

**Four Agency Managers Report
November 8, 2012**

Detroit River Area of Concern

Number of BUIs listed as:

Impaired or Requires Further Assessment: 10 (U.S); 9 (CAN)

Key Stressors/Issues: contaminated sediments, degraded fish and wildlife, CSOs/SSOs, nonpoint source pollution, loss of habitat

Date Final Delisting Criteria: 2008, domestic

Next Progress Report/RAP Update Expected: The DR Canadian RAP Stage 2 Report was released on Jan 25 2012.

AOC Highlights (since July 2012 Management Committee Conference Call Meeting):

US

- The Michigan Department of Community Health has completed an assessment of the Fish Tumors or Other Deformities BUI in the Detroit River AOC. A related study from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently in progress; however preliminary data from the study has been shared between agencies. Once the study from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been finalized and released, the BUI may be formally assessed for removal.
- The Detroit PAC has completed its Angler Survey and final report to assess whether the Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavor BUI should be removed. The findings of the assessment support the removal of this BUI and correlate with the findings on the Canadian side. Additionally, the technical committee has offered a recommendation to the Detroit River PAC to remove the BUI. The MDEQ is currently drafting the necessary briefing memo and supporting documentation recommending removal of the BUI.
- The Detroit River Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Plan is being revised to incorporate target aquatic sites identified by USGS, and reassess the list of existing target sites.
- The contaminated sediments mapping and characterization project being undertaken by the Detroit PAC is currently in progress. The Detroit PAC is partnering with the MDEQ, Wayne State University and the University of Windsor to gather and assess available data. An update to the Detroit PAC on the project is scheduled for November 9, 2012.

Canada

- The BUI Assessment Reports on the *Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavour* (BUI#2), *Beach Closings* (BUI #10), and *Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton* (BUI#13) were sent to the Canada-Ontario Agreement Annex 1 Implementation Committee (COA-AIC) for review and approval for re-designation to ‘not impaired’. The Detroit River Canadian Cleanup (DRCC) is awaiting feedback. Comments received from the Four Agency Work Group are being considered for revising the *Beach Closings* report before finalization.
- An Aesthetics Survey at 11 sites along the Canadian side of the Detroit River was completed in July 2012. The data is currently being compiled and analyzed to review the status of *Degradation of Aesthetics* (BUI #11). A report is anticipated in 2013.
- The Government of Ontario released the ***Draft Great Lakes Protection Act*** and accompanying ***Great Lakes Protection Strategy***. The draft Great Lakes Protection Strategy identifies six goals: empower communities; protect water; improve wetlands, beaches, and coastal areas; protect habitats and species; enhance understanding and adaptation; and ensure environmentally sustainable economic opportunities and innovation. Along with the Strategy, the Great Lakes Guardian Fund was announced to get Great Lakes’ communities engaged in the protection and restoration of their precious resource. An application was submitted by a local teen action group (partnered with the City of Windsor, Windsor Port Authority, and Detroit River Canadian Cleanup) to build a fishing platform on the Detroit River.
- The Great Lakes Sustainability Fund announced 2012/2013 funding for 5 Detroit River-related projects: 1) Windsor Combined Sewer Overflow Retention Treatment Basin Optimization Study, (2) Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Implementation (3) Rural Non-point Source Remediation; (4) Lafarge Shoreline Restoration Project, and (5) Lake Sturgeon Spawning Habitat Restoration Project.
- On July 14, 2012, the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup sponsored a “State of the Detroit River Boat Tour” hosted by a local environmental group. The 4-hour cruise along the Canadian side of the Detroit River featured expert narration about the Detroit River's environmental hot spots and unique fish and wildlife habitats.
- On September 22, 2012, over 430 people boarded one of the four boats or a Montreal canoe and crossed the Detroit River to discover Peche Island (a Canadian island at the head of the Detroit River). The event was organized by the DRCC and the City of Windsor with participation by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Windsor Police, BASF Inc., Windsor Essex County Canoe Club, Essex County Field Naturalists' Club and Citizens Environment Alliance. It was our most attended event to date!
- Two documentaries on the Detroit River are in progress by external production companies. Filming is now completed for a French-language Canadian documentary that will air on television in 2013 on Radio-Canada (French CBC). Planning is in progress with an American filmmaker with various stakeholders for a documentary on the St. Clair River-Detroit River system.

Restoration Activities (since July 2012 Management Committee Meeting):

US

- The Friends of the Detroit River are currently implementing two projects funded by GLRI habitat restoration grants. The projects are located at the Blue Heron Lagoon and the South Fishing Pier on Belle Isle. As construction of these two projects was commencing, a successful habitat restoration celebration was held on Belle Isle on September 18, 2012.
- The MDEQ has completed four statewide assessments for the Detroit River AOC: Beach Closings, Restrictions on Dredging, Degradation of Aesthetics, and Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems. The Detroit River AOC did not meet the restoration criteria for any of these BUIs. Final reports of these assessments are available to the public for review, including the recently released final report for the Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Canada

- DRCC representatives are completing projects (listed in the 2011-2012 Work Plan) and beginning to tackle 2012-2013 work plan items to address several BUIs including Fish Tumours or other deformities, Bird/Animal Deformities, Restrictions on Dredging, Degradation of Benthos, Degradation of Aesthetics, and Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat.
- Various outreach and education projects were completed (or are in progress with the PAC). These include a native wildflower garden at the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research, Peche Island Day event, a new brochure “Protect Our Detroit River from your Household Chemical Wastes”, an educational video on the journey of our wastewater, and hosting the 4th Annual Film Screening event.

Next Steps:

US

- Initiate bi-national consultation for the removal of the Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavor BUI on the US side of the Detroit River.
- The Detroit PAC, US EPA and the MDEQ are currently drafting a BUI removal work plan for the Detroit River as a pathway for eventual delisting of the AOC. The work plan will also identify and outline the steps necessary for meeting the BUI removal criteria for the four BUIs that failed the statewide assessments.
- Begin drafting revisions to the Detroit Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Plan.

Canada

- Continue work to address (Aesthetics, Benthos, Dredging) and prepare reports.
- Finalize COA-AIC review of BUIs (Tainting Fish/Wildlife Flavour, Phyto/zooplankton, Beach Closings)
- Finalize Habitat Strategy: setting short-term and long-term delisting targets.
- Continue to implement projects under GLSF and COA funding.
- Revise and update the 2012/2013 work plan.
- Upcoming events:
 - Liquid Assets: The Story of our Water Infrastructure Film Screening
Nov. 7/12 at 7 pm – SilverCity Windsor

Bi-national

- The [Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Protocol of 2012](#) was signed in September. The document includes revisions to the current Annexes as well as the addition of three new annexes on habitat, aquatic invasive species and climate change.
- The Western Lake Erie Watersheds Priority Natural Areas (PNA) agreement was announced with binational representation on Fighting Island in September 2012. The PNA is the Canadian response to the U.S. Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and reflects Canada's commitment to the Canada-U.S. Conservation Vision for the Lower Detroit River Ecosystem that was established in 2001. The PNA initiative builds on the foundation of long-standing Canada-U.S. cooperation on conserving natural resources, protecting the environment, and realizing the numerous benefits.
- Planning activities are underway for a joint US-Canada binational project to construct another Lake Sturgeon spawning reef project at Fighting Island. Partners include USGS, USFW, MNR, DFO, GLSF, University of Michigan, and University of Windsor, and others.
- When the recommendation to re-designate the *Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavour* BUI (#2) is officially approved, the DRCC and the U.S. PAC will work together to plan an official, binational re-designation celebration (Spring 2013). This will be the first binational re-designation event for the Detroit River AOC.

| Detroit River AOC BUI Status | | |
|--|---|---|
| BUI | Status Canada | Status US |
| Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption | Impaired for fish | Impaired |
| Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavour | Requires further assessment (Proposed re-designation in 2011; awaiting approval) | Impaired (Requires Four Agency management review) |
| Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations | Impaired | Impaired |
| Fish Tumours and other Deformities | Impaired | Impaired (Awaiting completion of removal assessment) |
| Bird or Animal Deformities or Other Reproductive Problems | Impaired | Impaired |
| Degradation of Benthos | Impaired | Impaired |
| Restrictions on Dredging Activities | Impaired | Impaired |
| Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae | Not Impaired | Not Impaired |
| Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems | Not impaired (Re-designated 2010 in Stage 2 report) | Not impaired (Re-designated July 2011) |
| Beach Closings | Impaired (Proposed re-designation in 2013; Four Agency comments being addressed in BUI assessment report) | Impaired |
| Degradation of Aesthetics | Impaired (Awaiting completion of assessment) | Impaired |
| Added Costs to Agriculture or Industry | Not impaired | Not impaired |
| Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations | Requires further assessment (Proposed re-designation in 2012; awaiting peer review comments before going to COA-AIC) | Not Impaired |
| Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat | Impaired | Impaired |