

Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Meeting Minutes

July 23, 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)
Dione Price, Torch Lake AOC
Shannon DesRochers, Torch Lake AOC
Aubrey Maccoux-LeDuc, St. Marys AOC
Keith West, Lower Menominee River AOC
Dennis Zimmerman, Saginaw River/Bay AOC
Kathy Evans, Muskegon Lake AOC
Patty Troy, St. Clair River AOC
Paulette Duhaime, St. Clair River AOC
Anne Brasie, Clinton River AOC
Eric Diesing, Clinton River AOC
Christine Kosmowski, Kalamazoo River AOC
Chery Vosburg, Kalamazoo River AOC
Bob Burns, Detroit River AOC
Bill Craig, Rouge River AOC
Marie McCormick, Rouge River AOC
Sally Petrella, Rouge River AOC
Brian Egen, River Raisin AOC
Matt Doss, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Amy Pelka, United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
Beth Hinchey Molloy, EPA
Carolyn Koch, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Lisa Fischer, DHHS
Jeremy Waechter, DHHS
Rick Hobrla, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
Melanie Foose, EGLE
Kimberly Passick, EGLE
Jennifer Tewkesbury, EGLE
Stephanie Swart, EGLE
John Riley, EGLE
Matt Tomlinson, EGLE
Nathan Noll, EGLE
Paul Seelbach, University of Michigan (UM)
Kyle Pettibone, UM
Alison Rentschler, UM
Evan Madden, UM
James Polidori, UM
Paige Schurr, UM

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Welcome Mary Bohling

Mary welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting. Acknowledged the challenge of virtual meetings and thanked everyone for attending.

Introduction to Teams – Matt Tomlinson, EGLE

Matt explained some of the functions of the platform, highlighting how to present, use the chat feature, how and where to locate tools, and basic etiquette of virtual meetings. Also informed participants that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of assisting the notetaker with reporting accurate minutes.

Roll Call – Rick Hobrla, EGLE

Verified attendance of participants by voice or comment affirmation.

Review Agenda – Mary Bohling

There was a change of the Agenda timing. Morning session ended at 11:40 instead of Noon and resumed at 1 PM instead of 1:30 to accommodate presenters' schedules.

Review/Approve Minutes from March 24, 2020 SPAC Virtual Meeting – Mary Bohling

There was a request to post the previous minutes in the chat box and Kimberly posted them for members. Patty Troy raised her hand to motion to approve the minutes. Horse Schmidt seconded. Minutes approved.

SPAC representative designations – Rick Hobrla, EGLE

Per the by-laws, designees serve a period of two years on a staggered basis. This schedule had been neglected, so the process of maintaining a formal record of those was reintroduced. In mid-May letters were sent to the Torch Lake, Kalamazoo River, River Raisin, St. Clair River, and Muskegon Lake Public Action Committees (PAC) to designate or reaffirm their designee for the SPAC. There were formal responses from River Raisin, Muskegon, and Kalamazoo designating Brian Egen, Kathy Evans and Cheryl Vosberg, respectively. Rick has indications of the designees for St. Clair and Torch Lake and will await the formal response of those designations. The six remaining PACs will be asked for their designees next year so the appropriate schedule can be maintained.

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SPAC officer elections – Mary Bohling, Rick Hobrla

At March meeting it was noted that elections are required every two years and the chair and vice-chair positions will be expiring this fall. There was discussion regarding the formation of a nomination committee. None stepped forward to volunteer on a committee. Rick asked Mary and Horst if they would be willing to continue or if they preferred to step down. Mary indicated she would like some time to consider. Horst indicated he would be willing to continue on. Rick proposed that he would work with Mary in an effort to identify interested candidates and have try to have a recommendation in place prior to the next meeting to see who may or may not be interested in stepping up to serve. Mary asked if anyone opposed this approach and no objections were noted.

EGLE Update – Rick Hobrla, Stephanie Swart, EGLE

Rick invited questions at any point during his report out. There were no prepared remarks, but a list of topics to update the members on.

Coronavirus effects – at EGLE, staff will continue teleworking for the foreseeable future. There is speculation that this will be through the end of the calendar year and perhaps beyond. Much will depend on how the virus spreads and whether or not a vaccine or other mitigator can be identified. Most staff have adapted well to working from home. One of the disadvantages is ready access to paper files. Documents stored electronically are available, but some historical documents are not. Staff is allowed, with permission, to go to the office in the event they need something they cannot access by other means. The biggest challenge is the inability to print hard copies of items; personal copiers cannot be connected to State owned computers by policy. Staff has also been dealing with temporary layoff days for the past two- and one-half months. Everyone was reduced to four days per week with half of the staff off on Monday and the other on Friday. This ends on July 24. There will be no further layoffs for the remainder of the fiscal year which runs through September. After the new fiscal year begins, it is possible layoffs could occur again. If staff had been difficult to contact, it was likely due to the reduced work week and that should abate now that the layoffs have ended.

Funding/budget – in terms of incoming federal funding we are currently underspending the GLRI grant from EPA to EGLE. There were several reasons including a delay in implementing PAC support grants, reduced staffing costs due to temporary layoffs, and one staff member has been on an extended leave of absence since mid-March. Due to this underspending, the unit has been looking for meaningful ways to utilize those grant funds. At the state level, a budget agreement has been reached through the end of the fiscal year, however, for fiscal year 2021 there is a projected budget deficit of approximately \$3 billion and it remains to be seen if the federal government will provide

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funds due to the impact of the coronavirus or if the state will have to deal with the shortfall internally. The Great Lakes Management Unit (GLMU) being federally funded does not necessarily protect it from budget cuts depending on how the state proceeds. There is currently a hiring freeze so if the unit were to lose staff, it would be very difficult to replace them; staff could also face additional layoffs in the next fiscal year. These are some of the ways that the GLMU could be affected in the upcoming year due to state budget concerns.

At the Federal level it is possible there may be an increase in funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Rick asked Matt Doss to weigh in. Matt's information is that there is an allowance of \$325 million in the House's budget and there is strong Congressional support for GLRI funding. The feeling is that funding will remain level or increase slightly. The GLRI is also up for reauthorization and may include additional funding levels of \$25 to \$50 million per year of the next five years. If reauthorized, the funding levels may not be fully appropriated, however support has been solid, and it looks as though it will be secure for several years to come.

PAC Support Grants – most of the PAC support grants have been issued; there are just a couple of PACs that may be in the process of submitting their applications. For this round of granting, multiyear applications were accepted and awarded, and many PACs have taken advantage of this. There have been some issues in the past with handling the billing as the reporting has not always been to the level that is preferred. One suggestion has been to provide grant training to the PACs that would deal with the finer points of reporting. This would not be targeted at the SPAC members but for the staff handling the financial reporting for each individual PAC for their PAC support grant. Rick asked if this training is something that the SPAC members feel would be of value to their PAC and if there is any interest in it; would there be participation or do members feel it would not be a valuable use of time. Horst asked what the training would consist of. Rick responded that it would be focus on the progress and financial reporting requirements and provide training in how to interact with SIGMA for reporting. Horst asked if funding could be provided for the PAC to hire someone to handle the reporting and Rick responded that if the grant was in place it would need to be amended for that and if not, included in the budget of the grant application. Anne Brasie commented that they would be interested in training, both for new staff and as a refresher for others. Eric Diesling asked if the training would focus on SIGMA and Rick responded it wouldn't be the sole focus but would definitely be included so staff understood how to interact with the platform. Eric agreed that it would be valuable to have that information. Horst asked about the amount of time involved. Rick responded that he was unsure at this point, once the training was developed, he would have a better idea of how much time would be needed but did feel that somewhere in the two-hour range would be a good estimate. Cheryl Vosburg also noted in the chat box that Kalamazoo would be interested in the training as well. Paulette Duhaime commented she would check with the St. Clair grant administrator to see if there was interest. Mary commented that she felt they had a good handle on reporting but did feel the training would be a good option. Rick invited any

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additional feedback either to himself, or to the appropriate AOC coordinator on this or any other topics where there may be an interest in some training.

Brian Egen commented that he appreciated the ability to have the multiyear grants as it gave the PACs additional flexibility, especially in light of the covid-19 situation. Sally Petrella commented that in order to get monitoring in place, covid-19 protocols had to be put into place. That time was not originally accounted for in the grant application and it was her assumption that the time would still be eligible under the grant. She questioned if that was accurate. Rick responded that he believed that it would be likely. Anyone who had an issue with their original workplan due to it being pre-coronavirus and need to make changes should speak with their AOC coordinator as quickly as they can to identify any issues so that a formal amendment can be issued if needed. It is very important to let the AOC coordinator know of issues in advance and not when they are due to avoid potential problems.

Rick stated that the unit was open to considering grant amendments if there was good cause to increase funding. For example, if the original plans have new associated costs because of coronavirus issues, additional funding can be considered for that. Again, be sure to speak with your AOC coordinator in advance so it can be addressed.

Menominee AOC Delisting - Stephanie Swart, Menominee AOC Coordinator, stepped in to report. She had a call planned for that evening with the PAC to discuss next steps. Both Wisconsin and Michigan have submitted letters to the USEPA requesting the formal delisting of the Lower Menominee River AOC. This takes it fully out of the hands of both states into those of the USEPA. From her understanding USEPA has contacted the U. S. State Department and they are aware and moving quickly, unlike with Deer Lake and White Lake. The USEPA was planning on submitting something formally the next week and because the State Department was already fully aware there is an expectation that this will happen sometime in August. This is really good news. Keith West weighed in and was anticipating the call that evening and is looking forward to next steps. Rick weighed in that this is good news for the USEPA as well as it is the fifth full delisting on the U.S. side in the program's 30-year history. At other times there would have been a large celebration, however with the restrictions that celebration will look different than those in the past, but it will not pass unnoticed.

2021 AOC Conference – An in-person conference is being targeted for early May 2021 in Muskegon, Michigan. There are no exact dates yet. The planning committee does not have a meeting planned but one is expected in the near future. A team to assist with planning is expected to be put together rather quickly. If anyone has ideas for topics, they can be relayed to Rick and he will ensure they are put under consideration. Kathy Evans is part of the planning team and she weighed in commenting that not much has changed. The construction of the convention center is on schedule and that dates just need to be decided upon. Rick added that assuming this meeting can take place in person and pursuant to how it was done in the past, there would be reimbursement funds available for PAC representatives from each PAC to attend. Another issue, that

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will be addressed later in the agenda would be if an SPAC meeting should be scheduled in coordination with the AOC conference or if it would be better to keep them separate.

MI Waters introduction – Nathan Noll, EGLE

Nathan works within the Water Resources Division (WRD) and is an administrator of the MI Waters database. Some of the benefits of MI Waters is that it allows for greater portability which helped a great deal when the coronavirus pandemic ensued. Many WRD staff work within MI Waters which combined numerous individual databases. MI Waters expands public interfaces, old and new. This helps reduce some FOIA requests as the information is searchable and available to the public. The public can apply and reapply for permits, make payments if needed, receive reminders on when permits need to be renewed, view public notices, download documents, and more. Much of the information can be accessed or searched without signing up for an account. Nathan demonstrated some of the site's look and functionality to help users find information that may be of interest to them.

Sally from the Rouge asked a question in the chat box during the presentation; if all of the reports from that watershed say "in progress" is there any way to get data? She was looking for CSO reports. Nathan responded that the search box defaults to "in progress" but you can go to the top of the screen and choose "all" but warned you would then want to choose a county or timeframe to limit the search or there would be potentially thousands of items. Patty asked if she could view NPDES permits that are not on notice. Nathan responded that if they are in draft mode, they may not be viewable, but once the record is closed the documents will be published and available. There were questions asking for Nathan's contact information and for a copy of the presentation he used. Contact information for Nathan is NollN@Michigan.gov and the presentation was placed in the chat box. Rick asked Nathan if there were additional resources for learning about MI Waters. Information is also available on the internet at https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3313_72753---,00.html and includes webinars and frequently asked questions. It is recommended as a good starting point for using the site.

University of Michigan 2019-2020 project – Kyle Pettibone, Alison Rentschler, Evan Madden, UM

Kyle spoke for the group and used slides that highlighted their project on community engagement, what they found and how that information may be helpful to the AOC PACs. Their project focused on three Michigan AOCs, Kalamazoo, Saginaw, and the Rouge. They were chosen as they represented a diverse sampling of environmental

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problems, geography, demographics, and they were similar in that they would likely be in the program for the long haul. The project asked how PACs were functioning within the AOCs and using community engagement to build relationships that would endure long term, how best those relationships could be utilized and how EGLE could best support the PACs in this endeavor. The group used methodology grounded in social science research and qualitative analysis with a more traditional approach of using interviews of numerous stakeholders along with participatory observation that required fully immersing themselves into the AOC program including going to PAC board meetings, events, and site visits. The project resulted in specific recommendations for PACs to create and nurture relationships with local community partners and develop best practices for AOCs, so everyone is on the same page. The methodology, data, and recommendations are included in the final report that can be found online at <https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/155003> and any of the project members can be contacted for more information. Mary asked if the presentation could be shared with the group along with their contact information. Kyle agreed to send it to Rick for distribution.

University of Michigan 2020-2021 project – James Polidori, Paige Schurr, UM

James related that this team is currently working on a project that is the fourth on the AOC program. The first was a thesis that was more of a retrospective about what the AOC program has looked like for the past 30 years and what factors enhance or inhibit PACs. The second was looking at life after delisting in the AOC program. The most recent was project just presented. This group's project is looking at target areas to implement best practices for PACs. Some benefits from their survey and interview process are to increase communication across the AOC program, establish next steps for implementation of the chosen recommendations for each PAC and to inform watersheds basin-wide on best practices. To date, they have interviewed 27 members from 10 different Michigan PACs for phase I. They will continue these interviews through August 21. Paige then presented on how the interviews were received and the vast majority of felt they were productive and useful. Looking forward into phase II the survey revealed that the majority there felt motivated to engage in the implementation process. She shared some of the quotes from those interviewed that express enthusiasm for the project and with the work the PACs do. In the fall, phase II participants will be contacted and all interviews for that will be virtual. During phase II there will be discussions to help craft individual implementation plans for each PAC based on the outcomes of those discussions. The goal of the project is to create plans that will be personal, impactful, and durable. The final plans are scheduled to be written after phase II and sent to the PACs in late spring. The team can be contacted for questions or comments at aoc-team2021@umich.edu. Mary asked for clarification on phase II and Paige explained that field coordinators and PAC members from phase I who agreed to be a representative for the phase II conversations would then be

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coordinated to meet for virtual meetings roughly two hours in length in late September and October. The slide show will be sent to Rick so it can be distributed. Paulette asked if there was any difficulty in getting interviewees for phase I. Paige responded that 10 of the 12 PACs had interviewed and they were looking for participants from the remaining two. They would also like to talk to everyone they can, so any interested PAC members are welcome to participate. The more information they receive the more customized the recommendations will be. Rick encouraged SPAC members that may have not yet participated to consider doing so. Paige and James shared that they are both Michigan natives and this project is an important one for them.

Mary adjourned for the lunch break, asking that anyone who is able be back slightly before 1 PM when the USEPA presenters will be available.

***Morning session ended at 11:40 AM.**

Afternoon session convened at 1 PM.

Mary brought the afternoon session into order and introduced the first presenter

2019 State of the Great Lakes Report – Beth Hinchey Malloy, USEPA

Beth is from the Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) and works on Lakes Erie and Michigan Lakewide Area Management Plans (LAMP) along with the indicators discussed in the presentation. She provided an overview of work covered under the Great Lakes Quality Agreement which includes ten annexes, the AOCs being one annex. Much of the information presented is one of the commitments of the science annex, or annex ten. There are nine general objectives and success means that each of these is being accomplished in all five of the great lakes. This annex measures indicators to assess the long-term health of the great lakes and produce a public-friendly report to convey the results on a periodic basis. She shared slides that showed the overall results from the 2019 report that includes a high-level overview of lake conditions. There were a number of slides showing these results system wide and broken down on a lake by lake basis to demonstrate how they are impacted by different factors. There was also a slide indicating the indicators used in the assessment including, drinking, swimming, fishing, non-native species, toxic chemicals, nutrients and algae, invasive species, groundwater, watershed impacts and climate stressors. The assessments are determined using numeric values or best scientific judgment and in concert with numerous experts the data is refined into ratings of good, fair, or poor. For the 2019 report there were over 200 scientists from multiple agencies, universities and others. She showed the results for each indicator with results shown overall and for each lake and provided a brief explanation for them. All of this information is available online at <https://binational.net/2020/06/03/soql-edgl-2019-2/> and the presentation will be sent out by the GLMU secretary following the meeting. The technical report should be released later this summer which will include links to the data used to create the

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overviews for the report. Questions were then taken. Patty Troy stated in one of the graphics is looked as though St. Clair was rated as poor when lumped in with Lake Erie which could be misleading. Response was that connecting channels were included when possible so she would check to see if the data indicated it truly was poor or if it was due to the graphic design of the chart. Bob Burns said that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Fisheries Division states in their current report that Walleye populations in Lake Erie are higher than they've ever been. Response was that by the time these reports are release, the data is a couple of years old and can already be outdated by the time they are writing the report. There is a desire to go to a more web-based presence where annual updates could be provided that included more up-to-date data.

EPA Update – Amy Pelka, EPA

Amy began by sharing that there had been improved communication between the states as of late, in part thanks to Rick for reviving the Federal-State Areas of Concern Coordinating Committee (FEDSTACC). There have been several meetings and provides a forum for states to talk directly. Rick is the current co-chair of the committee.

She presented new draft proposed prioritization tiers which are used to rate projects for funding. For fiscal year (FY) 20, tiers one and two were fully funded however there were no funds remaining for any tier three projects. There was a discussion of the proposed changes and the most recent FEDSTACC meeting and comments have been accepted and considered so the revised set of standards can be released and available for application to projects for FY21. The purpose of the revision was to realign with the measures in the GLRI Action Plan III. The goal is that by 2024 every AOC will have all of their management action lists completed as those that accomplish this will move up in the tier process. There are ten Action Plan III AOCs that will have developed very detailed plans to complete all management actions by 2024. There are two AOCs in Michigan, Torch Lake and the Rouge River that completed this extensive plan and it will help keep them on track. GLNPO is currently preparing FY21 budgets, meeting with all of the Task Force Leads (TFLs) to discuss all projects for all AOCs. She stated that if an AOC needs funding for a project to work with the state AOC coordinators who work closely with the TFLs.

There have been discussions regarding project resiliency for how to handle issues such as water levels and how to incorporate that into the designs as new projects are developed.

She shared that the program has had a good deal of positive exposure of late and has been highlighted as a success story of the GLRI. There is the possibility of more focus on the success of the program from now through November.

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The AOC conference is currently being planned for May of 2021 in Muskegon. An 18-month interval for these conferences is working better for GLNPO and is a good opportunity to share all the great work that is going on in Muskegon. She is hopeful that planning calls will begin very soon.

She showed some slides of the current buckets of where the AOCs stood and to highlight some of the work being done in Michigan. Manistique has their management actions completed.

There was a question regarding dredging in the Rouge; is there a start date as it was delayed due to covid-19. Response was that she believed it was a matter of weeks, possibly in August. Mary asked about those in the 2024 bucket, such as Detroit, what advice she would have for them. Response was that work on a management action list is prioritized and signed project agreements. Every management action list that is submitted also raises priority for the AOC and may move you from the back or middle of the list toward the top. Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) work is also prioritized so monitoring or projects that can assist with those will receive greater consideration. Amy believes that FY21 won't be overly tight for budgets, however beginning in FY22 there will be more competition for funding. Horst asked for more clarification on the FY22 funding. Response was there may be a point that there is a "Sophie's Choice" as there are some large projects coming up and there is not sufficient funding to get all ten tier 3 AOCs completed and there will be a race to see who can get their projects going and funded.

Communication and coordination are key and GLNPO appreciates, relies upon, and values the robustness of the PACs in Michigan and wants to continue that partnership and keep working together to accomplish the work that is being done.

The slide presentation that Amy used will also be sent out to members.

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative – Matt Doss

Matt began by explaining that at the end of April after 25 years he left the Great Lakes Commission to join the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI). It was formed in 2003 and spearheaded by Chicago mayor, Richard Daley and the Toronto, Ontario mayor at the time to organize mayors around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to work on water-related issues that affect the Great Lakes. There are approximately 90 mayors in the United States and Canada that participate. Michigan participation is not as strong as desired and currently includes South Haven, Grand Rapids, Flint, Traverse City, and Marquette so he would like to add others. He came on board as the U.S. policy advisor. The staff consists of Matt, the executive director, Jon Altenberg, an executive assistant, and counterpart policy advisor in Canada. They are currently engaging with their member mayors and advocating with Congress for funding for water restoration priorities in an upcoming economic stimulus package that is currently in the works. They are organizing meetings with mayors and their

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congressional representatives. The GLSLCI is involved in numerous areas including water equity, coastal erosion, invasive species and more; equipping member mayors to advocate for their constituents. He wishes to remain involved in the AOCs and to attend the conference in Muskegon though he will no longer have a role in planning as in the past. He would also like to reach out to some of the mayors in the AOCs to potentially become members of the GLSLCI and are currently in discussion with the City of Detroit. Anyone with interest can reach out to him for more information. Brian Egen asked the question about who to contact if a city or municipality had interest in participating. Response was that they could reach out to Matt. Horst asked if the group was lobbying organization to secure funding for cities. Response was that they cannot lobby, they do however communicate priorities from the mayors in the U.S. and Canada to Congress and the Canadian parliament. They hold informational webinars once or twice a month, organize meetings between the mayors to exchange best practices, develop informational resources. Their website shows a lot of the information and resources that have been developed over the years and can be found at <https://glslicities.org/>. Overall, they work to organize and communicate the collective priorities of member mayors. Funding for the GLSLCI comes from member dues, foundations, and corporate sponsors, there is no funding from Congress.

PAC member updates - All

St. Clair River – Patty Troy reported that their last PAC meeting was in early March and they heard from the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks about the spill notification procedure. The Ontario side of the AOC is working on a draft removal of the drinking water BUI but there is no completion date set. On the U.S. side, Melanie Foose is working on the BUI removal but was waiting on some information to include. Melanie confirmed she is still waiting for that information. Environment and Climate Change Canada is looking to fill a position in their staff leaving the AOC without a contact there. Due to the coronavirus there has been an impact to their outreach activity; the Sturgeon Festival was delayed and will possibly be cancelled. There have been some impacts on habitat projects from high water levels that needed addressing. And in Port Huron there was a unique event called a meteotsunami, during which the river rose and dropped over 31 inches in less than an hour. This caused damage to a grounded museum ship and other boats and docks in the Black River and the connecting canal.

Clinton River – Eric Diesing reported that they are in the process of wrapping up all of their habitat projects, the Sterling relief drain project will be completed soon. He is in the process of completing the final round of monitoring on all 11 projects and that data will be collected and compiled over the winter with the intent to have the final monitoring report coming out next year. Also, over the winter they intend to put together their public education and outreach materials and strategies. Jen Tewkesbury added that the BUI removal for aesthetics is in process which would be the first BUI removal. Once the monitoring report is done there are several more that will be in line to be removed next

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year. There are some sediment issues that are being worked through with USEPA and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). A PCB hotspot was found, and they are trying to do some sampling to determine the source and if it warrants clean-up. Patty asked if any of the meteotsunami effect was felt on the Clinton. Response was none that was known about.

Kalamazoo River – Cheryl Vosburg reported that the PAC had been holding monthly virtual meetings. They recently amended their fish and wildlife restoration plan with their AOC coordinator, John Riley doing the bulk of the work. This was done to develop criteria to understand the status of their BUIs. They are one of the recipients of the Trash free waters grants through the USEPA in partnership with another group. Covid-19 has impacted some of their outreach work and they are doing a semi-virtual event called Connect with the Kalamazoo where people share their experiences online. A local dam did a drawdown last year that is causing some impact in the AOC that has the public worked up. John Riley added the Superfund program has begun time critical removal action work in the impoundment at the Trowbridge dam with the idea that sediment remediation will occur within the next several years and then that structure will be removed. The governments have reached a settlement with NCR Corporation regarding their contribution to PCB contamination in the river. The settlement will be approximately \$245 million to be used toward sediment cleanup with \$25 million of that amount going toward natural resource damage restoration projects. John is currently working with a group to identify those projects. Those funds will be disbursed over the next seven years or so. It is also the 10-year anniversary of the Enbridge line six rupture in Marshall. While the oil did not make it downstream to the AOC, it was being watched.

Horst asked if the Otsego dam was on the Kalamazoo. Response was yes, there are two, City of Otsego where the dam structure still stands, and Otsego Township and that structure was removed in 2018. Horst asked if the area had been cleared of PCBs. Response was yes, the remediation has taken place in that area. Horst asked if there were any additional dams to be removed. Response was that there are several and that was part of the updated fish and wildlife restoration plan. The Plainwell dam was removed in 2009, the Otsego city dam is still in place, however its removal is part of the Superfund record of decision for that section of the river so it will be coming out. The Trowbridge dam removal process is beginning, and it will be coming out in 2023 or 2024. The Allegan city dam would be the last. The city had wanted to maintain the dam, but once it became clear how high the maintenance and operating expenses, they decided to remove it instead. Hopefully within ten years all of those structures will be out.

Manistique River – John Riley reported that the final management action was completed in 2019 which was a sediment remediation project. At this point there are two BUIs that need to be removed, fish consumption and restriction on dredging activities. The monitoring for fish consumption needs to be done and they will wait a few years before that commences. In terms of the dredging, USACE was planning on perhaps doing some maintenance dredging this year and collecting the data that may be needed to

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remove that BUI. He was unsure if the schedule had been altered due to coronavirus. Overall, they will be looking to delist this AOC in just a few years. Horst commented on a dam located there that was reportedly in imminent danger of collapse and asked if it was being addressed. Response is yes, USACE, MDNR, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) among others were addressing this. The dam is not part of the AOC, but they do support removing the dam. Complicating the issue is utilities that run through the dam, and upon removal and lamprey barrier would need to be installed to prevent migration upstream.

Lower Menominee River – Keith West reported that they are right at the finish line for delisting and they are currently discussing how they can fully note the importance of the accomplishment without a large public event. They are meeting later in the day for the first time in several months to receive updates and determine next steps. Stephanie Swart added that there was a need to determine the best manner in which to celebrate the accomplishments in light of the current restrictions due to the coronavirus. This could entail press releases and interviews, and perhaps a delayed celebration once the restrictions are lifted.

Muskegon Lake/River – Kathy Evans reported that four BUIs have been removed, fish and wildlife populations, benthos, eutrophication, and aesthetics and a fifth is being worked on. Part of that work is the Ryerson Creek Great Lakes Legacy Act project with USEPA, EGLE and a private sponsor and a contractor has been selected. There are three habitat projects known as the Lower Muskegon River, Amoco, and the Muskegon Lake Nature Reserve. Ecological monitoring for eutrophication is underway with Grand Valley State University along with a partner and is being supported through the PAC support grant. They are working with their AOC coordinator on the protocols and criteria for the removal of the benthos BUI. Complications due to high water levels have made them unable to meet the protocol for one of the criteria and while they have met the other criterion, they must find a way to meet the third. They are also using a NOAA grant as part of a long-term habitat management plan, which is a web-based plan and available at <https://muskegonlake.org/habitat-management-plan/>. Finally, the Muskegon Lake Partnership Management Action Plan which is the AOC transition plan put into place several years ago is being implemented and that could change management actions in the AOC. One of the priorities right now is public access to restored natural resources to ensure equitable access along with long-term stewardship by the local residents. Stephanie added that at Muskegon there is a push toward completing management actions and beginning getting BUI removals written so they can work toward delisting relatively soon.

River Raisin – Brian Egen reported that Dan Stefanski, who was the PAC chair for nearly 30 years has passed the torch on to Barry LaRoy. Dan will continue to be involved but will no longer serve as Chair. Five of nine BUIs have been removed in this AOC, the degradation of aesthetics (2012), both wildlife habitat and populations (2015), eutrophication (2013), and beach closings (2013). All action plans to date have been completed and they are in the monitoring phase. The benthos BUI remains, and the

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primary concern is the PCB contamination. Dredging was done in 2016 and they are waiting to see what the effects of that effort will be. USACE is planning a dredging project this summer and EGLE has requested that they sample. For the restrictions on fish and wildlife, another fish collection was planned for this summer and hopefully will prove good results. However, with covid-19 the sampling effort may be reduced or delayed. The PAC has been focusing on outreach, including a mini-documentary and has been well received which has raised awareness of the area. The documentary can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UA1WFok6EMs>. The PAC is looking at updating some of the educational and outreach materials that have been created over the years. There is an annual river clean up event that is augmented by local grants that will not be held this year to the restrictions from the coronavirus. Anecdotally, Brian lives on the River and has seen Bald eagles and Osprey in the area.

Rouge River – Jen Tewkesbury reported that they had held a virtual PAC meeting on June 3, 2020, that worked out well. There are currently six habitat projects underway. An announcement regarding a significant amount of funding for another round of habitat projects will be coming next week. They are continuing work on the concrete channel design. Working with USACE and other stakeholders they want to ensure adequate flood control while enabling fish migration with limited stressors. The sediment work on the old channel will begin to pick up, the current covid-19 issues have caused delays, but they expect to get into the field in August. For the main channel sediment work there is a collaboration between USPEA, NOAA, and Jon Allan through UM to partner with the Rouge and Detroit to come up with ways to encourage local engagement and secure non-federal sponsors to assist with those cleanups. The management action lists are complete which has allowed for funding of the habitat projects. There is also fish monitoring ongoing so there will be data available when it comes time to prepare the fish and wildlife BUI removals. It was recently announced that Friends of the Rouge received a grant from EGLE for approximately \$400,000 for work throughout the watershed.

Saginaw Bay – Dennis Zimmerman reported that due to covid-19 there has been no meeting since March and all activities through September have been cancelled. One reason they have not held meetings is the chair, Laura Ogar, has been dealing with the serious injury of a family member due to an accident. They are working on management actions and monitoring programs for eutrophication and next will be aesthetics and degradation of benthos. He also mentioned that Saginaw Valley State College is working on advanced QPCR testing that has revealed that when there is a beach closing or close to one, if they dig down into the upland beach sand and find *E. coli* and pathogens at roughly five times the rate that exists in the water. There is no explanation for it at this time, but it is being explored. Members of the PAC have interviewed with the UM 2020/2021 team and personally he found that some of the questions that were asked prompted some thought about what things were and were not happening and the value of those. Outside of the AOC, the dam failures on the Tittabawassee River caused a lot of damage and floodwaters inundated areas at a Dow chemical plant that may have discharged dioxins and it is unclear if that will have an effect on the Bay.

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There was also agriculture land that was flooded so they will watch for nutrients, particularly phosphates that may have an effect. John added that he had a conversation with his USEPA counterpart to catch up and sort of plan for the future. Patty asked if the dam failures had any impact on drinking water. Response was that there were no major concerns regarding drinking water.

Sally requested to give information about the Rouge UnCruise! Due to restrictions due to coronavirus, they cannot hold their annual event, so they are doing a virtual event in five segments. As part of this they will have a live event where they will be showing segments of the Rouge and as part of that interviewing key projects. It will be an interesting event that should bring attention to the AOC. Registration can be found online at <https://therouge.org/2020-rouge-uncruise-register-today/>. Also, fish monitoring began the last week of June, however this year they had to create a volunteer protocol to address the safety and social distancing requirements brought about by the coronavirus. She wondered if anyone else was having those challenges.

Jen had a comment related back to something Dennis had mentioned for Saginaw regarding E.coli concentrations in the sand and she said that the same thing had been found in the Clinton River. She suggested they consider coordinating to see what those similarities are.

St. Marys River – John Riley reported that they had completed all management actions on the U.S. side. The last project was the Little Rapids that has been completed for a while. There are three BUIs remaining, essentially, they need to collect data and coordinate the verification that ecological conditions now meet restoration criteria. Those remaining are restrictions on fish consumption, fish tumors and other deformities and degradation of benthos. They are working with Canadian authorities to complete. Work on the U.S. side should be done within a couple of years and they will work with the Canadian side toward delisting.

Torch Lake – Horst Schmidt reported that they have been working to collect data is needed to determine what is in the lake. He was also interviewed by the UM team and agreed with Dennis about it causing him to think. He thought the PAC could do some outreach to local high schools and work with teachers who may have interest in using the lake as a learning tool. Stephanie added that there are two BUIs remaining, degradation of benthos and fish consumption and they are doing some projects over the summer with Mannik Smith. They are doing some pre-design studies to help determine a larger remedy for benthos within the lake. They have completed surveys that is also supplementing work that Honeywell is doing in the Hubble and Lake Lindon areas. They will be conducting a Legacy Act project in those two areas. Mannik Smith will be working with them to get a contractor on board for next year to implement these benthos projects which will include installation of shallow water wetlands. They are still working on getting a management action list completed for the AOC but are on track to complete in the next year.

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Detroit River – Mary Bohling reported they had a special presentation on the Uniroyal sediment site cleanup and the plans to complete that. This has been a site that they have struggled to provide public access, and this will increase that access. They are working with their Canadian counterpart to put together some outreach materials. They are using part of their PAC support grant to model one of the projects after a report card that their Canadian counterpart did a few years ago called the Pathways to Delisting which involved taking each of their BUIs and giving a status of each and the progress that has been made. There are a number of habitat projects ongoing, three under the NOAA regional partnership. Lake Okonoka is nearly finished but there were flooding issues due to high water levels which caused a delay. It is expected to complete in the next month or so. Sugar Island feasibility and design has been completed and funding is in place for the first phase of construction which will be starting later this fall or next year. Hennepin feasibility and design is in progress and covid-19 created difficulty in seeking public input but a virtual public meeting is scheduled for August 5, 2020. The Detroit Riverfront parks feasibility and design is completed, USEPA had set aside funds for construction, however there are flooding issues so there is a delay while decisions are made on what actions to take to address it.

Next meetings and topics – All

Rick stated the goal had been set for a face to face meeting in the fall and had asked that October 14 and 15 be set aside for that, however it now seem optimistic that it will be possible. There was a discussion regarding scheduling a virtual meeting on the 14th and it was agreed that the date would work for nearly all who provided feedback.

Carryover topics were to hold the SPAC office elections and Rick suggested having the 2020-2021 UM team back to give an update on their project. It was asked what the remaining topics on the previous Doodle poll were and they included PFAS, LAMPs, Life after Delisting, and Phosphorus Loads to Lake Erie. Rick suggested that we could put out another poll to determine the topics with the broadest interest.

For new topics, Horst suggested including a brainstorming session for topics of interest for the AOC conference in 2021. Brian suggested that the Phosphorus loads topic may not be of interest to all and Mary thought it could be broadened to harmful algal blooms or excess nutrients. Sally commented that should was interested in habitat improvements in highly urbanized areas using fish shelves. It was presented at the Cleveland conference where they were exploring using sheet metal walls to improve habitat for fish and there was an idea to attach different sized substrate rock on the wall where fish could go to spawn. She wondered if there was anyone that could speak to that or other types of habitat improvements in heavily unurbanized systems. Rick was unaware but said he could look and encouraged Sally to also look and recommend anyone we could invite. Mary suggested reaching out to USEPA for someone that may have a recommendation as well. Dennis wondered if it might be interesting to have an update on the Tribal Treaty in the Great Lakes. Rick was unsure but said he could look

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into that. Stephanie felt it would be unlikely that the Treaty would be ready by that time, it was her understanding that there were some issues.

Rick then felt that 2021 meetings should be discussed. He had previously mentioned having a meeting in conjunction with the AOC meeting in May or if it was preferred to keep them separate. There was a discussion of the pros and cons of having it with the AOC conference including a longer trip, but reduced overall travel, only a half day if it was scheduled at the end of the conference or an additional whole day prior to the conference.

Kathy Evans stated she would like to do some AOC tours of the active habitat restored sites during the pre-conference period if there is interest. They will be winding down management actions so having the conference in Muskegon at that time will be a big deal for them.

Horst asked how many times were planned on meeting for the year. Rick responded that three would be typical. He noted that it seems there is general support for meeting in concert with the AOC conference and he suggested that as it is in May, a virtual meeting be considered for earlier in the year around late February or early March, and another meeting in the fall.

After discussion it was tentatively determined to have the fall meeting in October 2020, a virtual meeting early in 2021, a meeting in concert with the AOC concert to reduce travel for all involved and then another meeting in September/October 2021 to complete the year. This is also contingent upon how the coronavirus proceeds as the AOC conference may be rescheduled or canceled depending on the circumstances.

Mary inquired about a legislative briefing and would it be in the fall and Rick responded that ideally those are held in early spring when the new legislators are coming in. Mary felt that it was probably not feasible to have a spring briefing and it may need to be delayed to the fall. This is all subject to how the coronavirus develops and when in-person meetings can resume.

Review of Action Items – Mary/Rick

Rick will follow up on officer elections by contacting SPAC representatives by email or phone

Rick will follow up with Torch Lake and St. Clair PACs to formalize the SPAC designees

A poll will be sent to determine the level of interest in topics for the next meeting

GLMU secretary will send out the presentations to SPAC members. *[These we subsequently sent.]*

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Dennis Zimmerman made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Horst Schmidt.

Meeting ended at 3:19 PM.

DRAFT