



ST. LAWRENCE RIVER RESTORATION COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, July 16, 2020

11:00am to 1:00pm

St. Lawrence River Institute of Environmental Sciences

MINUTES

Attendance: Karen Cooper (MCA), Dale Phippen (citizen), John Towndrow (Transition Cornwall +), Stephanie Jaworski (South Glengarry), Elaine Kennedy (citizen), Natasha Pozega (RAP Coordinator), Kristin Geater (ECCC), Sara Varty (ECCC), Chris Moran (citizen), Nick Cox (citizen), Dorothy Hamilton (SDG-OWA), Jeff Ridal (RI), Idalia Milan (EOHU), Abraham Francis (MCA), Emma Tahirali (MECP), Candice McKay (MECP), Brendan Jacobs (RRCA), Jake LaRose (MNR), Benoit Lebeau (OMAFRA), Will Robertson (citizen), Andrew Morley (MECP), Marco Vincelli (citizen)

1. Call to Order and Introductions 11:15

- 2. Motion:** Be it resolved that the Agenda of the July 16, 2020 meeting be approved as amended.

Moved by: Elaine Kennedy

Seconded by: Stephanie Jaworski

Result: Carried

- 3. Motion:** Be it resolved that the Minutes from the meeting on December 12, 2019 be approved as amended.

Moved by: Dorothy Hamilton

Seconded by: Will Robertson

Result: Carried

Outstanding action items from December 12, 2019 meeting:

- Follow-up discussion between MCA and MECP regarding the potential application of the HHRA in Akwesasne.
- Fish Tumours presentation to Mohawk Council.

4. Business Arising

I. Human Health Risk Assessment Public Presentation Overview (Natasha)

- Virtual Meeting held on June 17, 2020 delivered using MS Teams Live. Recording available on stlawrenceriverrap.ca.
- Attendance around 30 people.

II. GLPI Funding Updates

5 agreements for the SL AOC:

- Continued RRCA funding for developing a plan for protection and restoration of coastal wetlands
- Continued MCA funding for RAP Coordinator
- New 2-year funding agreement with RI for Cornwall RAP Coordinator
- New 2-year RRCA funding for remedial projects for the AOC
- New 2-year funding agreement with MCA for a project on fish consumption and community engagement

III. Pattingale Restoration Program Update (Brendan)

- Project is now complete.
- Had 2yrs of funding to assess the health of the Pattingale sub-watershed.
- This was an update--> Had been done 10 years ago. Compared the natural heritage and landscape values from the Pattingale sub watershed to one outside of the AOC (Hoople Creek).
- Results: Pattingale is far more degraded than Hoople (reference location) and remediation is needed.

- Working with local community groups and landowners to put land stewardship projects on the ground--> total of 12 projects totalling 63.5 acres in size throughout AOC.
- Projects are all moving along well and some adjustments are being made to ensure the best success of the projects.
- 3 of the 12 projects were within the Pattingale watershed.
- Need buy-in to make changes in the watershed.
- Probably a 10-15 year time lag before you start to results at the mouths of those tributaries.

IV. Grasse River Update (Abraham)

- 75% staff laid off due to COVID-19.
- In April, notice was put out by Arconic that their staff would be coming in.
- Mid-June began dredging again along the Grasse River.
- RAC Coordinator returned to work very recently (Aimee Benedict)
- Another update and awareness campaign to occur in Akwesasne similar to 2019.

(Sara)

- Based on emails and website, a mailer was sent out in April to give an update of the project.
- Website had been updated with the presentation for the cancelled public meeting.
- April news release from April related to modifying the project plan--> specifically for navigational dredging.
- Daily updating of results.
- St. Regis and MCA Mailer was valuable --> Karen to circulate to the SLRRC.
- Proposed meeting --> delayed due to COVID-19 and reduced staffing.

5. Committee Reports

I. Water Quality Working Group (Brendan Jacobs)

- Past meeting on March 11, 2020. Next meeting to be determined.

- Matt Windle (RI) provided update on Macrophyte surveys using acoustic and UAV technologies.
- Abraham presented on fish consumption in Akwesasne (IJC study) and MCA is complimenting the study with additional funding. Goal is to weed out confusion between jurisdictions dividing Akwesasne.
- Quantitative vs. Qualitative – there's a basic framework used to put out fish consumption guidelines. Taking it into consideration and the assumptions to be amended to reflect first nation's culture and needs. Bringing those thematic into conversation to be included in the model. All the qualitative information derived from interviews, stories, and concerns to provide avenue of how to get the information out. Main issue is a lack of information to furthering fear of the community to be in relationship with the land.
- Presentation of Snapping Turtle egg collection data by Shane DeSolla. Limited samples able to be collected. Encouragement from the community to come back and do a more thorough collection to include Akwesasne. Did find that Hg contamination was highest in the SLR compared to other AOCs. One clutch taken from Gray's Creek had high PCBs compared to rest of AOC. Further monitoring requested to determine whether or not there is an issue with PCBs in Gray's Creek.
- Final report received by ECCC regarding concentrations of contaminants in snapping turtle eggs. Eggs usually reflect similar concentrations in livers, but in muscles is usually lower. Concentrations aren't being shown to be increasing.
- ECCC wants to set up a meeting to discuss the updates to the report but has not been able to do so due to COVID. - request made to present final report to the WQWG
- In Akwesasne, larger snapping turtles are consumed.
- Q: Is further infield research happening or planned upstream to potentially identify point sources in the Fly Creek system?

A: This study was one-time funding, but ECCC to look into additional funding. ECCC suggesting this may be a bigger question for the province as well. Few conversations to happen before decision is made for future monitoring.

- Elaine is chair public liaison committee for AEVITAS- interesting having a connection there as their effluent is released into Fly Creek.
- Should investigate PCBs in the Fly Creek drain across other studies including the fish study by Dr. Dominique Lapointe.
- Representatives from City of Cornwall and AEVITAS should be invited to discussion.
 - Eutrophication sub-committee update - no update
 - No meeting- delayed due to COVID-19 and funding delays.

II. Cornwall Sediment Strategy (Andrew Morley)

- Planning for a fall meeting (delayed due to COVID)
- HHRA presentation already discussed.
- Monitoring reports need to be reviewed at the Steering Committee level
- Gray's Creek data could be pulled into this discussion.
- New projects:
 - No field data cycle scheduled for next year or two.
 - One dock project coordinated in Zone 2 in the spring/summer in 2020 by Lissa Deslandes. Letter has been drafted to move forward with installing the dock. Similar design to one that has been previously approved.
- Meeting for Long-term Monitoring Group and Steering Committees to occur in fall.
- Request from Akwesasne for presentation to MCA Chiefs on the HHRA.

6. New Business

- I. Massena Remedial Action Committee (Elaine)

- Elaine has been attending the RAC meetings since the 90s. She will be the official liaison of the SLRRC at those meetings as the liaison and report back to the committee.

II. IJC Webinar (Dale/Jeff)

- Dale has been attending webinars on the high water levels in the Great Lakes held by the IJC. Webinars occur every 30 days. Another one tomorrow, July 17, 2020 from 12pm-1:30pm. Last meeting spectrum increased to all 5 Great Lakes. Website showing daily water levels passing Cornwall and Akwesasne.
- Great River Network Erosion file has been quiet. Chris Moran updated that they haven't received feedback from the Seaway. Interest in providing update at next meeting.

III. Transition Cornwall +

- John Towndrow Introduction- Current chair of Transition Cornwall +
- John is excited to be invited to join the SLRRC. Transition Cornwall + has the goal to reduce the community use of fossil fuels.
- Passed projects of TC+ include: drafted a tree canopy policy for the City of Cornwall, Walk and roll program to encourage people to rely less on motorized vehicles, food group promoting local production of food.
- All projects support the improvement of river health.

IV. Invasive Species Advisory (Dorothy Hamilton)

- Gypsy moth making an appearance nearby--> started out along Hwy 7 early in the spring. Provincial bug inspectors now out looking for the gypsy moth and other species.
- Emerald Ash borer still effecting this area.
- Dog strangling vine, buckthorn, garlic mustard, oak wilt, hemlock woolly Adelgid. Primarily coming up through Windsor and Northern NY State. Do have agreements with Canadian government and SUNY to monitor the different invasive species. Asking people to keep their eyes open-->

Eastern Ontario Model Forest and Health Network, Invasive Species Center, Invasive species Council (online resources Dorothy will share).

Eastern Ontario Model Forest – Regional Forest Health Network

<https://www.eomf.on.ca/programs/regional-forest-health-network>

Ontario Invasive Plant Council

<https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/>

Invasive Species Centre

<https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/>

- Asking to take pictures, description, and location and share with Dorothy to pass along to the experts to monitor spread and find out where things are coming from.

7. Next Meeting

Proposed: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 10am

8. Adjournment

Moved by: Dale Phippen