



## SBCI Monthly Meeting Notes – March 19, 2015

**DRAFT Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Laura Ogar.

Introductions around the room were made.

### **Discussion of the Saginaw Bay/River Area of Concern (AOC) – Remedial Action Plan (RAP):**

Copies of Executive Summary of the early Remedial Action Plan (RAP) from 1994 were distributed as background info on "where we've been". The Saginaw River and the Saginaw Bay were designated as an Areas of Concern (AOC) by Canada and the United States back in the 1980's. They were listed as AOCs due to a variety of water pollution problems that adversely impacted our use of the waters in the bay and river and our water-related natural resources such as fish, wildlife, birds etc.

### **Discussion of DEQ Proposed Changes to (3) Beneficial Use Impairments (BUI):**

Handouts of the proposed changes to the Restrictions on Dredging Activities, Eutrophication of Undesirable Algae, and Beach Closings were provided. All of these are being reviewed right now by Public Advisory Councils and the DEQ would like feedback. (Note: Laura Ogar had received the latest version of the proposed changes yesterday (3/18/15) from DEQ's John Riley who said there had been considerable changes since the last version distributed last fall.)

**Dredging** activities are being revised so that Restoration Criteria would be met when the "most recent routine dredging" does not require use of a confined disposal facility. Discussion took place on the importance of defining 'routine dredging' and recognition that the "most recent dredging" lacked an geographic boundaries. Meaning as the Army Corps of Engineers frequently dredge the lower Saginaw River channel by the mouth at the Bay, and this frequent removal may have 'cleaner' sediments that do not require disposal at the CDF, but that should in no way be representative of the entire AOC. The Kawkawlin River has special permission to dredge from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). There are questions we should be asking, such as what the reasons are for this change in dredging criteria and how routine dredging are defined. It's important to request some language that adequately represents the entire river channel, and of the bay as well.

**Eutrophication** of undesirable algae has been creating issues with muck on our beaches since the 1920s. It's an issue that is still a problem on our beaches. At the State Park and Saginaw Bay there are many issues with muck, turbidity, and color of the water. While the Bay City State Recreation Area is not on the impaired water list (303(d) and 305(b) lists), it's still important to address the concerns and issues of eutrophication in this area. Mike Kelly was able to discern that with the proposed changed to the BUI criteria, the AOC could be delisted for Eutrophication now. This is problematic all agreed.

**Beach Closings** have been an issue in our area and many attribute the cause as being Combined Sewage Overflows (CSOs) from our water treatment plant. However, the water overflow from a heavy rain event actually goes through Retention Treatment Basins (RTBs) as a secondary treatment for the overflow. Any discharge must be reported to the media and it's important to get across the fact that the overflows are not raw sewage. 60% of the time there is 0% bacteria reported from testing the overflow. 65% - 90% the



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overflow samples meet recreational activity acceptance levels. There have only been one or two times that the overflow bacteria levels were exceeded due to system failure (faulty chlorination).

The Beneficial Use Impairments RAP was done in 1988, 1994 and updated in 2001. The study has been compiled throughout the years (decades) to define and describe the environmental problems in the Saginaw Bay Watershed (including the beneficial uses impairments), to define the causes of such impairments, and to define goals to address the impairments. The major problems that have been identified include cultural eutrophication, toxic material contamination, sedimentation, pathogens, and degraded environmental conditions.

### Comments:

When we talk to people about the Saginaw Bay, there are a few things that seem to always come up:

1. The desire for access to the Saginaw Bay (muck and physical, visual access)
2. Reduction of Beach Closings

**Updates:** We will be reviewing the statewide proposals for dredging. It's important to define routine dredging and determine how best to remove and deal with contaminants. The Kawkawlin River has special permission to dredge from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). There are questions we should be asking, such as what the reasons are for the change in dredging procedures and how dredging or routine dredging are defined. It's important to know how this will affect the BUI.

**Tuscola County:** Vanderbilt Park is the only public access to the Saginaw Bay in Tuscola County. The park needs to grow. There are plans to put in a new water line. This park is part of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

**Arenac County:** Have been working on phragmites control in AuGres area over the last three years with spray treatments.

**Huron County:** Farmers are unhappy about the phragmites spray in the area as it kills off other vegetation besides phragmites. St. Clair County got a grant to promote the water trail and want to join Huron County for the I-69 Corridor Project. They are still working on controlling the issues with the Pinnebog River. There have been some concerns about the wind turbines killing birds in the area and it's being checked out.

**Saginaw Bay WIN:** There will be WIN Grant funding for small areas for environmental projects. More information is on their website.

**Michigan Sea Grant:** There will be a meeting in late April, Katy will get more information.

**East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG):** Working on the new regional plan. The EPA wants them to include environmental strategies. They are working with the Bay City Rowing Club on some outdoor recreation projects and dock improvements at the Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA).



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**Kawkawlin River Watershed Association (KRWA):** There will be cleanup efforts taking place for the Kawkawlin River up into Monitor Township. The KRWA Annual Meeting and Walleye Dinner will take place on Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at the Bangor Township Fire Department, 3921 Wheeler Road, Bay City, MI 48706.

**Congressman Dan Kildee's Office:** There is GLRI Funding, along with other proposed funding being recommended. Since it is appropriation time, everyone is encouraged to write letters of support to their representatives.

As there was no further business, the March 19, 2015 SBCI meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m.

The next SBCI Meeting will be on **Thursday, April 16, 2015** from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Bay County Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Old Chambers, 515 Center Avenue, Bay City, Michigan.