

**SPAC Habitat Monitoring and Long-Term Maintenance Subcommittee  
Meeting Summary  
February 6, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. via Teams**

**List of Attendees:**

- ☒ John O'Meara, Chair, Detroit/Rouge River AOCs
- ☒ Tennille Newsome, ARC
- ☒ Chris O'Meara, ARC and RRAC
- ☒ Erma Leaphart, Healing Our Waters
- ☒ Bob Burns, Detroit River AOC
- ☒ McKenzi Waliczek, Detroit River AOC
- ☒ Paulette Duhaime, St. Clair River AOC
- ☒ Lynnea McFadden, St. Clair River AOC
- ☒ Melanie Foose, EGLE
- ☒ Doug McLaughlin, Kalamazoo River Watershed Council
- ☒ Mikela Dean, Clinton River Watershed Council

**Introductions**

Introductions of attendees and roles of each on the call were completed. He mentioned that Jen T. was had another meeting and would not be on the call.

Dan Ballnik's AI notetaking bot was removed from the meeting.

**Depository Website Discussion**

SPAC Habitat Subcommittee website link: <https://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/spachabitat.html>

John O'Meara stated the importance of reviewing the website depository before the full SPAC meeting. John O. discussed the purpose and development of the website and its role as a depository for maintenance plans and other habitat related information as an evolving resource.

Chris O'Meara shared her screen of the website and explained that the website is hosted under the Alliance of Rouge Communities website due to the state limitations and need for accessibility.

John detailed the website's content, which includes monitoring and maintenance examples, meeting notes and other relevant information to support habitat projects. Chris demonstrated how to navigate the website and contribute content, highlighting the current features and the process for adding new information. Some highlights were:

- if there are any items or information to add to the topics on the website to click the email link at bottom of page which goes to [rrac@allianceofrougecommunities.com](mailto:rrac@allianceofrougecommunities.com) which will then be received by Chris. It was mentioned that a potential future possibility of using additional software to allow direct document uploads through the website, with a review process to prevent spam and ensure legitimacy.
- Access clickable file links to view and download documents that will open in Adobe.

John O. mentioned adding photos of restoration projects on the website to make it more engaging when viewing. John O. would like this website to be very useful.

John O. asked if there were any thoughts, ideas, suggestions.

- Chris O. suggested adding logos of partners that link to their websites. McKenzi agreed as she saw the SPAC logo with all the dots and thought it would be helpful to know information about who is with each dot.

- McKenzi mentioned the Detroit River created a story map that touches on habitat projects as well as sediment work and wondered if the SPAC habitat website would be a good place to add it to.

Detroit River Story Map: <https://arcg.is/iuOrL0>

KRWC Story Map: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e04264505157495fb25d99ab502d7a3e>

- Chris suggested each PAC could add logo and create a couple bullets of focused information and include a link to the story map.
- Doug M. thanked the team for getting the website together. He mentioned the possibility of creating a paragraph on the website that has questions received and new questions as they come in as a subcommittee relating to habitat and reasons why some documents are housed.

Chris suggested a "Frequently Asked Questions" section would be useful.

Doug mentioned they are working on creating a chat bot on their website as an interactive Q&A and wondered if that would be good idea to keep the page relevant. John thought it was a great idea and to move forward into the framework in the future after the site is "loaded up", for interaction.

- Erma Leaphart suggested categorizing monitoring and maintenance examples by AOC/watershed to make it easier for users to find relevant information. John stated that it could be a concern with some AOCs by using this approach. Chris mentioned you could put in parentheses the county name. Erma stated it would be nice to see something from all AOCs.

Lynnea stated the monitoring and maintenance examples are from 2021. She has some from 2024 that she could send as updated examples. John mentioned for her to please send them.

McKenzi stated ease of navigation of the SPAC Habitat website would be helpful where it stands out as there are no tabs or icons to click to get to the SPAC Habitat page from the Alliance of Rouge Communities home page. Chris stated under the RRAC website, there is a "SPAC Habitat Subcommittee" link on the first page. Chris mentioned it could definitely be added under a tab on the RRAC home page (which is also hosted on the Alliance of Rouge Communities website) and the ARC home page.

Bob Burns asked how John would like photos, etc. populated. John O. stated he would like to receive them from each PAC and to email them to [comeara@allianceofrougecommunities.com](mailto:comeara@allianceofrougecommunities.com).

Doug M. added to the chat some statements and questions he grabbed from the March 2023 and 2024 minutes that are posted on the site that could be useful to highlight some reasons for developing the site and possibly some questions people might have.

Doug's chat comments copied:

From March 2024

"The depository would consist of information relating to the performance of restoration sites after completion."

From the March 2023

- Once a project is completed and the site has been turned back over to the property owner, what happens next?
- How do you get a plan for maintenance after the project is done?
- What needs to be done, when, by whom, etc.?
- Who will do that work?
- Relationship between landowner and organizations to accomplish goals. What could this process look like?

- How do you share knowledge of how to maintain a site with property owners as most people wouldn't have that knowledge?
- What about orphan sites?
- How do you interest/involve the community in supporting these sites?

John encouraged participants to think about additional ideas and provide feedback on the website to improve its content and functionality.

John requested updated examples, photos, and logos to be sent to Chris for inclusion on the site. Paulette mentioned having a before and after photo of a project would help give a visual impact as importance of community engagement in habitat projects.

Chris O'Meara suggested everyone on the call could get her their logo, a brief paragraph about their organization and top three bullets they would like to promote. If you send pictures, include a caption.

John concluded the meeting, thanking participants for their input and encouraging them to continue providing feedback and updates for the website. He looked forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming SPAC meeting.