has resulted in a great deal of work. As of September 2020, 97 BUIs had been removed including the most recent one at the Clinton River, for aesthetics. The total number of AOC delisted is five with Lower Menominee in August 2020. Also, there are four AOCs where all management action lists are approved so there is a clear path to delisting, two of which are in Michigan, Kalamazoo and the Rouge. This will prioritize those AOCs to the top in terms of vying for funding which is tight for FY21. There are also 11 AOCs with all management actions complete, five of which are in Michigan. (Menominee is included in this count but has been delisted). Of those, four are in Michigan, the St. Clair River, River Raisin, St. Marys River, and Manistique which was the newest addition.

Action Plan III is a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) guidebook and measures reporting plan for FY20 to FY24 and there are goal targets for each year. For the AOC program there are three measures, the first one is to have all management actions implemented. The goal for FY20 was 16 and that was missed with a total of 15. The second measure is removing BUIs and the target for FY20 was 93, however 97 have been removed so well beyond that goal. The new measure is to have complete and approved lists of all management actions needed. The goal for FY20 was 22 and that was met with 22.

We are doing well on BUIs. Prior to GLRI only 10 had been removed and by the end of this action plan, more than half of all BUIs will be removed. Rick took a moment to brag that of the 97 BUIs that have been removed, 54 are from Michigan, so while Michigan has approximately 40% of the total BUIs, they have accounted for more than 50% of the removals to date. Amy said removing BUIs was a top priority as it was one of the measures to meet.

She also discussed the buckets and how even though ten AOCs could be in the running to be done, they did not reasonably think they could all be completed by FY24. Therefore, the goal is to complete five. The example for action plan III is a horse race and they want to find a way to get five AOCs across the finish line by 2024.

In FY21 there are a lot of potential projects to fund, at least a 50% increase over last year. This year there are over \$220 million in potential projects with a budget of approximately \$94 million. This means it will be a competitive year for funding. Often it

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

is because of Legacy Act or sediment remediation projects. These are very expensive but must be prioritized because there is a non-federal sponsor to assist in funding and they can't turn those opportunities down. There are several projects already for this year. There are also a lot of habitat and non-sediment projects proposed this year that are either on a management action list or will be soon.

She reiterated to everyone to get your management actions lists in as best as you can. That will benefit you and raise you up in terms of your ability to get funding. Currently they are on a continuing resolution for the budget, but they continue to propose projects to the director. They receive a pro-rated monthly amount based on the previous budget until a new one is approved. She has about \$40 million in projects for the first quarter and not enough funding for all of it, but she will keep them ready in the event that some funding becomes available. There are a lot of good projects, but they probably won't be able to fund them all.

For Rouge and Torch Lake, she appreciates all the hard work and detail that went into getting their lists completed, those are used as milestones and she considers them living documents to keep work on track. She encouraged them to reach out if they have any difficulties, need guidance, etc., as they have a lot of advocates and help to get them completed by 2024. Not delisting, just completing the list.

Horst had a question as to whether Legacy Act projects were funded out of the GLRI budget and the answer was yes, it does.

John Riley asked why she thought requests for projects has such a large increase and did she anticipate the same level in the future. Amy responded that she felt it was a few things; they changed the AOC process, so they use a task force lead (TFL), those who work closest with the states and the PACs finding these projects, instead of the focus area lead. It is a more streamlined process. There is also an overall maturity to the program, more clarity and ability to secure funding. She also believes that because of the success of some of the Legacy Act projects non-federal sponsors are encouraged and more willing to partner and provide funding for these projects, some of which are very large. She does feel it will continue to increase, although the thought was that the increase would be another year or so away. She said she feels the trend will continue as they try to get five AOCs completed by 2024 with a lot of sediment work remaining which is very expensive.

Dick Micka asked if the AOCs were included in the Green Infrastructure project and the How's my Waterway program. Amy responded that they were not, however, if the PAC has a leveraged project, they could present that to their director on a case-by-case basis. They prioritize the things that must be done to meet the action plan measures.

She did emphasize that action plan III AOCs will have priority over action plan IV AOCs, but they don't want to leave anyone behind; they want to find ways to support them.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Mary wanted to tell Amy that a new economics report was released, and it shows a large growth around recreation and tourism. The work that is happening in the AOCs is driving their ability to promote those opportunities. She felt that as Amy is seeking funding this would be a document of new information to use to support projects. The report can be found at <https://www.michiganseagrant.org/topics/resilient-coastal-communities/great-lakes-and-the-economy/>.

Amy said there is a lot of support for the AOC program, there have been announcements, events, the administration has been traveling and likes to celebrate this program because of the partnerships, the economic benefits, and more. She looked forward to seeing the report and thought it would be a good topic for the upcoming AOC conference as she'd like there to be a closer look at revitalization with specific examples.

### **2021 AOC Conference – Kathy Evans, Rick Hobrla, Amy Pelka**

Rick explained that a planning committee has been working on putting together the next AOC conference. The last one was just about a year ago in Cleveland. The second week of May 2021 is being targeted as the date and it will be held in Muskegon.

Initially there was a backup plan to hold the conference virtually in the event that the coronavirus precluded a face to face meeting however, that has been updated and the backup plan is now to push the conference in to the fall of 2021, still in Muskegon. It was felt that the networking opportunities were an important and valuable feature of the conference and it was preferred that we work toward a face to face event.

Planning is proceeding with the assumption that everyone will meet in May 2021 and work on the draft agenda is beginning. Presently the committee is looking for topics for breakout sessions and suggestions for themes of breakout sessions that could be adopted. Rick said that this was an excellent opportunity for SPAC members to present ideas for topics they might want to see.

Rick and Amy are co-chairs for the event and Kathy is playing a key role as the representative of the host community.

Amy said she would like to see some breakouts that are focused on topics that the PAC members are interested in and would like input. She would like a good amount of PAC involvement, so she encouraged everyone to think about topics for breakouts, possibly some speakers, or perhaps leading a breakout session. She said the breakouts at the previous conference were very large so there will be an effort to have more sessions to reduce the size. This means there will be a need for more people to be willing to help out. She wanted to be sure that some of the videos for the Michigan AOCs were presented, such as the one for the Raisin, and Muskegon. Any ideas for topics for breakouts, poster ideas, a good speaker for a plenary session, she would like to hear them.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

Horst asked if Amy had a brief summary of the work going on in all of the AOCs. She said that she had created one recently for Ohio that she could possibly share, and some others are in development. She said it is difficult as they look at each AOC as their own individual so there isn't anything that summarizes them as a whole, but she could look into that.

Rick invited Kathy to weigh in on the optional events and things to do in the area. She said there are lots of ideas for optional events including pre-conference-day habitat tours, visiting different facilities such as the NOAA - Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory on the channel of Lake Michigan, Annis Water Research Institute, to name a couple. They want to have a lot of options like walking tours, boat tours, a venue for dinner such as the USS LST 393 and such. Nothing has been confirmed yet, but they are looking at lots of options. They should begin to solidify plans shortly.

One topic Kathy was interested in exploring was a topic with an environmental justice angle in regard to recreation. Now that Muskegon has completed a great deal of cleanup they would like to talk about how they continue to have access to the shoreline for the public and residents and how that results in an economic benefit as well and not how the shoreline is being redeveloped and built on.

Rick said there was hope that the USEPA Lake Guardian, a research vehicle could perhaps dock in Muskegon so there could be tours of the vessel. There is also a cruise vessel called the Aquastar and there is hopes that there could be a dinner cruise. He expects there will be a poster session as well. In general, he thinks it will be similar to previous conferences with the except that it may be bigger with more breakout sessions. He reiterated that they are soliciting the ideas so they would like to hear from folks in terms of what you would like to get from the conference and if there is something that you are working on that you think may be of interest to other folks, they'd like to have you step up and volunteer to lead a breakout session.

He also wanted to mention, that as has occurred in the past, they are anticipating providing some financial assistance for travel costs for local PAC representatives. That is something that they hope to make available. There have also been discussions of piggybacking an SPAC meeting on at the end of this conference. The conference will likely run a day and a half with optional tours the day previous, but that second day it is anticipated to end at mid-day and there is a likelihood that we would follow that with an SPAC meeting that afternoon.

Paulette commented that having an SPAC meeting in association with the conference may not work well as some travel with other members of their community and those folks may not want to stay. That could increase expense as they would then need to travel separately.

Patty had a couple ideas for breakout sessions; some discussion regarding lead and copper in drinking water, how communities assess that and what mitigation efforts there are. Another topic would be effective advocacy for pollution prevention and reductions

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

initiatives that would include NPDS permits and things of that nature. Rick asked if there a specific person or organization that would be suited to discuss those. Patty replied she would give that some thought. She subsequently added to the comment section "...maybe there is someone from the Healing Our Waters Coalition (HOW) and/or Sierra Club or similar organizations?" Mary responded to that comment; "Yes, I agree. There are many ways to discuss advocacy on pollution issues. HOW can weigh in on a more legislative level whereas local community groups can weigh in on a more grassroots level."

Mary would like to see how the AOC work is benefitting communities and bringing economic revitalization opportunities to them and to discuss the importance of improving habitats and the environment as a catalyst to economic redevelopment and recreation. Rick also asked if she had anyone in mind that would be good to speak on that topic. She responded that part of her interest in the topic is that their AOC, the Rouge is developing a water trail and a couple of AOC projects that were completed in that area have really been important in helping make that part of the river a recreational asset. Essentially it is giving the community a way to engage with their natural resources in a way that may not have been able to otherwise. Rick said that the water trail program has a state lead and we could contact that person to speak in a breakout session to describe how it interacts with the local government and economy.

Horst commented that he had read an article describing an influx of investment in the Muskegon area as it was in the cleanup stage and he thought it would be interesting is someone could speak to how it has benefited from this economic development because he assumes it is tied in with the AOC work. He thought perhaps Kathy would know of a speaker or wondered if any studies had been done regarding this issue on the academic side and could be contacted. He also suggested the local government or the Chamber of Commerce. Rick responded that with Muskegon being the host city it is expected that they have some time to do a presentation during a plenary session and perhaps they can build some of that information into it and if there was an interest in going more in-depth there could be a breakout session.

Dennis wanted to comment on the topic Patty had mentioned regarding copper and lead. The MI Clean Water plan has one focus of plumbing lines and leads to houses in urban areas and the other has to do with overflows due to storm events from water treatment plants. Perhaps that new initiative and how it will deal with these issues would be a good topic. Secondly, the dams along the Tittabawassee, though not part of an AOC, are in an AOC watershed. He wanted to avoid the political and legal issues but wondered if by the time of the conference what the local impacts to the environment are and if it would impact the AOC. A third topic of interest was the qPCR testing being conducted by Tami Sivy at Saginaw Valley State University, perhaps she would be willing to come speak in Muskegon. Rick responded that the conference is intended for all of the AOCs so the first topic may be challenging and though we can still have breakout sessions that are focused on a Michigan topic, it would need to tie in

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

information that is useful to AOCs outside of Michigan as well. He did feel they could be designed in such a way as to make them interesting to all of the AOCs.

John Riley wanted to mention with regard to the quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction (qPCR) testing, in addition to the initial investigation of microbial source tracking they are also now involved, along with EGLE and Michigan State University in looking at finding covid-19 in wastewater to monitor spread. That is another aspect of qPCR that could make the topic more widely interesting throughout the basin.

Bill Craig was interested in long term recommendations or strategies to maintain habitat projects. Rick responded that is of special interest to USEPA and he felt they would be supportive of a session on that topic. He thought they had at least one session in the past on the topic. Amy was supportive of it as well; she thought it would be good to have some specific examples of what has worked, a more practical level discussion.

Bob Burns added that in his AOC, they have had some real challenges with developing habitat restoration projects due to high water. The high-water issue is a challenge for everyone in the Great Lakes as they work on these habitat projects. Rick said there would be a number of expert speakers that could discuss lake levels. Bob said that he brought this up because they have had to do some very quick adjustments to habitat designs as water came in at two to three feet higher than was designed for so they had to make some major modifications from the initial plan to the actual installation. He suspected others were facing this challenge and wondered if there would be interest in the topic. Rick said that there was a proposal from NOAA, among others, to get some funding to try and do some work on Great Lakes resiliency and how we adapt to changing water levels. Last he knew that project had not been funded but it could change between now and the time of the conference.

Matt Doss added that the issue of coastal resilience is huge and there are a lot of initiatives going on. In addition to the project Rick mentioned, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation along with NOAA and others are beginning to develop a Great Lakes coastal resilience assessment with the process just kicking off. He was unaware of the timeline but was something that could be looked at in terms of having a speaker for the conference. Water levels and variability are big issues and there is a lot of concern about what to do about them. There is also work going on about how to deal with the impacts of coastal erosion and resources developed to assist property owners and others. Matt's organization is looking at coastal resilience challenges and needs for Great Lakes cities and they are hoping to do a survey later in the year to assess the needs of cities in relation and they may have the results in the spring. There should be an adequate number of speakers available and one thought would be to ask what the nexus is in relation to the AOCs.

Brian Egen said that they had interviews with grad students from the University of Michigan (UM) and they have formed a GLRI Equity project team and their idea is to collect perspectives on the AOC projects with regard to the impact on social equity and

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

inclusion through the work and investments. He felt that would fit in with the cultural resiliency aspect. He felt it was an interesting topic from a different view as he was impressed by how there are impacts beyond the traditional. Rick responded that UM has several projects, many that might be of interest to the broader AOC audience and there may be a breakout session devoted to providing updates on each of those projects and how they may impact the AOC program. Marie responded in the comments; “Yes, the U of M students giving a presentation would be great.”

At this point the meeting was ahead of schedule so a vote was taken to either move up a topic from the afternoon or break early for lunch. The vote was to move the environmental justice topic from the afternoon and the meeting continued.

### **Environmental Justice in the AOC program – Mary Bohling, Kathy Evans**

Kathy began by saying she thought it was important to learn more about how to engage community residents with economic development planning for the shoreline. A lot has been spent to restore these water bodies not only for public access and recreation but other types of private development as well. It can be difficult for local governments to understand how to really engage residents in a meaningful way in the economic development process because of the way projects are done (zoning, permitting, etc.). It’s beginning to look like restoration is resulting in a lot of economic development but not necessarily in ways that are most meaningful for the residents of those AOCs. In Muskegon there was a community that was very disconnected from the shoreline for many generations because of the industrial past and now that is cleaned up, they don’t really know the value of it from the perspective of how they would like to use it because they were told not to for so many years due to pollution. How is this work benefitting residents? How can they be engaged at a more grassroots level in the development of their own shoreline to ensure the sustainability of their own communities? She had heard a speaker, Majora Carter from Bronx, New York, and had thought about reaching out to her to inquire about speaking at the conference. Her perspective is from an urban setting, but Kathy didn’t feel it was all that different from many of the AOCs.

Kathy added in the comments; “Majora Carter spoke about engaging communities in economic development in the context of environmental restoration during the National Estuarine Summit. She was excellent at explaining how important it is to engage community residents in the redevelopment of shorelines that have been restored to ensures sustainability for the communities. She also touched on how public access contributes to economic benefits. In the Great Lakes, we often quantify the economic benefits of restoration in terms of private developments that don't always necessarily serve AOC residents in meaningful ways. We have something to learn about this subject area.”

Mary thanked Kathy for this topic as a challenge for her for some of these projects was the lack of connection to and knowledge of them in the community where they take place.

**Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Matt added that the Healing Our Waters coalition has a diversity and equity committee that is taking a look at the GLRI and Great Lakes issues through an equity lens. They have also been looking at how the GLRI functions. They have a meeting in December that may have some presentations on this topic so they may have some suggestions and it would be worth inquiring with them.

Rick stated that this is also a topic that is very important to Governor Whitmer and EGLE director Clark. EGLE has a designated environmental justice coordinator on staff and if the SPAC would like to get more into this topic at a future meeting she could be invited to speak.

Dick Micka mentioned that USEPA has a program called How's my Waterway? that offers information on many areas and can be accessed by anyone at <https://mywaterway.epa.gov>. There are layers of information on numerous subjects related to water and information can be added to the site. He felt it was a wonderful tool.

Mary Bednar felt this was a topic that needed to be explored, and that it would make sense to invite EGLE's environmental justice coordinator to speak in the future.

Horst said we may want to consider speaking with the Michigan Environmental Council as they are involved with a number of the organizations that are dealing with drinking water issues for future SPAC meetings.

Though still ahead of schedule, Rick suggested that the meeting break for lunch early and reminded everyone that there was a separate link for the afternoon portion of the meeting and to please be back promptly at 1:30 for the UM students' update.

Horst adjourned the meeting for the lunch break.

**Morning session ended at 11:44 AM.**

**Afternoon session convened at 1:30 PM.**

There was a slight delay as the UM presenter had a technical issue with the afternoon link. Horst asked Gary for some background information while the issue was being addressed. Gary supervises the Lake Michigan Unit within the Water Resources Division. They have a number of water quality monitoring responsibilities including responding to harmful algal blooms (HAB), the group handles lake monitoring, total maximum daily loads and things of that nature for impaired water bodies.

The technical issue was resolved, and the meeting proceeded.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

### **University of Michigan 2020-2021 project – James Polidori, UM**

Horst asked James if there was anyone else presenting with him and he responded that Paige had another commitment so he would present alone today.

James began by introducing himself as part of the UM School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) 20-21 Masters Group. He wanted to provide an update to the SPAC.

This team is the fourth project team building on the work of the previous three projects which looked at the factors that enhance and inhibit the effectiveness of PACs, how AOCs can be launched into life after delisting, and how the state can support AOCs, particularly those that are complex and expensive. Information from those projects was used to create the recommendations made and look towards implementation in this project. During the summer they looked at targeting areas for implementing best practices for each PAC, how they could assist with PAC capacity and ability to move toward implementation. That was part of the phase one interviews. James thanked the members that participated. Benefits from the survey and interview process will be to help increase communication across the Michigan AOC program, to establish next steps for implementation for each PAC, and to help inform basin-wide AOC program best practices.

For phase one, 10 PACs were interviewed and 39 individuals overall, with 35 opting to be included in the phase two interviews which are ongoing. The most common themes across the PACs with the highest were community education and funding for life after delisting. The remaining results can be viewed in the attached presentation. For the fall, the team will continue with the phase two conversations are collaborative between PAC representatives and their field coordinators. The team has been guiding discussion at each meeting trying to serve as a launching pad for the individual PAC implementation plans. Another goal is to analyze the data from the interviews, both phase one and two. There will be an in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts to help identify common themes within and across all of the PACs that were interviewed. Phase two will help provide material to create meaningful implementation plans for each PAC, help inform turning the recommendations into action, and an understanding of how the plans can be used across the AOC programs. Phase two will provide PACs with a clear and personalized plan that can be used to implement changes and structures that they would like to move forward with. Finally, this will provide the state with information as to how they can provide support to each individual PAC. A description of the deliverables can be seen in that attached presentation.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

### **Harmful Algal Blooms in Michigan – Gary Kohlhepp, EGLE**

Gary said he began his career with USEPA, region 5 in Chicago working with AOC issues so he is familiar with these programs. He began by speaking to algal blooms in general and what the response has been in terms of monitoring and evaluating potential impacts.

He had three areas to discuss, background of cyanobacteria, impacts, and monitoring and assessment component. A definition of harmful algal blooms (HAB) is included in the attached presentation. EGLE considers any heavy concentration of growth of cyanobacteria which may have adverse effects. They emphasize the toxic component as there can be a thick, heavy algal bloom, that smells bad but if no toxin is present it is not considered a HAB. There are some picture examples of how algal blooms can look in the attached presentation. One of the most common reports received is that it looks like someone spilled green paint in the water. Nearly all of the reports received are at inland lakes, with occasional reports on large rivers in backwater areas. There has been some response with blooms on Lake Erie shore, but it is not typical as NOAA, USGS, and other federal agencies cover it.

A string of hot, sunny days in late July, August, and into September on calm bodies of water are the most common times of reports. Storm events can stir up the water, breaking up the bloom and often it will not reappear. Nutrients in the water can also contribute to blooms, and a lot of evidence suggests that if there is heavy rain in the spring causing runoff it seems to set up conditions for blooms later in the year. In low nutrient lakes, the presence of zebra and quagga mussels can also create the conditions for HABs. Occasionally there are even reports of blooms into October.

In terms of impacts, there are those on people and pets. Most cyanobacteria do not produce toxins, they are natural parts of aquatic systems. The most common cyanobacteria they see are microcystin, cylindrospermopsin, and anatoxin-a here in Michigan. The most common symptoms reported in humans is a rash. The toxin can also be aerosolized which can result in headache or light-headedness. Other symptoms are listed on the attached presentation. Generally, the toxin goes away a few days after the bloom dissipates. There have been dogs that have become ill and died after coming into contact with HABs. They can swim in it, lick it off of their fur, or drink the water directly. If your pet comes into contact with an algal bloom, it would be best to bathe them to reduce their risk. If they exhibit symptoms, seek veterinary care. EGLE does coordinate with MDARD to follow reports up on from veterinarians.

For monitoring, the numbers are trending upward, but he warned to not read too much into that. As people have become more aware, more is being reported. It is important to remember that for as many reports are received, most lakes in Michigan do not have extensive, repeated cyanobacterial blooms and therefore do not have the toxins. Michigan has approximately 11,000 lakes and the vast majority of lakes do not have blooms. The unit does a lot of monitoring when they are out looking for other things so if

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

they are already at the location to collect samples for water quality or looking at the trophic state, they will look for the toxins. Therefore, for as much news as there has been about HABs, there is actually a small number. Most reports are from the southern portion of the state where it is warmer, more developed, and has more nutrients. The blooms are highly variable across time periods and lakes.

They have discovered that there can be a surface level of algae with high toxins but off to the edge where the water is clear there can be a non-detect result. So, the good news is that can give some warning. If there is a surface scum visible don't swim, don't let your pets swim. Or perhaps someone that has a bloom on the west side of a lake, but they are on the east side and it is clear, they should be fine. A note that the anatoxin-a is associated with the blue-green algae, benthic algae, there is not always a visible cue that it is present. This is much less frequent, perhaps 8-10 lakes per year.

EGLE works closely with the DHHS and they work with local health departments to put up advisory signs and the level of warning corresponds with the severity of the blooms. Next year, there will be an online map to show where reports have been, where blooms have been found and that type of information.

From an assessment standpoint, they look at whether a water body is meeting designated uses which ties in with water quality standards. The USEPA has criteria for meeting those standards which is what Michigan uses. Michigan standards are more narrative looking at how often blooms occur, how long they last, how intense are they and then a determination is made to say whether a lake is impaired. He said that more focus had been put on rivers and streams previously, but more action is now being taken on lakes and is moving toward becoming more proactive. From an AOC standpoint it can tie into the aesthetics and eutrophication BUIs. Gary can provide more information if anyone has detailed questions. There is a great deal of information available online. Those links can be found in that attached presentation. He also encouraged people to use the email address to report potential blooms.

Bob Burns asked if there was any concern about the large, brownish, smelly algal die offs that his AOC experience. Gary responded that generally it is thought that once the algae dies off, the toxin dies off, but he didn't want to be too definitive. He said he has not received any reports of pets or people coming into contact with toxins in that situation.

Christine asked in the chat; "Would you avoid swimming if any algae is present or if you suspect it may be blue-green algae?" Gary answered that his most often used response is "when in doubt, stay out." If you are unsure, your best bet is to avoid it. If there is surface algae present, he would advise avoiding it.

Rick said that the prevailing theory that algal growth is primarily limited by phosphorus and light availability. Are there any examples in Michigan where there was anything else that was a limiting factor? Gary answered that there are occasions where nitrogen can be the limiting factor, again, in Michigan it is much more likely to be phosphorus. There

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

are cases where there can still be cyanobacteria and toxins in lakes where zebra mussels are found, even though they are low nutrient situations.

Kathy asked in the chat if there were still signs available as some would be helpful in the Muskegon AOC. Gary responded for her to give him a call or send an email later and he can pass on the information for the DHHS staff that he typically works with and they would in turn work with the local health department.

### **Environmental Justice in the AOC program**

Horst let the afternoon participants know this agenda item had been moved into the morning session and that there would be more discussion on it in the future and perhaps at the AOC conference. If anyone has any suggestions they can be forwarded to Rick for more ideas for possible topics in the SPAC, or the conference.

Rick added that as they had time and Mary had not been able to add to the topic, they could discuss it some more and Horst agreed.

Mary wanted to let folks know that they were working with about 11 universities across the great lakes basin to look at AOCs and environmental justice and a proposal is being submitted to the National Science Foundation. If funded, they may be coming to the PACs for input.

Kathy had added a letter of support due to some issues her AOC is having where after cleanup rather than efforts being put toward public access those sites are going into private hands and becoming condos and things like that. Their proposal is looking at the distribution of equitable redevelopment of AOCs. She asked that people keep this in mind as she may be returning to folks if the project is funded.

### **PAC member updates - All**

Saginaw Bay – Dennis Zimmerman

The PAC has not met since February and there have not been any accomplishments to date.

Jen added that she had sent an email out to get a meeting scheduled and her goal is to have one before the end of the year. There are some activities going on in the AOC, not necessarily AOC work but there is beach monitoring and there is work being done on a proposal to get monitoring done for nutrient loads and other things hopefully beginning next year. USEPA funding has not been approved yet but she is hopeful that they'll hear something soon.

**Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Rouge River – Bill Craig

They have an approved management action list which has helped them get several USEPA grants. Some of their big projects are the Oxbow which is nearly done and the fishway which will be complete in the spring of 2021. A big Legacy Act project, the lower old channel is moving along. Some good news is that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is taking special interest in the concrete channel; he wasn't aware of all the details, but it looks like after many years some action is taking place.

The PAC will be forming a PAC recommendations committee to receive the plans from the UM SEAS students and that discussion will start and continue.

Jen added that there is also a working group being headed by Jon Allan to reach out and collect background data on the sediment work in the main channel which will meet soon and begin discussing ways to approach potential partners and get them interested in future Legacy Act projects. There are roughly seven habitat projects in various stages from planning to implementation.

Lower Menominee River – Keith West

Representatives from the USEPA came out to the AOC in August and made the delisting announcement alongside the river. Unfortunately, it has been anticlimactic as they were unable to hold a public event to celebrate the delisting. There has been quite a bit of recognition in local media and he is hoping that at some point when the current situation is over that they can hold a public event because it's something that the local community needs to understand and recognize what an achievement this is.

Stephanie added that she had discussed the delisting in the morning session and had shared that they were hoping to have something next spring in terms of a celebration. They are trying to promote the news of the delisting through interviews or other publications. The State of the Great Lakes report should also have some news about it. Given the circumstances with the coronavirus, the best efforts are being made to highlight this accomplishment.

Keith said that for now they are busily investigating what life after delisting means for the area.

Clinton River – Mary Bednar

The previous day there was a press release regarding them reaching a milestone in removing their first BUI for aesthetics, so they are on their way and very excited.

River Raisin – Brian Egen

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

As mentioned earlier they have been working with the 20-21 UM SEAS team and the GRLI equity team and that has been both beneficial and inspirational. They still have four of five BUIs remaining and are in monitoring stage now and they are anxious to remove those.

Recently fish were collected to inform on the deformities BUI, carp and bass were also collected to inform on the consumption BUI and the earliest they would see analysis of those samples would be next summer, but the collection was good news. They are continuing to monitor the cap. The Herring gulls and Bald eagles are also being monitored for the deformities BUI; they are one of the AOCs with that BUI that will be informed by the Bald eagle's genetic project by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

They are continuing their outreach with materials, website maintenance, and working on an extended documentary and the filming is going well. They have a new educator in their PAC, and they are looking into educational opportunities to perhaps create lesson plans or materials for Monroe County. Perhaps in partnership with the greater River Raisin watershed they can work with schools or colleges in the area.

Another item which is outside their AOC and outside the City of Monroe, there has been a large patch of flowering rush which has plagued the river in the city and had eradicated most of it, however this new patch is upstream and they are working with local governments as there is concern that it will populate again down in the city.

Detroit River – Mary Bohling

There are five habitat restoration projects that are still underway or just completed. The upper Detroit Riverfront parks are facing difficulties due to high water levels and there is hope that there can be some agreement soon so that project can begin. At Lake Okonoka on Belle Isle, some temporary water control features until the water goes down. They had reconnected the lake with the Detroit River and with the high-water levels, the island is flooding.

At Hennepin Marsh, the feasibility and design work are underway.

At Sugar Island the feasibility and design work has been completed and they are working on permitting with the USFWS who manage that as part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

On Celeron Island construction was completed earlier this year and the monitoring for fish and wildlife is just finishing up.

They are working on a report card for all remaining BUIs, so Melanie has been assisting to put that together and they hope to have something before the end of their current PAC support grant to show.

**Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

They have also been working with the 20-21 UM SEAS team on their project.

With sediment they are working with USEPA and Melanie to identify those hotspots in the river and from that come up with a list of projects.

Finally, there is a video for the AOC that NOAA, the Great Lakes Commission and some others have helped them put together. In thinking of videos for the AOC conference that would be another potential addition.

Bob wanted to add that the City of Detroit has recently reviewed their project for the Detroit Riverfront at the upper river parks and given the go-ahead and USEPA is completing the request for permits.

The Lake Okonoka project that was delayed due to high water has been take care of and work has started and is expected to be completed by the end of November.

The Sugar Island project's partner the USFWS has finished their review and given the go-ahead so they will be submitting their request for permits for that as well.

Also, on the Hennepin Point project, the design work has been completed and received approval from current landowners and have the authorization letters to submit for construction permits. There are a couple of issues at the North Hennepin Marsh area that they hope to have resolved next week and will hopefully be submitting permit requests for that as well.

Melanie added that there is also some sediment remediation work being done; a small capping project that is nearly complete just south of the MacArthur bridge by the former Uniroyal site and it will be part of the Riverwalk that expands through that area. They are working through other sites so hopefully there will be more sediment work coming.

Paulette asked if there was an update on the mapping of the sediments in the Detroit river, was the project near completion? Melanie responded that there has been a great deal of sampling and now they know where the contaminants are in the river so they can now find partners and narrow down sites from there. There was an extensive characterization project done by USEPA that is complete do they do know where the contaminants are.

Bob reiterated Melanie's explanation and added that there was another site at the Trenton channel and a small one just below the toll bridge at Gross Ile and a group from USEPA were there last week. It appeared that the consultants were putting together a plan, the sampling regime and the analytical work so he feels within the year they'll see a proposal to do restoration there. Melanie said she knew they were working in the design and believes they will some additional sampling in November. Melanie said Detroit has done a lot of work and there is a great deal to come but the PAC is doing a great job in keeping the momentum going.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Horst had a question. He said that WRD recently had a program where they were sampling for PFAS around the water intakes in the river. Has the PAC been made aware of any findings from that? Bob answered that he took a group of graduate students and staff from Wayne State University in July and they sampled numerous sites up and down the river including a portion of the Rouge around the West Jefferson Ave. Bridge. The analytical work is still being done and processed but his understanding was that some traces of PFAS had been found especially in the Rouge samples. That report should be out soon, and he could give a report at the next meeting. He knows that other work has been done by USEPA and he recalls that some PFAS was found in the area where the new bridge is being constructed.

St. Clair River – Patty Troy

Patty reported that they had to cancel their Sturgeon Fest which would have taken place in August.

The PAC presents partner awards to various groups or individuals who have done a lot of work in the AOC every year, and those were recently given to the recipients. Typically, they would do so at a public event such as the sturgeon festival but this year they opted to make a presentation video and there is a compilation video of all the awards at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eatUi69prMg>.

Several PAC members participated in phases one and two of the 20-21 UM SEAS team project and they found the phase two conversation particularly helpful. Sheri Faust with the Friends of the St. Clair River is organizing follow-up meetings for them to discuss next steps in organizing the post-delisting world.

BPAC had a meeting on September 24 and the main speaker was from Enbridge. They recently completed the replacement of line 5 under the St. Clair River so it is in a secondary tunnel.

For the drinking water BUI, Melanie had recently received the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) report on the drinking water monitoring network so as far as she is aware, that is all there is to report on that.

Some funding enabled their Canadian counterparts to hire for the RAP facilitator position and that organization is working on a science workplan which encompasses not only the St. Clair, but other Canadian AOCs as well.

Paulette added that there has been sampling of fish to inform the Fish Consumption BUI and they are waiting for the analytical results from EGLE. They are also conducting a survey on public attitudes concerning the quality and safety of drinking water in preparation to removing the Drinking Water BUI.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

Kalamazoo River – Cheryl Vosburg

Their group is meeting monthly via zoom and working hard to do some board development and recruitment. Recently their board took a tour of the dams and some of the restoration and remediation sites in their AOC. They are currently developing or strengthening a relationship with a relatively new superfund CAG on some similar mission items. They are developing a membership plan to support some of their strategic initiatives. Recently, they got approval for an amendment to their plan for fish and wildlife BUIs and it contains an approved management activities list which will be helpful moving forward. The amendment is intended to reflect the work that has been done, some of the work that is being planned, and to hopefully provide achievable targets for removal of the BUIs. One of the things that in process currently is removal of the Trowbridge Dam on the Kalamazoo River that will occur in stages and will hopefully be completed in 2023 or 2024.

John Riley added that he represents EGLE on the Natural Resources Damage Council for the site and the council is currently preparing the supplemental restoration plan/environmental assessment and it is anticipated to come out in the next month or so and go out for public comment for 30 days. This plan anticipates implementation of restoration projects using about \$2.5 million on hand as a result of bankruptcy settlements from a few years back. It also anticipates an imminent settlement with NCR Corporation over the next seven years with a total amount of roughly \$25 million. They are hoping the first installment of \$10 million will be forthcoming in several months. The settlement is still in the hands of the court.

He also added that as a parallel in the Saginaw, they are at a similar spot with the Natural Resources Damage Restoration plan coming out even sooner for the Saginaw River and Bay superfund site. This is a result of a 1998 settlement with General Motors with about \$5 million in projects to be funded. If you want to know more, just reach out to John.

Muskegon Lake/River – Kathy Evans

They have removed four BUIs with five remaining and the final four management actions are underway to address those five. A Legacy Act project is underway to remove sediments from Muskegon Lake near the discharge from Ryerson Creek into the lake where there was an old storm drain that delivered a lot of industrial waste in the past when there were numerous factories along the shoreline.

There are three fish and wildlife habitat projects, one is at the Amoco tank farm and is now owned by the City of Muskegon, but BP is the responsible party. They were able to carve out a section of that parcel right along the mouth of Ruddiman Creek to do habitat restoration and reconnect wetlands to the lake. Formerly the oil tank operation had placed a concrete wall around the parcel next to the water and that has been removed and work is underway. There is a bike trail and it has been moved back slightly but will

**Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

October 14, 2020

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

still run along the water's edge. It is a good project for habitat but will also have some community benefits for recreation as well.

Another habitat project is at the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve, owned by a local non-profit group and is on the Muskegon River right at the entrance of the lake. That was formally a dumping ground many years ago and a lot of work there was done by volunteers who acquired the property from a local trucking company. They are lowering the elevation and connecting wetland to the shoreline.

The third project is the lower Muskegon River that is a 53-acre former celery farm that is not connected due to a berm that goes along it. When the farming ended, the berm was not removed so they are currently excavating. They had to do a water drawdown after wildlife relocation and there was a breach in the berm resulting in the need to do a second wildlife relocation. Having the breach even for a short amount of time resulted in many new types of fish moving in.

Substantial completion of all the projects will be done this year so she believes they are on track for 2021 to have all management actions completed. The Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership is holding monthly meetings via zoom and those are going well. They use the AOC transition plan as a guide for the meetings and look at those topics to help plan their agenda so they can talk about the progress being made not only in the AOC but in some of the other projects that are beyond the AOC so they can hopefully have a seamless transition. They are hoping it provides some understanding that some of those projects are outside the AOC and that they will continue to work on being good stewards even after delisting.

She expects that work will continue as long as possible this year and then pick up next year with installing vegetation and monitoring. She hopes that for the AOC conference they can show newly done projects with active restorations underway if we can have it in the spring.

There is monitoring to remove the benthos BUI, but part of the target is to monitor tributaries and high water has complicated that. Some of their streams are more similar to marshes now so they are looking into a wetland protocol. If they can get agreement to change it, they may be able to meet the target.

St. Marys River – John Riley

Management actions on the U.S. side were completed a couple of years ago and are in a monitoring mode. The only update really is that EGLE recently collected fish to reassess the fish consumption BUI and over the last few rounds contaminant levels have been on a downward trend and it is anticipated that it will continue with this sampling. It is hopeful that this BUI could be removed in the near future. The lab results will most likely not be available for at least six months due to a backlog of work at the state lab, partly due to the coronavirus.

## **Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

Horst asked if there was anything on the Canadian side to report. John responded that the Canadians are continuing to do a lot of work, including a fair amount of sediment work, some of which is in planning and engineering stages. There is also some implementation at this point. He does not have detailed information but knows the work is ongoing.

### Manistique River – John Riley

Management actions are complete and there are two BUIs remaining, restrictions on dredging activities and restrictions on fish consumption. There will be sampling for fish consumption done in a few years as the last sediment project wrapped up in 2019 so they would expect that it will take a few years to see reductions in fish tissue concentration. For restriction on dredging, USACE is planning on doing some maintenance dredging in the navigation channel so sampling was done this past summer to determine appropriate placement. USACE provided EGLE with their analytical results and now technical staff at EGLE are looking at what the data shows and it is hopeful that the BUI can be removed over the next several months.

Horst stated that there was a dam in Manistique that was rated as one of the worst and he wondered if removing it would have an effect on the work that has been done. John said that is should not have a negative effective. His understanding is that if there are any contaminants, they are not at a level that would be of concern. This has been a difficult dam removal to plan due to ownership issues and other factors and funding. When and if a removal happens then a barrier for sea lamprey must be installed and maintained to prevent access upstream. Overall, John feels it would be positive.

### Torch Lake – Horst Schmidt

They are looking for ways to put their grant application in. They have data collection that they want to achieve to present their recommendations to USEPA and the Office of Great Lakes. They also have had a meeting with the 20-21 UM SEAS team, and it went very well. They got some ideas on what they could do for outreach.

Stephanie added on the Legacy Act side, the upland work near the Hubbell property was completed this summer. They are also continuing to do review work and initial surveys of the area next to the Hubbell and Lake Linden property to determine cleanup goals and criteria as part of the Legacy Act project. The state is not a partner on this, it is between Honeywell and USEPA.

A project that the state is conducting with Mannik Smith Group is moving forward. The pre-design studies have been completed to determine potential areas either for capping and/or macrophyte assemblage so that benthos can be increased within some areas of the AOC. There is now a bid out for construction of those areas; three capped and two wetlands, to determine if those are feasible and viable projects that could move forward

**Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes**

*October 14, 2020*

*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

as a management action. There is hope that the contractor will be on board within a month and work could begin in the spring.

**Next meetings – All**

Rick said at the last meeting there was talk of having the meetings for 2021; a virtual meeting in late winter or early spring, try to have a face to face meeting piggybacked on the AOC conference in May, and then a legislative briefing in the fall.

Earlier in this meeting, there was a concern of piggybacking onto the AOC conference due to potential travel difficulties. Those attending the conference may not necessarily also be attending the SPAC meeting. Rick asked if folks were comfortable with that plan or did anyone want to rethink the second meeting?

The majority of attendees opted to piggyback the SPAC meeting onto the AOC conference and the schedule for 2021 as laid out. The next meeting will be scheduled in late February, early March and will virtual.

For topics, there was an expanded discussion of environmental justice.

There were no other topics proposed however, if anyone has ideas for topics, they can be sent to Rick.

Rick did mention he should have added a review of action items to the agenda but it seems as though there are not many.

The meeting minutes will be drafted and sent out along with the presentations and a Doodle poll will be sent to determine the next meeting date.

Any ideas for topics for the AOC conference are still being actively sought so if you think of any please forward them on to Rick.

Horst asked about the fallback position for the AOC conference and how that would impact having a fall legislative meeting. Rick responded that if the AOC conference could not be held in person it would suggest that the SPAC meeting could not be held either. Therefore, he suggested another virtual meeting in late spring to early summer. A determination would then need to be made for the third meeting if there should be an attempt at a legislative briefing or try to meet along with the AOC conference in the fall. Rick's suggestion was that we wait and plan to meet face to face in May but by the time the next SPAC meeting occurs there will be a better idea as a decision on the AOC conference will need to be made.

Dennis Zimmerman made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Brian Egen.

**Meeting ended at 2:49 PM.**