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## DETROIT RIVER RAP PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

**Monday, January 8, 2024**  
**1:30 – 3:30 pm**

### Meeting URL

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83872235038?pwd=QzdQWi94RFBqWjlkcEZMQWVoYWFBdz09>

**Meeting ID:** 838 7223 5038

**Passcode:** 2024

**Call-in Info:** +1 312-626-6799

**Attendees:** Mary Bohling (MSU extension and chair), Bob Burns (FDR and vice chair), Kaylee Peterson (FDR), Sam Walsh (FDR), McKenzi Waliczek, Amber Falkner (EPA), Erica Clites (MI Sea Grant extension), Jackie Serran (DR clean up), Kate Gmyrek (city of Detroit LA), Anita Harrington (city of Detroit), Christian Bako (DR AOC), IE Commuter\_Tech Support, Michal Helman (Detroit resident and Green Task Force), Jay Juergensen (Jefferson Chalmers Water Project), Bailee Pasienza (SEMCOG), Lisa Perez (USFS), Marie Garcia (Wayne State university – DR WMP), Tom Henderson (Canadian PAC), Megan Price (ECT), Arianna Zannetti (Detroit Riverfront Parks LA), Erma Leaphart, John Myers, Tricia Blicharski

### 1.0 PAC Administration

Agenda Comments / Revisions / Additions *N/A*  
Introductions

### 2.0 Agency Updates

***Detroit River Canadian Cleanup*** – Jackie Serran, RAP Coordinator

**4 BUIs left on Canadian side – populations, deformities, fish consumption, habitat.**

- **Fish deformities** – Completed public period for feedback. Next steps: U.S. review and submission to Canada-Ontario Annex Leads for designation to not impaired. Indigenous engagement activities ongoing.
- **Fish Consumption** – Completed a draft fish consumption report, which basically shows that no actions can be done within the Canadian side of the AOC to improve fish consumption advisories within the AOC. Therefore, not impaired. This report has been approved by the Monitoring and Research WG and will go to the Steering and Implementation Committee in June for approval. If approved, will go to public consultation.
- **Habitat** – In planning process for two final projects (Fighting Island & dyke wetland repair) completion estimated for 2028. Once projects are complete, they will be moving the BUI towards delisting.
- **Populations**– Fish populations report was completed showing that established sub-criteria has been met. Still working on wildlife populations - birds on the Canadian side of the Detroit River have disappeared and have low marsh bird IBI scores. Hoping emergent vegetation will reestablish at one of the two planned restoration projects to improve marsh bird IBI scores then move this one towards delisting. Looking at another 5 years for total completion.

Tom added – PAC supported Windsor’s opposition of plan to transportation hazardous materials (corrosive and flammable) over Ambassador bridge. (New bridge can support hazardous materials transport).

**EPA** – Amber Falkner Chris C is officially retired, and new Director is officially hired.

**Sediment study question** – Riverbend area update to be emailed later.

**EGLE** – Melanie Foose NA (not on call)



### 3.0 Subcommittee to Establish Priority Habitat Projects

- Enhanced community engagement in 2024.
- Jay shared: [https://riverwisedetroit.org/article/mapping-detroits-buried-waterways-part-i-finding-the-creeks/?fbclid=IwAR17xzU-PFDMrZ-UZFZ6MHX4cLv6XeFRFMiHeOBC0\\_BtTp8YEKeo-1uB3Vo](https://riverwisedetroit.org/article/mapping-detroits-buried-waterways-part-i-finding-the-creeks/?fbclid=IwAR17xzU-PFDMrZ-UZFZ6MHX4cLv6XeFRFMiHeOBC0_BtTp8YEKeo-1uB3Vo)
- Jay to reach out and connect this effort with subcommittee and DR WMP efforts.

### 4.0 City of Detroit Watershed Management Plan

- Marie Garcia - Recruiting steering committee members (including many PAC members), recruiting resident watershed planners (for education and outreach components). Here is form for applying to be involved: <https://forms.gle/P3aC3sKZDfHW7YsDA>
- WMP will cover areas that are not currently covered by existing WMPs. Marie to share with McKenzi and Bailee when ready.

### 5.0 Membership Recruitment and Engagement Subcommittee

- A Governance Charter (similar to by-laws document) was drafted and sent to subcommittee for review. We're in the process of scheduling a meeting to review the document before it gets sent to full PAC.

### 6.0 Project Updates

- PAC Support Grant next report due at end of January.
- NOAA Regional Partnership – *Bob Burns*
  - Sugar Island Construction Habitat and shoal work around the southern portion of island is almost complete. Spawning reef behind shoals and two little island construction, and extension on shoal 5 – 80% done now. Early to mid-spring is the goal for construction completion. Grant ends in July 2024.
- Detroit Riverfront Parks – *Amber Falkner* Habitat restoration project – no substantial updates because this project is on hold due to flood mitigation study that is being done through city of Detroit. They are looking to set up a meeting with USACE to get an update on flood mitigation project so it's clear how this may or may not impact the habitat restoration project. If there is conflict, flooding will likely take precedence over habitat projects.
  - Arianna - Identified more funding for AB Ford Park to build out entire master plan. There will also be some work on the failing sea wall.
  - Jay – concerns with sea wall construction that will later be removed. USACE is completing determination for section 205 process (flood mitigation). Detroit would have to provide matching funds for USACE. The Habitat project plan is outside the flood plan. 580 above sea level is the new level suggested.
  - Erma – nature-based solutions > sea walls. Need to prioritize the benefits that we want over building sea wall just because we have the money to do so. How will new sea wall construction impact the future of the habitat restoration project?
  - Arianna – they have had these conversations many times and also wants to push habitat restoration forward, but the EPA still has concerns.
  - Amber – EPA has concerns about levee / cutting habitat restoration project in half. It doesn't make sense to build a new sea wall just to tear it down.
  - Mary – is sea wall repair funding specific to hard infrastructure or can we use funding to support shoreline softening? Does it have to be all or nothing?  
Arianna – not sure, need to check.
  - Bob – Is there proposed sea wall work at Lakewood East? / Arianna – No
- Sediment Projects – *Amber Falkner*



- Wilson Park – construction is remobilized after a 3-month settlement period. They did a survey early last week and saw little settlement. In 2023, they place 78k of cap material. Feb 2024 is the anticipated completion date.
  - Bob – current flow here is very dynamic. Do the studies show the long-term effectiveness of this cap? Why are we capping versus removing contaminated sediments?
  - Amber – capping requirements will be held up by partners.
  - Bob – is there maintenance?
  - Amber – every 5 years a survey must be conducted.
  - Christina - Operations & Maintenance Plan would outline these partners' responsibilities. They can keep PAC updated on this Plan / process.
- Monguagon Creek / Upper Trenton Channel (MCUTC) - design phase. Upland survey conducted. Final remedy and sponsor selected full dredge with temporary sheet pile walls. Working towards 50% design in February.
  - Chairs of PAC can review 50% design documents.
- Tribal coordination letters – open 30-day comment period for work planned. No feedback received so far.
- Working to conduct several investigations in DR over the next 2 years. 5 remedial investigations anticipated. The goal is to have the entire DR investigated through the entire remedial investigation phase. Still in planning phases.
  - Bob had a question about BASF north works. Amber to confirm if this is part of Heather's project area.
- Upper Trenton Channel – working towards construction. Planning for construction solicitation in 2025 and construction in 2025-2026. Technical review committee saw no setbacks on design. Just need to decide who is doing what and when now.

## 7.0 PAC Member Update Roundtable

- MSUE virtual listening sessions Jan 16 6:30-8:30 and Jan 18 11:30am - 1pm  
Registration link:  
<https://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?eventID=B7C81D6CA1F0549AB922175B4754150F7E808620D8A374D4C437085055752643>
  - The other way to contribute is the online survey. The survey includes four primary questions, as well as demographic questions. All responses are anonymous. Anyone can [complete the survey online](#) through January 23, 2024.
- Jay – received two grants for sampling in Fox Creek.
  - Youth Scientist Program - Robbie Pharr,  
intern1@jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org, 313.917.63.79
  - Will start at the end of March and run through end of summer
- Great Lakes Day, a free virtual conference Feb. 27:  
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/2024-great-lakes-day-celebrating-science-and-water>
- Erma – FOTR and Sierra Club Rain Gardens to the Rescue program
  - Install 9 community rain gardens (1k sq ft)
  - 48217 target area
  - Looking for businesses, community groups / centers (anyone but residents) to participate
  - Deadline is end of February. Install in spring and finish up in Fall.
  - Have you considered Marathon Gardens? Frogg Park?
- February 3 - Shiver on the River at the Dossin Museum from 10am – 2pm. FREE, family-fun event!
  - Erma suggests including tour of GLRI projects at future event
  - John Myers – let them know if any tables open up



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- Lisa - How does Lake Erie LAMP and PAC work together? Ideally, PAC will put ourselves out of business and then PAC would direct members to LAMP. PAC efforts work hand in hand with LAMP. - **confirm with Melanie / Andrew Barhou – ask to share more information at future PAC meeting**
    - Huron to Erie corridor – what organization helps concentrate on this area.
    - Western basin Lake Erie LAMP includes Huron to Erie corridor
    - Once DR AOC is delisted then everything goes to LAMP for management of this area.
    - LAMP info: <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/newsroom/press-releases/2023/12/19/2023-state-of-the-great-lakes-report>
    - <https://binational.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/EN-2019-2023-Lake-Erie-LAMP.pdf>
  - Arianna – NOAA Coastal Management grant for Maheras Gentry. They are working with WATER Project and residents.
  - SPAC DEI – Melanie will identify someone to help us use existing screening tools to make good decisions.
  - Mary & Tricia to get in touch with Melanie regarding meeting dates (SPAC meets at same time as PAC but SPAC starts at 1pm). Push PAC meetings to start at 2pm?

#### 8.0 Upcoming Meeting Dates

- PAC Meeting – March 11, 2024
- PAC Meeting – May 13, 2024
- PAC Meeting – July 8, 2024
- PAC Meeting – Sept. 9, 2024
- PAC Meeting – Nov. 11, 2024

Adjourn



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## DETROIT RIVER RAP PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

**Monday, March 11, 2024**  
**2:00 – 4:00 pm**

### Meeting URL

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**Meeting ID:** 838 7223 5038

**Passcode:** 2024

**Call-in Info:** +1 312-626-6799

**Attendees:** Bob Burns, FDR; Tricia Blicharski, FDR; McKenzi Waliczek, FDR; Marie Garcia, Post Doc Fellow Wayne State University; Jay Juergensen, Jefferson Chalmers Water Project; Tom Henderson, Canadian PAC; Erica Clites, MI Sea Grant; John O'Meara, ECT; Bailee Pasienza, SEMCOG; Scott Troia, Great Lakes Environmental Law Center; Grant Koster, Jakobs Engineering; Arianna Zannetti, City of Detroit; Meghan Price, ECT; Sam Walsh, FDR; Amber Falkner, US EPA GLNPO; Dave Klatt, Jakobs Engineering; Jackie Serran, DRCC; Christian Bako, US EPA GLNPO; Melanie Foose, Michigan EGLE; Athur LeVasseur, Bayview Yacht Club; Zehra Batool, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services; Liza Perez, USFS; Kaylee Peterson, FDR.

### 1.0 PAC Administration

Agenda Comments / Revisions / Additions  
Introductions

### 2.0 Agency Updates

#### ***Detroit River Canadian Cleanup – Jackie Serran, RAP Coordinator***

- Held annual Film Screening event February. The documentaries featured PFAs and wetland loss. 150 in attendance. Thank you to Melanie Foose for connecting DRCC with EGLE's Michigan PFAs Action Response Team (MPART) to join panel discussion.
- **Pesche Island** – Received monitoring results from Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Pesche Island Project consists of 9 sheltering islands, located at the head of the Detroit River east of Belle Isle on Canadian side of river. Monitoring results showed improvement on submergent vegetation cover, showed 60% found behind islands in 2021 and 52% in 2023. Preconstruction showed 10-36% submergent vegetation coverage on average. In 2021, 34 fish species were caught, 4 of which were species at risk. 13 juvenile native fish species were found, and 19 native fish species were found that weren't captured in previous surveys.
- In the planning process for two additional habitat projects at Fighting Island.

#### ***EPA – Amber Falkner***

- The current Branch Manager has a detail in Washington D.C., Amy Pelka will be filling in for Branch Manager until July.
- EPA Great Lakes Action Plan will be released to the public by the end of March.

#### ***EGLE – Melanie Foose***

- AOC Coordinator Positions closed at the end of February. Will be reviewing applications and interviewing soon. Hopefully will have the new Detroit River AOC Coordinator hired and on board by May's PAC meeting.
- The Surface Water Assessment Section is now called Great Lakes Watershed Assessment, Restoration, and Management Section (GLWARMS).



- Mike Alexander (who was section Manager) is leaving EGLE on March 15, 2024, and will be going to MDARD. A new manager for Great Lakes Watershed Assessment, Restoration, and Management Section will be hired in the next few months. Mike will not be working with EGLE but will be available to answer questions about previous topics, if needed.
- Please see page 3 for Organizational Chart on GLWARMS <https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/egle/Documents/Org-Charts/WRD.pdf?rev=11f71b0cf18e413ebd56e20c1ab52a8e>
- Along with change in section name a new unit has been added: Sediments and Aquatic Invasive Species Unit
- Jay Juergensen asked Melanie if she could comment on Mr. Roos arrival to EGLE and how/if the culture has changed at EGLE has changed considering Roos' personal history with Line 5 and as chairs are moving around and are going to affect the relationships we have now?
  - Melanie Foose responded that she's continued serving AOC in addition to my current position, and will be training the new AOC coordinator, but will be stepping away. We have a lot of people on the team. The EGLE Director I have no experience with, but in our unit, we continue to do good work. Can't comment on Line 5.

### **3.0 Detroit River PAC Report Card**

- Part of PAC Support Grant to develop. We need to update the current report card for 2024. Will be meeting to determine which changes need to be made and will share with members of the PAC for input.
- You can find current Report Card here: <https://www.detroitriver.org/pac-1>

### **4.0 Subcommittee to Establish Priority Habitat Projects**

- Next meeting is 4/8 at 2 pm.
- Subcommittee has revisited list of sites that were identified in early 2000s. SEMCOG is helping to develop a map of newly identified sites to visualize where locations are already under Watershed Management Plan and AOC work and where there are areas of overlap and areas of void that we can focus efforts on past delisting of BUIs.

### **5.0 Detroit River Watershed Management Plan**

- The Steering Committee has met twice. Next meeting will be held at the end of March. Will begin looking at plan draft sections. Start goal setting and getting volunteers to write some sections.
- Resident Watershed Planners have been identified but still need representation from 48211/48212 and 48221/48203 zip codes.
  - Jay Juergensen – Has a few connections around those communities. Asks Marie to reach out to him so that he can connect Marie with community leaders in those areas.
- If you'd like to sign up for newsletter or would like to become a Resident Watershed Planner, please use this form to sign up <https://forms.gle/5RhpSWgLQbkgBuEv5>
- The first Resident Watershed Planner meeting will begin next week.

### **6.0 Membership Recruitment and Engagement Subcommittee**

- The Governance Document has been drafted and sent to the full PAC for review. Please be ready to discuss at the May PAC meeting. Feel free to email edits, questions, or suggestions ahead of the May meeting to Kaylee.





## 7.0 Project Updates

- PAC Support Grant – Preparing report for Q1 2024.
- NOAA Regional Partnership – *Bob Burns*
  - Sugar Island Construction – Contractor worked up until the end of December but stopped in January. Focusing on the southern end of the island and working on shoreline and shoals and emergent rock area. They completed the second snake hibernacula and an extension on shoal 5 to increase the protective aspect. Scheduled to finish by the end of May. Are currently working to put the small islands between shoals 3-4 and 4-5 and additional spawning areas.
- Detroit Riverfront Parks – *Amber Falkner*
  - **Upper Riverfront Parks (currently on HOLD)**
    - EPA held an alignment meeting with USACE regarding the GLRI habitat restoration project and the flood mitigation project on February 29th, 2024. As the Federal Interest Determination phase is ending, the flood project will still need to complete multiple phases until a tangible project is feasible (e.g., funding and alternatives). EPA will seek written communication on the relationship between the two projects - but ultimately USACE intends to work around any completed GLRI habitat restoration project components during any potential flood mitigation implementation.
      - EPA was hoping to hear a clearer path forward once the Federal Interest Determination phase was completed, but there is still a lot of uncertainty.
    - In addition, EPA attended public meeting on Feb. 29, 2024 hosted by City of Detroit after a public meeting a week prior caused some misinformation spreading throughout the community. The City of Detroit shared a rendering that did not display any amenities of the GLRI project leading to a stakeholder newsletter publishing the GLRI habitat project had been formally cancelled. The EPA was not fully aware of the extent of the A.B. Ford Park improvements being planned by the City of Detroit.
      - The City of Detroit was able to hold an additional public meeting to help answer questions regarding the GLRI habitat project and A.B. Ford Park restoration plans and how they may interact.
      - The City of Detroit will be proceeding with A.B. Ford Park improvements this year while intending to leave room for the current design for the GLRI project. However, their remediation introduces a 2-foot clay cap over current grade. This has the potential to cause additional redesign (elevations) for GLRI habitat restoration in A.B. Ford Park.
    - **Next Steps:**
      - Caitie Nigrelli (Nigrelli.Caitlin@epa.gov) will be taking over as main POC and will begin focusing on pathway towards construction.
      - Currently planning a briefing for EPA management input on how to proceed, investigate options for effects from city improvements in A.B. Ford Park and possible redesign or for removal park components in A.B. Ford Park only from the GLRI project. EPA will still proceed with Lakewood East Park improvements upon correspondence from USACE.
      - Receive formal written correspondence from USACE regarding flood mitigation project conflicts/resolutions and



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- City of Detroit regarding A.B. Ford Park improvement conflicts/coordination plan.
- EPA to coordinate with USACE and City of Detroit.
  - Bob Burns asks – Is the USACE saying do what you want, and they'll go around? If so, when can this project get started and what is holding us up?
    - Amber Falkner responds – Paperwork is holding us up. But we're coordinating with flood mitigation crew to see how the projects conflict. Seeking written correspondence. Though they said we should proceed with GLRI because their design timeline will take a while.
  - Bob Burns asks – There will be a 2 ft cap to raise elevation that would help with flood control. What will the end grade be? Close 580? There could be a seawall that is ultimately torn out and wasted.
    - Arianna Zannetti responds – We are not replacing the seawall, just repairing the tiebacks so it is usable. It will be a temporary fix.
    - Amber Falkner responds - Different situation than a few years ago. There needs to be more communication with the city and EPA for both projects to fit together. Don't see GLRI construction this year, but closer to having a clear path forward.
    - Bob Burn asks – Are there plans for Lakewood Park seawall?
      - Arianna Zannetti responds – No, only AB Ford Park.
  - Jay Juergensen poses – Amber, I appreciate you moving this forward. Waiting for USACE could take up to 10 years. We would like to see the design set and would really like to understand what the contours mean. We've asked for similar information from the city. Again, making that request of open sharing of construction drawings from the city and USEPA. Unless we see what the contractors are responsible for delivering there's no way that we can fully understand the scope of the work. Secondly, the City has suggested 20-30 trucks per day, which is 4,500 trucks over the project period to deliver soil to the site. We are concerned about the environmental consequences and community impacts. We want to propose barge delivery and temporarily excavate the lagoon. We are proposing to slow the project down until sort out the details.
    - Arianna Zannetti responds – We have slowed down to reevaluate some of these things. We did look into the possibility of a barge and the addition of needing to dredge and doing waterside improvements to get a barge there didn't seem feasible or efficient.
  - Sediment Projects – *Amber Falkner*
    - **Wilson Park** - Pump station control panel being installed. The final inspection is scheduled for March 20. Operations and Maintenance plan for cap - contained in engineered cap design. Designed in a way that cap will need minimal maintenance. Repairs will be the responsibility of the NFS for the project.
      - Bob Burns asks - There's a difference between removing sediments vs. capping. Someone needs to conduct periodic survey to make sure the cap doesn't shift or deteriorate over time, (i.e., boat anchor, dragging, etc.). EPA should make sure it's written somewhere that someone needs to check and prove it is still maintaining its integrity. The previous survey showed spots that needed to be recapped.





- Christian Bako responds - There should be a plan/documentation for survey work. This cap is armored and entombs the sediment and helps to protect against large craft and movement. These are very large stones and drastically lower the risk of being shifted. But we can get more documentation.
  - Bob Burns responds - We aren't involved in the day-to-day sediment discussions as we are working on habitat, so we aren't fully aware of what's going on. It's PAC's responsibility to remove BUIs so we need as much info as we can, so we can be confident that these capping remediation processes are doing the job of encapsulating the underlying contaminated sediments for perpetuity.
  - Christian Bako will provide updates on cap technology and progress.
- **MCUTC** - 50% design currently in review by project team. THPO letters were completed and sent out to tribes in the first week of January. The comment period ends this month. No responses. Construction is tentatively planned for 2026.

#### 8.0 PAC Member Update Roundtable

- Tom Henderson Canadian PAC - City of Windsor raised objection to the State of Michigan with regard to Ambassador Bridge's Application to transport hazardous materials (flammables and corrosives) across the bridge. Since then, the State of Michigan has not let the City of Windsor know if this application has been approved. Once Gordie Howe Bridge is open in 2025, that bridge will be authorized to transport those materials.
- Michigan Sierra Club is hosting Rain Barrels on the Riverfront Event – April 21<sup>st</sup>
  - At Gabriel Richard Park More info here: <https://mirrainbarrel.com/signup/>
- McKenzie Waliczek – EGLE is recruiting for Environmental Quality Analyst position
  - <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/michigan/jobs/4409240/environmental-quality-analyst-9-p11-warren-district-office>
  - FDR is hosting first spring Detroit River Water Festival at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge – May 7<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Link: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfi-KAYW-INOIDP30x2krvtwNk2huo5A9LL\\_hZlpizJchPDrg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfi-KAYW-INOIDP30x2krvtwNk2huo5A9LL_hZlpizJchPDrg/viewform)
- John Myers – AB Ford Park environmental testing from EPA. No significant contamination was found unlike the City of Detroit. Amber will connect with Arianna to discuss this.
- Jay Juergensen – Jefferson Chalmers Water Project is recruiting for Youth Scientists Program. Please contact Robbie Pharr, if you want to be involved.
  - [intern@jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org](mailto:intern@jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org)
- SEMCOG – Clean Waters meeting May 1<sup>st</sup>. Send Bailee an email if you would like to be included on the invite list.
- MI Sea Grant – Fisheries Workshop happening April 11 at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. <https://www.michiganseagrant.org/educational-programs/fisheries-workshops/>
  - Harmful Algal Bloom webinar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLEPYcg6iOM>

#### 9.0 Upcoming Meeting Dates

- PAC Meeting – May 13, 2024
- PAC Meeting – July 8, 2024
- PAC Meeting – Sept. 9, 2024
- PAC Meeting – Nov. 11, 2024

Adjourn