



St. Clair River Area of Concern

Binational Public Advisory Council for the St. Clair River

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The St. Clair River AOC



Key Stressors/Issues

- Spills and drinking water protection
- Contaminated sediments
- Agricultural run-off
- Combined sewer overflows and storm sewer overflows

Beneficial Use Impairments

- 8 impaired
- 2 unimpaired
- 4 require further assessment



Delisting Criteria

- Approved by Management Committee
- Current bi-national delisting criteria comes from 1995 Stage 2 Report
- Criteria review underway in 2006-2007

Reports

- Waiting for pending release of 2005 Progress Report



Beneficial Use Impairments

BUIs Impaired

- Restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption
- Degradation of benthos
- Restrictions on dredging activities
- Restrictions on drinking water consumption or taste or odour problems
- Beach closings
- Degradation of aesthetics
- Added costs to agriculture and industry
- Loss of fish and wildlife habitat

BUIs Unimpaired

- Eutrophication or undesirable algae
- Degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations

BUIs Needing Further Assessment

- Tainting of fish and wildlife flavor
- Degradation of fish and wildlife populations
- Fish tumours and other deformities
- Bird and animal deformities or reproductive problems

Source: Table 6. Summary of Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) beneficial use impairments within the St. Clair River AOC



Activities to Restore Beneficial Uses and Progress toward Delisting

Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (RIC)

- Meetings held in October 2005, February 2006, May 2006
- Co-chaired by Environment Canada and Ontario Ministry of Environment
- Representatives from various agencies and key stakeholders
- Activity: Update St. Clair River AOC Work Plan (Canadian perspective)
- Four sub-committees: Point Source, Non-point Source Habitat, Sediment, Research and Monitoring

Habitat Workshop

- February 1-2, 2006
- *Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitat Projects in the St. Clair River Area of Concern (1995 – 2005)*
- Purpose:
 - To assess habitat BUI in Canada
 - To update habitat/NPS Work Plan

Court-awarded Penalties

- \$30,000 Cdn. coming to Friends of the St. Clair (Canada)
- Through Environment Canada program
- From companies in violation of environmental law
- Distributed within the watershed where the violation occurred





Activities to Restore Beneficial Uses and Progress toward Delisting

Sewer Separation Project

- City of Sarnia, Ontario
- Started June 15, 2006
- Three years to complete, providing funding continues

Habitat Enhancement through Shoreline Softening

- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) has received funding from Environment Canada to inventory candidate sites

Historical Contaminated Sediments

- Joint project with Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, and St. Clair Region Conservation Authority
- To define and evaluate remaining zones of sediment impairment

Bird Studies

- Canada Marsh Monitoring Program
- BPAC members are participating
- Training February 25, 2006
- 50 persons trained to monitor St. Clair River marshes and report on up to five wetland-related BUIs



Additional Activities in the St. Clair River Watershed

“Celebrating the St. Clair” Photo Contest



- Media releases sent
- Newspaper and radio advertising purchased
- Radio interviews conducted
- On photo contest and general river issues
- Presentations being made to public groups
- Over 60 photographs submitted by 45 photographers in three weeks
- Photos will be used for future information documents and PowerPoint presentations
- Winners will be announced and prizes awarded at BPAC meeting in September



Obstacles to Delisting the St. Clair River

- Situations that are out of our control I.e., potential spills, either deliberate or accidental, from (unidentified) marine vessels
- Need for numerous water quality monitoring stations
- Need for water quality monitoring data
- Need for better communications network to notify water plants in case of a spill
- Full water quality mitigation – and delisting – may not be possible





Benefits from other AOC Experiences

- Shared Information
- Lessons from successes and “failures”
- Contact with potential funding sources
- Increased credibility
- Greater impact on local governments





Resources and Assistance Needed

RAP Public Involvement Coordinator Needed

- BPAC has requested Four Agencies to consider
- Four Agencies reply: not likely, but possible if money can be found

Decision on Delisting Targets Needed

- Decision to be made by Four Agency Managers,
- Then action by the Working Group, BPAC and Rap Implementation Committee (RIC)

Funds Needed

- For other Work Plan tasks





Other Comments and Information

Ongoing BPAC Discussions

- Roles and responsibilities
- Future Work Plan activities
- Focus on outreach and education of AOC issues

Next Steps

- Implement BPAC Work Plan
- Refine and finalize delisting criteria
- Continue to monitor and suggest activities to the RIC to speed the progress of delisting
- Continue to assess BUI status
- Finalize Work Plan (Canada) by September 2006

? Questions & Discussion ?