

# Detroit River PAC Meeting notes

Monday, March 18, 2013 2 – 4pm

Belle Isle Nature Zoo

## 1. PAC Administration

- a. Introductions – see attached sign in sheet.
- b. Agenda comments/revisions/additions/updates shared electronically
  - i. Bruce Manny was scheduled to present as item 2 on the agenda, but is running late, so the meeting will proceed and return to item 2 once he arrives.
- c. Updates were shared electronically via email.

## 2. 2013-14 Monitoring needs

- a. 4 Agencies meeting in February – asked the DEQ to put together a list of the monitoring needs for the AOC.
  - i. Fish Tumors BUI was evaluated via GLRI grant to MDCH
    1. Sent map of sampling locations to be approved by PAC (Grassy Island, Peche Island, and some other locations) but no sampling in Trenton Channel. There are known tumor problems in Trenton Channel.
    2. PAC asks any researchers that catch brown bullhead send it to MDCH for analysis. (MDCH does not have enough \$ to go out and sample, but will run the analyses).
    3. Natalie suggested coordination with Ken Driard. He is doing sediment sampling and assessment.
  - ii. Discussion on Bird & Animal Deformities. There is concern on the population of the birds that would be used to evaluate the impairment.

## 3. Identifying Priority Projects – Dr. Bruce Manny, USGS

Presentation: Restoration of Sturgeon Spawning Habitat in the Detroit River

- a. Spawning reefs have been installed in the River over the past 10 years and the scientists involved have learned quite a bit about the ideal habitat/substrate and flow conditions that are ideal for sturgeon spawning.
  - i. 2004 – Constructed Belle Isle Reef
    1. Materials used (different substrate based on existing research)
      - a. Shot rock 8-12"
      - b. Rounded rock 8-10" in diameter
      - c. Coal Cinders from DTE power plant
    2. Fish around reef: 14 native species (2 sturgeon but no sturgeon eggs)
  - ii. 2009 – Constructed Fighting Island Reef on Canadian side on hard clay bottom, 28-29 foot depth, fast flow
    1. Materials used
      - a. Broken limestone
      - b. Rounded rock

- c. Mixture of rounded rock and broken limestone
    - 2. Fish around reef: Sturgeon spawning next spring (2010), lake whitefish, walleye, & about 12 other species using the habitat for spawning
  - iii. 2012 – Middle Channel (St. Clair River)
    - 1. Materials used
      - a. 4-8" broken limestone
    - 2. Construction Feb-March and Sturgeon were observed spawning DURING CONSTRUCTION (3 of 9 beds were completed by the time the sturgeon started utilizing them)!
  - iv. 2012 – NW Belle Isle Reef (constructed as part of the Blue Heron Lagoon Habitat restoration project).
- b. USGS used modeling to show water depth and velocity to determine ideal spawning grounds for Sturgeon. Areas ideal for Sturgeon will also be ideal for Lake Whitefish. Identified 105 sites ideal for habitat restoration (eg: the "Big Bend"). Used various sampling techniques to determine what fish were present at a site, and what fish are spawning. Sampling proves that these habitat restoration methods are successfully reaching the goals of various conservation plans.
 

Spawning reefs planned for the near term (and/or funded):

  - i. Fort Wayne Reef (construction summer of 2013)
  - ii. Fighting Island Reef Expansion
  - iii. NE Grassy Island Reef (design will continue this year)
  - iv. NE Belle Isle Reef
  - v. Fort Wayne Reef Expansion

#### **4. Committee Update**

- a. Sediment Mapping update by Bob Burns
  - i. Reviewed available data from approximately 30 studies.
  - ii. Final report by end of April.
  - iii. Working with EPA, DEQ, & University of Windsor to determine dangerous levels of contamination (primary contaminants: Hg, PCBs, PAHs)
  - iv. Have several maps predicting where sedimentation is occurring and could contain a concentration of contaminants that may require remediation.
  - v. Next meeting Friday, 3/22/13 at 1:30pm at the Belle Isle Nature Zoo.
  - vi. Goal – have list of sites for investigation and pare down this list to a list of remediation sites.
- b. Fish & Wildlife Technical Committee is having its first meeting 3/21/13 at 1pm at the Belle Isle Nature Zoo.
  - i. Reviewing the 2009 BUI removal plan. Evaluate the 19 projects currently on the list, remove those unnecessary and add new sites based on new data (eg: spawning sites).
  - ii. EPA contracted ECT to document the decisions made by the committee and update the document

- iii. Goal – narrow the list of projects to those key AOC priority projects necessary for BUI removal.
- iv. If any of the projects identified as priorities for the AOC are within contaminated sediment areas, then the site may be tied with Great Lakes Legacy Act funding.
- c. Tainting of Fish & Wildlife
  - i. US and Canada have both recommended removal of the BUI
  - ii. Let Tricia know if you want to help plan the celebration (fish fry anyone?)
  - iii. Both US & Canada feel they will complete the removal process by 9/31/13.

**5. Other items**

- a. 2013/14 Grant Opportunities
  - i. PAC support funding for FDR management of the PAC. Will allow Tricia to have continued involvement. Sediment mapping project, BUI pathways project.
  - ii. NOAA grants
    - 1. Stoney and Celeron Island –submitted as 2 of 2 habitat design and engineering projects.
  - iii. HOW Coalition – FWF FDR/PAC Support
- b. Detroit Water & Sewerage NPDES Permit Application – PAC provided comment during public comment review period. A handout of the PAC comments was available.

**6. Other Comments**

- a. Jeff Rahm from Wayne State submitted a letter of commitment that a pre-proposal will be submitted to the Michigan Water Center for continued monitoring for Blue Heron Lagoon for post-construction monitoring. This would be monitoring up to 3 years post-construction.
- b. Wayne State University, University of Windsor, Alliance for the Great Lakes, and ECT are submitting a U of M grant application for data compiling of contaminants of emerging concern. Rose suggested focusing on the Lake Erie LaMP for verbiage to use as support for that grant application.

**7. Next Meeting Dates – meetings now Mondays from 2-4pm to better accommodate schedules.**

- a. Monday, May 20, 2013 – location TBD
- b. Monday, July 22, 2013 (tentative)

**8. Adjournment**