

**Four Agency Managers Report
June 26, 2013**

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 January 25, 2012.

AOC Highlights (since March 15, 2013 Management Committee Conference Call Meeting):

US

- The DEQ has completed the Briefing Memo for removal of the Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavor for the Detroit AOC. The request to re-designate the Tainting BUI has successfully progressed through the Four Party process and was sent to EPA for approval.
- The Detroit River Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Plan is currently undergoing revision. The revised plan is expected to be finalized by July 2013.
- The contaminated sediments mapping and characterization project being undertaken by the Detroit PAC is complete. This project has resulted in the creation of a poster documenting all the data available and the “hot spots” can now be identified and targeted using this information. The Detroit PAC partnered with Wayne State University, the University of Windsor, DEQ and EPA to gather and assess available data, and an output of the project includes a comprehensive database of the available data. This database will be invaluable as clean-up sites are identified.
- The NPDES permit for the Detroit WWTP has been finalized. The Detroit WWTP continues to be an important source along the Detroit River and is relevant to several of the Detroit River AOCs Beneficial Use Impairments, directly relating to the Beach Closings and Aesthetics BUIs. The DEQ has a webpage specific to the Detroit WWTP at http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3313_3682_3713-298007--,00.html.
- The Detroit PAC has finalized the pathways or flow charts documenting the steps necessary to re-designate each BUI. An associated narrative work plan is still draft and expected to be finalized by July 2013.
- Following the results of the statewide assessment for the Bird or Animal Deformities BUI, additional monitoring needs were identified within the Detroit River AOC. Additional data will be collected for forage fish as well as bald eagles and colonial nesting birds.

Canada

- The DRCC is preparing a Delisting Strategy (Pathway to Delisting) which will include short, updated BUI assessments; a revised 5 year work plan; and clear direction for delisting options. As part of this exercise, DRCC technical working groups are compiling recent information from scientists for BUI assessments.
- The recommendation to re-designate the *Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavour* (BUI#2) to 'not impaired' has been submitted to COA-AIC for approval. Awaiting official response. The DRCC is planning a bi-national celebration event in the late spring.
- The "Beach Closings Re-Designation Report" was revised (based on comments received from U.S. EPA) and submitted to COA-AIC for approval on May 24, 2013.
- Comments received from EC Scientists are being considered for revising the *Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations* reports 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.
- Proposals for the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund support are being reviewed for consideration. There were 5 Detroit River 5 proposals: for 2013/14: (1) Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Implementation; (2) Rural Non-point Source Remediation; (3) Lafarge Shoreline Fish Habitat Restoration; (4) Lake Sturgeon Spawning Habitat Restoration Project; and 5) Weight of Evidence approach for Assessing Toxicity and Recovery of Priority Pollutants in Sediment of the Huron-Erie Corridor. The proposals are under review.
- Several education and outreach activities are underway including the development of a museum exhibit, a series of bookmarks, and signage at various sites. Events include the 3rd Annual Detroit River Evening (June 19), Detroit River Boat Tour (July 13), Peche Island Day (September 28), and Film Screening event (TBD).

Restoration Activities (since March 15, 2013 Management Committee Meeting):

US

- Two habitat projects on Belle Isle implemented by The Friends of the Detroit River are nearly complete. The projects, funded by GLRI, are located at the Blue Heron Lagoon and the South Fishing Pier on Belle Isle. The sites were recently highlighted with a story and video from the Detroit Free Press, available at: <http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013306030019>.
- The Detroit habitat plan is currently under revision and expected to be completed by July 2013. The revised habitat plan will incorporate in-river, aquatic sites, as well as a thorough documentation of all projects. The plan will include projects both completed and in need of funding, along the river necessary for completion in order to remove the Fish and Wildlife Habitat BUI. One of the sites expected to be included in the report is the Fort Wayne Reef. The Fort Wayne Reef was recently funded with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and will provide much needed spawning habitat for multiple species of native fish.

Canada

- DRCC representatives are completing projects (listed in the 2013-2014 Work Plan) 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.
- Design and permitting for the Lake Sturgeon Spawning Reef and Lafarge Shoreline Fish Habitat Project completed. Awaiting additional funding support to complete construction phase.
- Through funding support from GLSF, the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Implementation Project and the Rural Non-Point Source Pollution Remediation Project continued this year by the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA). Working with landowners, ERCA was able to restore a total of 29.5 acres (11.9 hectares) to Carolinian forest at 6 sites, create a 0.5 ha wetland, and completed 18 rural BMP projects (e.g., fragile land retirement, septic system upgrade, soil erosion control structure).
- The ERCA, with funding support from Environment Canada, launched an awareness project to help landowners learn more about septic systems and their maintenance. Coined “Get Septic Savvy!”, the comprehensive program included a mass mailing to rural landowners in the Detroit River watershed with information about septic maintenance and a magnetized reminder to have their septic systems serviced regularly to save them money in the long term.
- More details can be found in the DRCC’s 2012-2013 Annual Report that describes all projects completed in the Detroit River AOC and its watershed between March 2012 and April 2013. It can be downloaded from www.detroitriver.ca or contact the [RAP Coordinator](#) for a hard copy.

Next Steps:

US

- The Detroit PAC, with assistance from the EPA and DEQ have drafted 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. The PAC will continue to work towards finalization of the work plan.
- Continue drafting revisions to the Detroit River habitat plan, “Delisting Targets for Fish/Wildlife Habitat & Population Beneficial Use Impairments for the Detroit River Area of Concern” to include in-river, aquatic sites.
- EPA and MDEQ will continue to work together with the PAC to determine areas in need of characterization and sediment remediation as a result of the contaminated sediments mapping and characterization project.
- Follow up with EPA on on-going characterization work in the Trenton Channel.
- Follow up on the additional monitoring in the Detroit AOC for the Bird or Animal Deformities BUI, including the collection of forage fish, bald eagle, and colonial nesting bird data.
- Continue to work with MDCH and the Detroit PAC on gathering data for the Fish Tumors or Other Deformities BUI. Samples have been gathered and are awaiting analysis and additional sampling may be undertaken with assistance from DNR, USFWS and MDCH.

Canada

- Complete the “Pathway to Delisting” document.
- 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 on the Work Plan with support from GLSF and COA funding (e.g., fish shoreline habitat restoration, sturgeon spawning reef expansion, non-point source remediation projects, etc.)
- Upcoming events:
 - Detroit River Boat Tour (July 13, 2013)
 - Peche Island Day (September 28, 2013)

Bi-national

- Planning activities are underway for a joint US-Canada bi-national 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, bi-national re-designation celebration during the Summer of 2013. This will be the first bi-national re-designation event for the Detroit River AOC.
- Planning for the bi-national State of the Strait Conference (October 28, 2013) at the University of Windsor is underway. Please visit www.stateofthestrain.org for more information.

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 (Awaiting COA AIC Approval)	Impaired (Submitted to US EPA for approval)
Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations	Impaired	Impaired
Fish Tumours and other Deformities	Impaired	Impaired (Awaiting data from MDCH (USGS/USFWS)
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 in 2010 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 (Comments from peer review being considered for revising BUI Assessment report).	Not Impaired
Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat	Impaired	Impaired