

Canadian RAP Updates

January - March 2013

Highlights (please contact the RAP Coordinator for more information):

- The 2013-2014 work plans (drafted by respective work groups with the RAP Coordinator) were approved by the Steering & Implementation Committee on February 5.
 - A Delisting Context Report (Delisting Strategy) is in progress.
 - On February 28th, researchers from Environment Canada and the University of Windsor presented data and updates that will be used for various BUI assessments to a group consisting of representatives from the St. Clair River and Detroit River held at Ministry of Environment offices in London, Ontario. **BUI Status listed in Appendix 2.** Details follow below.
 - *Bird and Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems BUI:* EC scientists have drafted a report summarizing their findings on reproductive health and deformities in northern leopard frogs in the Detroit River AOC. The report will be reviewed by the Monitoring and Research Work Group within the next few months for the assessment of this BUI and to determine next steps.
 - *Degradation of Benthos BUI:* Researchers from the University of Windsor's Great Lakes Institute of Environmental Research produced an Assessment of Degradation of Benthos Beneficial Use Impairment in the Detroit River and St. Clair River Areas of Concern. The purpose of the report was to provide recommendations to the RAP team on the appropriate "assessment tool" to address this BUI. The report and its recommendations will be reviewed by the M&R Work Group and EC technical experts. The report will be finalized by March 31, 2013.
 - *Bird and Animal Populations BUI:* EC researcher, Dave Moore, completed a 3-yr hatchability and nesting success study of Black-crowned Night Heron, one of the indicator species being used to assess this BUI. The results indicated the BCNH were successfully nesting, hatching and had a good egg clutch size; however, in 2012, no herons found at the study location (Turkey Island, ON) and large numbers of gulls also absent from this area. The cause of their disappearance is unknown. Researchers are hoping to re-visit the site in 2013 to follow-up.
 - Awaiting feedback on two BUI Assessment Reports on the *Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavour* (BUI#2) and *Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton* (BUI#13) from the Canada-Ontario Agreement Annex 1 Implementation Committee (COA-AIC)
 - Comments received from the Four Agency Work Group are being address through the revision of the *Beach Closings* report before submission to COA-AIC.
 - The Great Lakes Sustainability Fund received 5 proposals for consideration 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.
 - 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 (Spring 2013).
 - Planning underway for our Annual Detroit River Evening (June 2013)
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Canadian PAC Updates

PAC continues to advocate for the protection and enhancement of the Windsor Airport Provincially-Significant wetlands.

PAC continues to advocate for the naturalization / restoration of ~15 ha of lands along the new Windsor-Essex Parkway (Hon. Herb Grey Parkway project).

PAC continues to lobby for Canadian lands to be added to the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (through the recently signed Western Lake Erie Watersheds Priority Natural Areas).

PAC began lobbying for politicians to take action on protecting the Detroit River from the pile of petroleum coke stored on the U.S. Riverfront. See **Appendix 1** (page 3) for the letter sent to local Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, Provincial and Federal Ministers of the Environment, Windsor Mayor and Councilors, County of Essex Warden, Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, and Sierra Club of Michigan. Articles of interest:

- <http://www.freep.com/article/20130313/NEWS01/303130118/Growing-mounds-of-petroleum-coke-raise-fears-along-Detroit-River>
- <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2013/03/07/formal-request-made-for-ottawa-to-act-on-petroleum-coke-pile-on-detroit-river/>
- <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2013/03/06/environmental-fears-spike-after-riverfront-black-piles-identified-as-petroleum-coke/>
- <http://www.windsorstar.com/What+those+massive+black+piles/8055192/story.html>
- <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2013/03/05/environmental-concerns-raised-over-massive-black-pile-on-riverfront/>

Appendix 1

Letter to local politicians regarding petroleum coke on the U.S. side of the Detroit River
Sent on March 13, 2013

To Whom it May Concern:

The Public Advisory Council of the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup is in shock after the discovery of piles of petroleum coke on the Michigan side of the Detroit River. We wish to express our displeasure and request that the materials be removed as quickly as possible. In the meantime strict controls should be put in place to ensure that the petcoke does not run off into the waterway or is blown about in the atmosphere.

Attached is the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for petroleum coke. MSDSs are required by the government of the United States for all potentially hazardous chemicals ranging from household bleach to unleaded gasoline. Marathon Oil, the company purported to be the source of the petcoke has issued an MSDS, available through this link:

<http://www.marathonpetroleum.com/brand/content/documents/mpc/msds/0109MAR019.pdf> These forms are required by U.S. federal law to list the potentially harmful components (such as benzene in gasoline) and what to do in the event of a spill. The documents also outline the acceptable exposure levels and times for the product before they start harming you.

Unfortunately it appears the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality can do little except ensure Marathon Oil and/or the landowner have adequate erosion control measures in place to prevent this stuff from getting into the waterway. Notwithstanding, the fact that the petcoke is in such large quantities right beside the river remains a concern. Let's hope it isn't getting into the waterway, either as airborne migration or via stormwater as it will kill fish (clogging gills etc) and travel who knows where. Looking at the photos in the March 3, 2013 Windsor Star, who would have imagined anyone stockpiling such material in huge quantities along the river? It belongs at the bottom of an industrial landfill. At best, it's a blight on the landscape.

Over the decades millions of dollars have been spent on air and water quality improvement by citizens of both countries. Hopefully the people responsible for the petroleum coke will get rid of that stuff at once, remembering what happens when companies conveniently forget about these things. If nothing is done, the forces of Mother Nature will likely not help the situation. The Public Advisory Council urges you to prevail upon the American authorities to expedite the removal of the petcoke and to ensure that in the meantime none of this material finds its way into the river and none is released into the air.

Yours for a cleaner Detroit River,

Tom Henderson

Chair, Public Advisory Council of the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup
www.detroitriver.ca

Appendix 2

Status of BUIs for the Detroit River Canadian Area of Concern as of January 2013

Please note that there are a few BUIs that are currently listed as 'impaired' but are either being assessed by a Work Group or reviewed by the COA AIC and awaiting approval. See the footnote below the table for more information.

GLWQA #	BUI Name	Status
1	Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption	Impaired for fish
2	Tainting of Fish and Wildlife Flavour	Requires further assessment*
3	Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations	Impaired
4	Fish Tumours and other Deformities	Impaired
5	Bird or Animal Deformities or Other Reproductive Problems	Impaired
6	Degradation of Benthos	Impaired
7	Restrictions on Dredging Activities	Impaired
8	Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae	Not Impaired
9	Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems	Not impaired
10	Beach Closings	Impaired**
11	Degradation of Aesthetics	Impaired†
12	Added Costs to Agriculture or Industry	Not impaired
13	Degradation of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Populations	Requires further assessment‡
14	Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat	Impaired

* Proposed re-designation in 2011; awaiting COA approval

** Proposed re-designation in 2013; Four Agency comments being addressed in BUI assessment report

† Awaiting completion of assessment report

‡ Proposed re-designation in 2012; awaiting peer review comments before going to COA-AIC