

Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC)

June 17, 2021

**Business Meeting Minutes
Meeting via Microsoft Teams**

Attendees:

Horst Schmidt, Torch Lake Area of Concern (AOC) (Chair of SPAC)
Patty Troy, St. Clair River AOC (Vice Chair of SPAC)
Anne Brasie, Clinton River AOC
Eric Diesing, Clinton River AOC
Mary Bohling, Detroit River AOC
Bob Burns, Detroit River AOC
Christine Kosmowski, Kalamazoo River AOC
Cheryl Vosburg, Kalamazoo River AOC
Keith West, Lower Menominee River AOC
Kathy Evans, Muskegon Lake AOC
Brian Egen, River Raisin AOC
Barry LaRoy, River Raisin AOC
Dick Micka, River Raisin AOC
Dan Stefanski, River Raisin AOC
Bill Craig, Rouge River AOC
John O'Meara, Rouge River AOC
Dennis Zimmerman, Saginaw River/Bay AOC
Paulette Duhaime, St. Clair River AOC
Mike Ripley, St. Marys AOC
Dione Price, Torch Lake AOC
Helena Garcia, University of Michigan (UM) School of Environment and Sustainability (SEAS)
Logan Murphy, UM SEAS
James Polidori, UM SEAS
Laura Rubin, Healing Our Waters (HOW) Great Lakes Coalition
Amy Pelka, United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
Carolyn Koch, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Mike Alexander, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
Rick Hobrla, EGLE
Melanie Foose, EGLE, SPAC Liaison
Kimberly Passick, EGLE
Matt Preisser, EGLE
John Riley, EGLE
Stephanie Swart, EGLE
Jennifer Tewkesbury, EGLE

Welcome – Horst Schmidt

Horst began the meeting and talked about the exciting prospect of being able to meet in person in the near future, how the topics of climate change and sustainability are continuing to gain more attention and the positive work being done through EGLE leadership initiatives. Environmental justice discussions are becoming more frequent with

more emphasis placed on their importance. Pipelines have been in the news as organizations work to limit potential harms while states seek to protect their fossil fuel industries.

Roll Call, Review of Agenda – Horst Schmidt

Horst reviewed today's agenda items and scheduled presentations. Rick called roll by AOC and then agency.

Review/Approve Minutes – Horst Schmidt

Dennis Zimmerman made a motion to accept the minutes. Brian Egen seconded. Unanimously passed.

Review of Action Items – Melanie Foose

Melanie reviewed the action items from the previous meeting and all action items were completed.

Horst asked if elections were held in the fall and Rick said we'd have to check the previous minutes. (Subsequent review of the minutes show that elections are held every two years with the last one taking place in October 2020. The next election will be due in Autumn 2022.)

EGLE Update – Rick Hobrla/Melanie Foose

- Teleworking (until July 12) – Rick shared that with COVID numbers improving dramatically state workers will begin returning to offices the week of July 12. Within EGLE this is expected to be a slow process and for a large number of staff they will continue to work remotely indefinitely. Supervisors and secretaries will be expected to spend at least half of their time in the office so Rick and Kimberly will be back in Constitution Hall at least three days per week.
- Funding/Budget – The Great Lakes Management Unit gets the bulk of their funding from USEPA under a grant which typically runs for three years. The existing grant expires in March 2022 and they are anticipating receiving a new grant in April 2022 that will likely be run for another three years. Because projects cannot cross over from one grant period to the next, all grants that the unit has issued through EGLE will expire no later than February 2022 in order to allow time for Rick to prepare the final report for USEPA.
- PAC Support Grants – EGLE will likely begin issuing another round of PAC support grants beginning in April 2022 or soon thereafter. It is Rick's intention to offer a multi-year option similar to the last batch that was issued. While the grant issued to EGLE is generally a three-year contract, it is only funded one year at a time. There will be a clause in any outgoing grants that in the event that USEPA does not fund any given

year, funds will not be available to pass through to the PACs. To clarify, most current PAC support grants are set to expire February 28, 2022 with final reports due by March 31, 2022. It is expected that the next capacity grant from USEPA will go into effect in April 2022 and once funded, EGLE can begin to issue new PAC support grants.

- SPAC Representative Designations for 2021 – Melanie explained that SPAC representative were designated for two-year terms on a rotating basis. This year the Saginaw, St. Marys, Manistique, St. Clinton, and Rouge AOC PACs were asked to update their designees. Most AOCs had already responded with their choices. Melanie will follow up to ensure all PACs have a designated SPAC representative.
- Michigan Clean Water Plan – the MI Clean Water Plan is an initiative proposed by Governor Whitmer to significantly expand planned funding for water infrastructure both drinking and wastewater. There is a proposed \$207 million in funding to carry out a number of activities related to safe and equitable drinking water, improvement of local facilities, replacement of lead service pipes, planning for future water needs, and more. For wastewater there is a proposed \$293 million to upgrade and improve equipment, help eliminate risks from raw sewage discharge, aid with failing residential septic tanks, and manage storm and wastewater infrastructure. A month or so ago the legislature had decided not to include this package in their funding however since that time the federal government has provided additional funding to states. It is hoped that having access to this additional funding will lead the legislature to support this initiative. Whether this initiative goes forward is unknown at this time.

EPA Update – Amy Pelka

Amy shared that they have recently learned that the additional funding that was appropriated for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) has been released and the AOC will be receiving \$14 million of the additional \$30 million. Other programs being funded by the additional funds are tribal programs, invasive species, and ballast water. Even though it is late in the fiscal year, the AOC program is poised to use that additional funding as there are some projects that are ready to go. Talk with your Task Force Lead (TFL) if you have additional projects that you may be able to get moving very quickly as she may be able to get them on the spreadsheet for funding consideration. These would be tier one and two projects only. Normally USEPA would not be entertaining new proposals this late in the fiscal year but with the additional funding it may be possible to approve some if they can be ready to go quick.

Horst asked what tier one and tier two were. Amy explained that last year USEPA revised how they prioritize AOC projects for funding. Tier one are AOCs that are near completion with management actions complete or all management action lists in and approved with a good likelihood of being complete by 2024. Tier one is also BUI evaluation or monitoring work or technical assistance to other agencies. Tier two is work on a management action list. In fiscal year 2021 there was a great deal of dredging work so that is where most of the funding went for this year.

Horst also asked about how the funding for ballast water and tribal programs would be used. Amy did not have information on the ballast water projects. For tribal programs it could projects on tribal lands, affecting tribal resources, affecting treaty rights areas, and other things in a very broad range. In the past USEPA had given funding to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or the tribe perhaps got a grant or subaward through the state or another federal agency. This wasn't a cohesive approach and didn't consider goals that the tribal interests might have across the Great Lakes basin and instead went through the different Focus Areas. The tribal entities have successfully argued that they need a focused funding source and that is called the Distinct Tribal Program. Now, instead of filtering things through the other focus areas, they sort of have their own program now. They have to establish how to meet the GLRI action measures and contribute to advancing progress of the GLRI Program and report out results. This has been so successful that USEPA was able to give them additional funding.

A final note that due to the AOC program being so successful that there are many more projects than funding can accommodate. In order to determine how best to navigate prioritization they are having discussions with the states and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (as they co-manage an AOC) both individually and as a group. They are crafting a survey and finishing up prioritization discussion and will likely have a follow up meeting in July with the group.

AOC Conference Update – Rick Hobrla

Planning is underway to hold the next AOC conference in Muskegon at the end of September this year. The previous conference was held in Cleveland, Ohio in 2019. The original intent was to hold the event this past May, however the situation with COVID led the planning committee to push the date back to fall. There is not yet a final decision on being able to hold the conference but given the current trends, optimism is high. It is likely that COVID restrictions in Michigan will be lifted next month if not sooner. What may limit the ability hold the conference in person will be if the federal and other state agencies will allow staff to travel to Michigan. The committee is staying updated on those travel restrictions and we will decide sometime next month.

The planning team has been meeting since last August on a regular basis to plan the event. It meets every two weeks and is currently in the process of planning the breakout sessions. They are anticipating that in number of sessions this will be the largest conference every. In the past there have been three sets of three sessions, and they are tentatively planning three sets of five breakout sessions. This is mixed news in that there will be a lot more choices.

EGLE is planning to offer travel support for this event. Once the decision to hold the event has been made, guidance will be put out for how to apply for that support. The guidance that applies to state employees for travel will be applied to this support in terms of reimbursement limits to attend the conference.

Kathy Evans has been planning a list of optional events including a variety of tours and a reception the day and evening before the conference and a group dinner on the first night. Kathy added that there will be two habitat tours, one East, one West, a bicycle tour that will include some habitat stops, and a walking tour of downtown Muskegon. The tours times are staggered so more people have the opportunity to participate. There is also the potential for a sunset cruise that evening, but the details of that have not yet been worked out to see if it that is a possibility.

The dates for the conference are September 28 for pre-conference activities. The conference itself begins the morning of September 29 for the entire day and concludes around noon of September 30, 2021. While it was considered, it is unlikely that the conference will offer a virtual option due to logistical constraints.

A new polling feature has been added to the Teams platform and was used to ask the question “Will you attend the AOC conference in Muskegon in September?”. There were 17 responses with 76% being “yes” and 24% being “maybe”.

PAC member updates

Torch Lake – Horst shared that a new waste lagoon is being put in through the Torch Lake Area Sewage Authority and it's hoped that project will begin next year. There is a nearby community that is built on the side of a mountain and they received grant funding to install a community septic system which will help reduce potential water quality impacts. The PAC is in the process of obtaining grant funding for support of the AOC. Stephanie Swart shared that work is being done in the AOC towards the benthos BUI which involves creating test plots. There are two wetland test plots and two where soil capping is being done. The idea is to determine if these actions have any impact on improving the benthos community in Torch Lake. If so, over time there is potential to expand throughout the lake. Currently the subcontractor began work two weeks ago and have installed the two soil capping plots and are finalizing work on the wetland plots. Plants are currently being planted and then Mannick Smith will monitor over the summer and into next year. There had been one site selected for the project, however it was not possible to use it as a test plot because as digging began an old slag deposit was discovered and it was no longer safe to proceed.

Saginaw Bay/River – Dennis Zimmerman shared that the PAC last met in April and are overdue on officer elections but hope to do that within the next couple months. Tami Sivy at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) has two projects ongoing, one is shoreline monitoring and assessment and the 2019 data for that is complete with the 2020 data being processed. The data from the second project for microbial tracking has been assembled into a document with the purpose of determining where pathogens are originating and from what source. There are many projects happening in the area and agencies are doing a better job at sharing information. Some of those projects include an

effort to identify a site for a project based on the success of the Coreyon Reef project a couple of years ago. Another project involving the health department and SVSU is using qPCR testing along with live cell only testing to identify coliform in an effort to determine if the pathogens are coming from waterfowl, agricultural runoff, or human sources. A possible project is for a new confined disposal facility, likely offshore near the tip of the thumb as the current facility is nearing capacity. Jen Tewkesbury added that there is still a push for a large-scale monitoring project in Saginaw Bay and River. This would help in obtaining baseline data and perhaps some forecasting to inform management decisions.

St. Marys River – Mike Ripley reported that the BPAC has been meeting regularly. The management actions on the U.S. side have been completed however there are a couple of BUIs still in place. On the Canadian side there is still a lot of work going on and there remains a large amount of contaminated sediments. There was a recent request to look at the fish and wildlife population BUI for the Canadian side and the BPAC is waiting for input from the Batchewana and Garden River First Nations who have been consulted by Environment Canada. There is also a fish consumption survey project on the Canadian side through Algoma University. The survey is mainly for people on the Canadian side of the river and asks the types and quantities of fish that residents are consuming. This information will be used to inform the fish consumption BUI. John Riley added that the three remaining BUIs are degradation of benthos, fish tumors, and fish consumption advisory. It is just a matter of collecting data at this point and will just take time to get those removed.

Rouge River – Bill Craig reported on the many habitat projects taking place in the AOC. Several are completed and two recent ones are being allowed to grow and settle, there are some that are set to begin this year. The PAC's non-governmental organization (NGO), the Friends of Rouge, continues its fish sampling project as part of their grant workplan tasks. One of their projects, Fish Hatchery Park won an award. Jennifer Tewkesbury shared that the large concrete channel project is ongoing. The hydrologic modeling is complete and is being looked at to see what the options are. It is hoped that they can get to the design phase of that project soon. There is also a lot of work being done with contaminated sediments. COVID set the schedule back significantly and there were also some bank failures in the old channel due to stockpiling close to the bank. There is a question as to whether dredging could create more bank failures, and whether that creates any liability issues. They are working with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) to work through those issues. In the lower Rouge main channel, they are looking to do some sampling with a USEPA contractor. There is some difficulty in obtaining permits to complete the monitoring. John O'Meara added that the award that Bill mentioned was a 2021 Michigan American Public Works Association Project of the Year Award.

Clinton River – Eric Diesing said they are currently working on a public engagement project now that most of the habitat projects are mostly complete. One project was slightly delayed due to blow out of the bank but that has been fixed. For the habitat and wildlife BUIs he is in the process of compiling and analyzing all of their data. That report will be complete by the end of the year and be submitted for technical review. The aesthetics BUI

was removed in 2020. There is a great deal of research taking place throughout the watershed. Oakland University, University of Michigan, and Michigan State University are all involved in various research projects taking place now. Jennifer Tewkesbury added that they ran into a hotspot in the river with PCBs, so they are working with USEPA to contract some sampling and identify the area. It is estimated to be a \$6 to \$12 million project which sets the AOC back in terms of delisting. The Huron Metroparks is inquiring about a potential project to look at possible nonpoint sources at the beach to address the beach closing BUI. There has been qPCR monitoring and not too many polluters last year, however water levels were fairly high so there is interest in seeing what happens with water levels going down this year such as if there will be more closures and what the *E. coli* numbers look like. There is optimism that they are getting close to being able to remove that BUI.

River Raisin – Brian Egen shared the year four post construction cap monitoring has been completed. The results of that monitoring will be ready to share in the near future. They are working on the PAC support grant tasks, updating their website, creating some outreach posters, updating seven interpretive signs about the River Raisin Legacy Project along the river. They have created branded items to use as outreach tools. The installed fish pole mounts to encourage use of the river. They are updating their field guide and continue to work on their expanded education outreach film. They have also been working with EPA, EGLE, and USACE to repair a fish passage rock ramp that was damaged. There is a River Raisin Clean-up scheduled for July 17 and he invited everyone to come join the event. They are also working on some educational outreach materials and looking to create lesson plans that would tie directly into some of the core curriculum that is being used. They have a good relationship with the Monroe County Intermediate School District, and they encourage partnering so there is an effort to develop engagement in the river and the AOC. Now that they are in monitoring phase, they are really looking toward creating partnerships with local stakeholders and really get them involved. Barry LaRoy added that fish passage four is beginning to lose functionality at lower flows due to some of the stone moving. USACE is working on design to see how to correct that. They will be working on securing a grant to help fund the repair. Melanie added that the monitoring that Brian mentioned has been taking place every year since the project was completed and will continue until they are able to remove the benthos BUI.

Kalamazoo River – Cheryl Vosburg reported that their PAC board is meeting monthly and they have smaller work groups that are meeting more often. They are working to implement a new strategic plan. There is some ongoing work at the Trowbridge Dam site where they are preparing to complete removal of the dam over the next couple of years doing some staging and channel work. One of their responsible parties is doing some PCB remediation in area one of the AOC. They have been working closely with a channel design work group and a biological monitoring work group that John Riley initiated. There has been some good collaboration and work coming out of those groups. They joined the SPAC Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (EJ-DEI) committee and are pleased with the work being done there. They are experiencing ongoing problems with the sediment release from Morrow Dam. That drawdown released an estimated 300,000 cubic

yards of sediment downstream that is covering PCBs and is creating complications. They have a River Walker program and are having issues with finding people to hire. They have one person and are looking to get a second. The program is part of the Eat Safe Fish program through the Department of Health and Human Services and they help to educate public on fish advisories. John Riley added that the watershed council is very active with outreach and activities. Also, the Natural Resources trustees recently finalized a restoration plan to implement 14 different projects with \$12 million in funding from a recent settlement with one of the responsible parties to the Superfund site. These span from the city of Kalamazoo to Saugatuck.

Muskegon – Kathy Evans wanted to note that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) regional partnership with her office, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission is working on some road-stream crossing, fish habitat, and other improvement projects in the watershed outside the AOC and working hard to maintain public access as they revitalize the community which increases pressure on shoreline development. There are also some coastal management and green infrastructure projects and proposals as well. In the AOC there were four Legacy Act projects that have been completed that were needed to get to delisting. There are three large-scale habitat projects underway. They have volunteers (Shoreline Stewards) to help manage and maintain the completed habitats. These volunteers are also involved in the new projects doing tours with students that are involved in the West Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, a program that educates teachers in the use of water quality monitoring equipment and engaging their students in a meaningful way. They are working with Stephanie Swart to remove their remaining five BUIs, so as they complete their management actions, most related to habitat and monitoring, they are gathering documentation. Grand Valley State University did some recent monitoring to advance the removal of the eutrophication BUI which effects Bear Creek and Bear Lake, both part of the AOC. For the benthos monitoring they are working with Central Michigan University to do some coastal wetland monitoring as the streams that were once wadeable are now more like wetlands. The fish and wildlife habitat and populations BUIs are dependent upon the three project that are underway. They will be moving forward with the removal of the aesthetics BUI. (Stephanie noted that the removal document is being reviewed by USEPA now and once they approve the draft it will be sent to the PAC for acceptance and put on public notice.) The habitat projects include a 53-acre celery farm that is being returned to wetland habitat. There is also a project at the former Standard oil dock at the mouth of Ruddiman Creek. The last project is the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve and helped to eliminate a large amount of invasives. They are working toward advancing the delisting of the AOC when it comes time.

St. Clair River – Paulette Duhaime reported that the PAC last met in May and centered mainly on the drinking water BUI which is still outstanding in the U.S. and Canada. Canada presented an assessment and is moving forward with a removal document. On the U.S. side they have completed their public survey for the drinking water BUI asking residents how they feel about their water. The good news that most people are confident in their water but have concerns about spills, permitted discharges, and bacterial contamination.

They are beginning to develop a program to educate the public about the quality of the drinking water in hopes that by next year they will have the removal document completed and can remove the BUI. Canada is also doing a fish consumption survey that is open to both the Canadian and U.S. sides working on removing the fish consumption BUI in Canada. In the U.S. they are still waiting for data analysis from the state to see if progress is sufficient to remove the BUI. Canada has also started two online sites. One is a St. Clair River Story map which highlights habitat restoration projects. It currently highlights Canadian projects, but they are working to include the U.S. projects as well. This site can be accessed at <https://arcg.is/18DDKG>. The second site is where St. Clair Regional Conservation Authority has started a virtual field trip. This can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/GLHuronErieCorridor>. They are still working on getting a plan together for life after delisting. They are using the University of Michigan student's plan and that has become a regular part of their meetings. Friends of the St. Clair River in the U.S. and Sherie Faust, its president, has organized the Sturgeon Festival this year. There were two cruises on the Huron Lady that allowed guest to interact with fishery biologists catching, tagging and releasing Lake Sturgeon underneath the Bluewater Bridge. They are hoping to upgrade it back to full capacity next year. The Friends are also doing butterfly monitoring and habitats, invasive species management, general education projects, and beach monitoring. They are developing a habitat monitoring scorecard to help evaluate habitat projects and communicate with managers by relating the quality of the habitat project, highlight problems, and identify actions needed for maintenance.

Detroit River – Bob Burns wanted to share the habitat restoration and sediment work being done as their nine remaining BUIs are related to those. For habitat restoration projects, the 14 that are on their list have all at least reached the design completion phase. They are currently working to complete five projects that remain on the list. The Detroit Riverwalk Park project is an area of shoreline of continuous parkway that is lined with steel sea walls. There will be in-cuts made to the walls to create some wetland areas. At Belle Isle, the Lake Okonoka project is underway (and nearly complete) in association with the Heron Lagoon which are two impounded lakes with no connection to the Detroit River. By opening these two bodies of water to the river, it will open up habitat from the river for fish spawning. Also, on Belle Isle is a restoration and hydrological work on the Flatwoods forest. That should be completed next year and work on Belle Isle will be done. At Hennepin Marsh they are waiting for the final permits and funding will be coming in September and hopefully the project can begin. The final project is Sugar Island which has seen a lot of erosion and the project is to stabilize the shoreline and create a series of horseshoe shaped shoals to create 10-15 acres for wetland development.

For sediment work there is quite a bit of it. Last year a capping project was completed near the old Uniroyal site, design plans are underway for remediation along the shoreline just above the Ambassador Bridge, a project along the shoreline in the upper Trenton Channel that is working through final design and negotiation with property owners, a couple of projects in the midsection of the Trenton Channel just below the Gross Ile toll bridge.

Lower Menominee River – Keith West had words of encouragement in that once you're delisted things slow down quite a bit. They are still active as they work to determine how they're going to proceed now that they have been delisted. Because of COVID restrictions, they did not have a public event to celebrate the delisting of the AOC and they hope to be able to do so in the near future. This past week they had their first post-delisting maintenance activity in some of their habitat projects. Earlier this spring they discovered that high water levels over the past couple of years along with ice had a negative impact on some of the habitat work that was done. Bird houses had been toppled by wave action and ice and vegetation was underwater, so they engaged a crew from the Superior Watershed Partnership to come down and repair some structures and clean up. They have to determine what steps to take to repair some of the damage that was done.

Manistique River – John Riley shared that all management actions are complete in the AOC and there are two remaining BUIs. The restriction on dredging activities is one and John has completed the draft of the removal document and has passed it on to federal partners for technical review. Hopefully that BUI will be removed by the end of the year. That leaves the fish consumption BUI. Sampling of those fish will wait a few years to provide some time for the contaminants to work their way out of the system. The last sediment removal project wrapped up in 2019. After a couple of years, it is hoped that concentrations of PCBs will have dropped significantly enough to remove the BUI at that point.

The group broke for lunch at just after 11:30 AM.

PM Session began at 1 PM

Horst welcomed everyone back to the afternoon session and introduced the first presenters.

University of Michigan Master's Team Project – Assessing Equity and Environmental Justice in the GLRI (Helena Garcia/Logan Murphy)

Helena and Logan presented the results from the group project they did as part of their program at UM SEAS. Their two co-authors could not be present. The study is an inquiry into emphasizing social equity across the GLRI with an aim to highlight how more equitable restoration processes are necessary for equitable Great Lakes revitalization and increased local interest and care for water resources, sustainability, and GLRI investments. The project provides insight into how current GLRI and AOC restoration projects translate to social outcomes that can impact resource equity and quality of life for Great Lakes communities.

Laura Rubin from HOW, the client for this project, commented that it had been a pleasure working with the students and their project was complimentary to work that the coalition was undertaking in looking at equity in the GLRI.

The slides for this presentation are attached to the end of these minutes.

SPAC Environmental Justice Subcommittee Report Out – Paulette Duhaime

Paulette shared that the subcommittee has been established and has met twice so far. The committee discussed how the PACs might begin to address environmental justice (EJ) issues along with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues and begin to develop a plan or standards. They also heard from the Clinton River Watershed Council and Friends of the Rouge about their ongoing work toward EJ-DEI work. She discussed the issues identified, steps to be taken, and a recommendation to EGLE to hire a consultant to evaluate the SPAC program and assist PACs with ongoing EJ-DEI work.

The slides for this presentation are attached to the end of these minutes.

It was also mentioned that the Michigan Environmental Justice Conference had taken place just a few weeks prior and had some very good presentations. All of the sessions were recorded and can be accessed at https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3308_3333-551173--,00.html.

University of Michigan Master's Team Project – Bridging the Gap: Designing a Course of Action with Michigan's Public Advisory Councils – James Polidori

James shared that he recently graduated and is currently working with the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Regional Center as the as the Water Equity and Affordability Policy intern. His focus in working towards creating better policies that will improve clean and affordable water access. The goal of the project was to work alongside Michigan PACs and EGLE to translate previous SEAS master's capstone recommendations into concrete implementation plans. The project resulted into individual plans for each PAC to use to guide their work and a set of recommendations for action-oriented implementation.

The slides for this presentation are attached to the end of these minutes.

Discussion of Recommendations from UM Master's Team PAC Project

- Presentation of Recommendations to EGLE – Melanie shared a short set of slides of the recommendations for the SPAC meetings. These are attached to the end of these minutes.
- Small Group Breakout Sessions – attendees were broken into four groups for 30 minutes to discuss some questions that Melanie presented to address ways the SPAC could integrate the UM recommendations. Each breakout had an AOC coordinator and chose an SPAC member to report out to the larger group.
- Full SPAC Group Discussion – once the breakout session ended, the groups came back and began sharing the results of their individual group discussions. The responses from the group varied from continuing virtual meetings to holding two-day, in person meetings at various AOC sites, changing or eliminating the PAC report outs, holding three meetings per year with an option for a fourth if needed or wanted, and adding EJ-DEI committee report outs as a standing agenda item. Some of the benefits listed for in-person meetings were networking and sidebar conversations. Benefits of virtual meetings were more people could attend and because there is no need to travel, that can help in winter. There were lots of ideas and these issues will be discussed more over time.

There were two poll questions posted during the full group discussion, the first was "How often should the SPAC meet?" and of 18 responses, 83% answered "3x per year", 11% answered "4x per year", and 5% answered "other".

The second question was "Does your PAC send, or plan to send, a representative from your AOC to participate on the Environmental Justice subcommittee?" and of 10 responses, 60% answered "yes" and 40% answered "maybe". (this question was meant to have been asked earlier in the afternoon during that agenda item).

Next Meetings and Future Topics

Rick shared that at the last SPAC meeting it was proposed that the fall SPAC meeting be held in concert with the AOC conference and there was overall support for doing that. There are a couple of options one being holding the SPAC meeting after the conference on the afternoon of September 30, which would only allow for a short meeting and delay

travel back home. The other option would be meet the day before the conference which would conflict with the tours that are being planned. Alternatively, we could meet on the morning before the conference but that could mean an additional night's stay in Muskegon. There was some discussion and Kimberly added a poll question to gage consensus and 83% preferred to hold the meeting on the afternoon after the conference. Rick asked that folks place a hold on their calendars for the afternoon of September 30, 2021 for that meeting.

Horst asked if the group may want to hold another virtual meeting later this year as well. Rick said that it was possible that we could do one in late 2021 or early 2022 (essentially the winter meeting). Rick committed to setting up a Doodle poll to find a date in the December/January time frame to see when would be good for that meeting.

Rick asked if anyone had topic suggestions for the September 30, 2021. The EJ-DEI committee report out will be added as a standing item for the agenda. One idea was an item to discuss if there was anything that came out of the AOC conference that should be looked at more in-depth. Another topic suggested was the delay in getting data on fish sampling to inform the fish consumption BUIs. Rick said he would look into that and try to have a report out.

Dennis Zimmerman made a motion to adjourn, there was no second and no objections, so Horst concluded the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Action Items:

- Rick and Melanie will check election dates and ensure planning for next cycle.
- Melanie will follow up with Rouge and St. Marys River AOCs to confirm their SPAC representative.
- A Doodle poll will be to schedule a December 2021 or January 2022 meeting.
- A timeline for fish analysis and results will be prepared for report out.

Assessing Equity and Environmental Justice in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative





Acknowledgements

Project
Client



Laura Rubin
Healing Our Waters-Great
Lakes Coalition
Executive Director

Project
Advisor



Dr. Paul Seelbach



Tiffany Wu



Briana Wendland



Helena Garcia



Logan Murphy

UM GLRI
Equity
Team



Project Rationale

Historical Environmental Degradation & Injustice



Cuyahoga River Fire, Nov. 1952

Who is involved?

Great Lakes Restoration



Muskegon Lake Habitat Restoration

Who is benefiting?

Sustainable & Just Great Lakes Revitalization

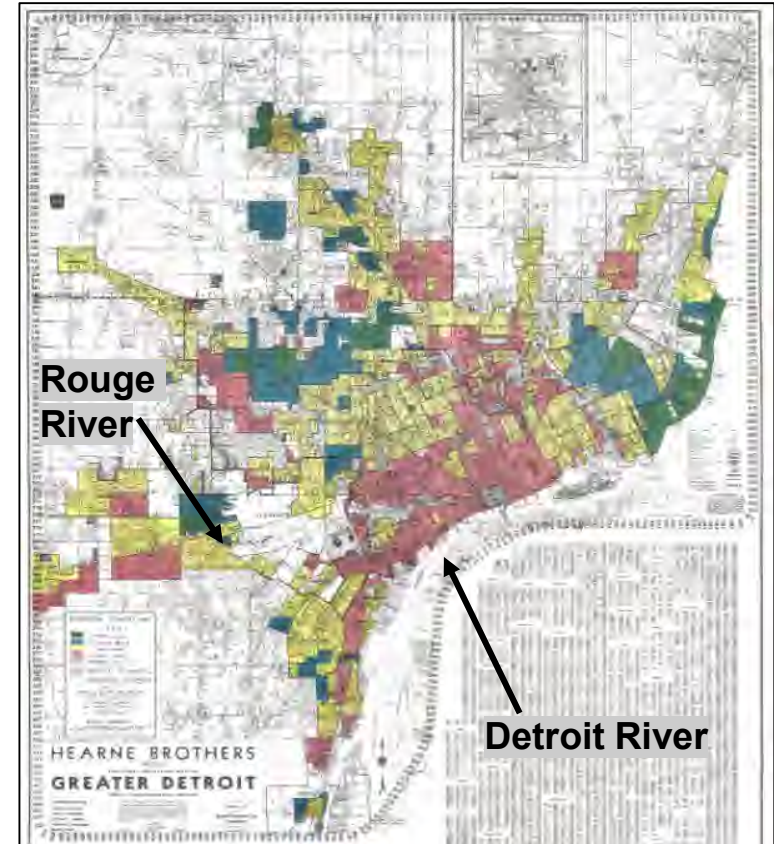
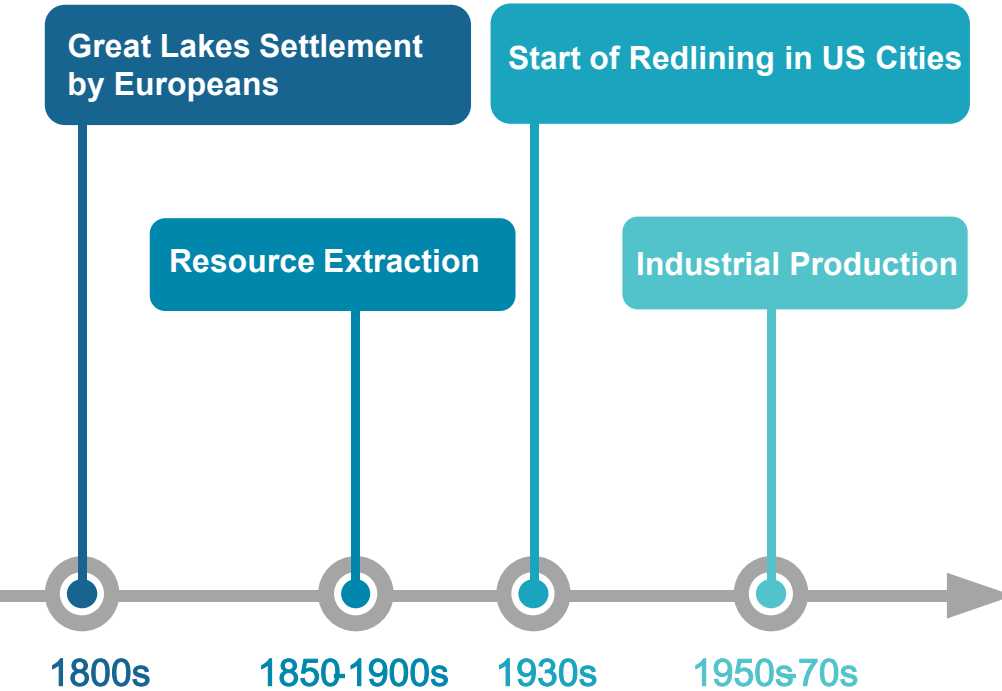


Detroit Riverwalk

Who has been impacted?

Project Rationale

History of Great Lakes Environmental Degradation



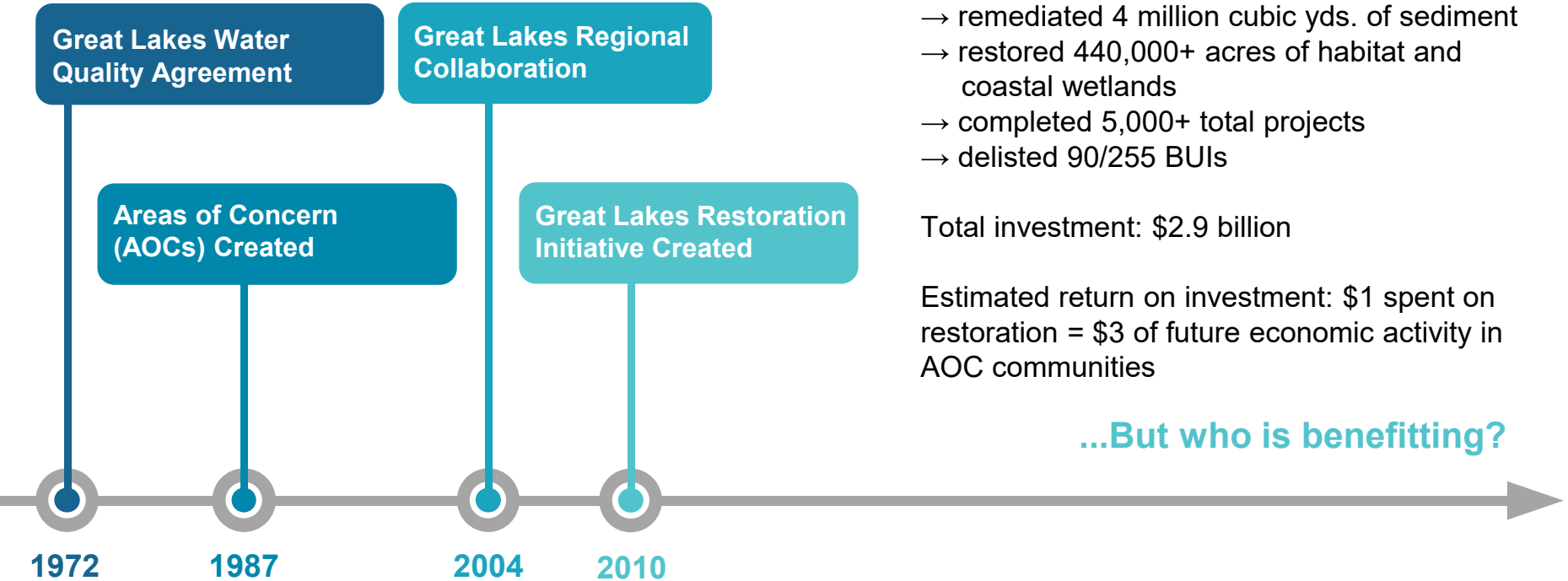
■ "Hazardous"

■ "Definitely Declining"



Project Rationale

Great Lakes Environmental Restoration



Since 2010 the GLRI has...

- remediated 4 million cubic yds. of sediment
- restored 440,000+ acres of habitat and coastal wetlands
- completed 5,000+ total projects
- delisted 90/255 BUIs

Total investment: \$2.9 billion

Estimated return on investment: \$1 spent on restoration = \$3 of future economic activity in AOC communities

...But who is benefitting?

Project Rationale

The GLRI is a catalyst for Great Lakes revitalization towards:

- A prosperous **blue economy** that embraces freshwater health and sustainability
- A **21st century freshwater culture** where freshwater benefits are valued and shared by all Great Lakes communities

Considerations of equity and justice in this restoration process are crucial for setting the tone of this revitalization.

If equity and justice are NOT considered in the GLRI, we risk:

- Further impacting the people of the Great Lakes, particularly communities who have been most impacted by freshwater contamination
- The long term sustainability of GLRI investments if a broad coalition of people are not aware of, connected to, or interested in restoration efforts



“Stewardship and care are essential elements to this program because long after the GLRI is gone, who will be taking care of it all?”



Our Project

Our study begins this inquiry into emphasizing social equity across the GLRI.

We aim to highlight how **more equitable restoration processes are necessary for equitable Great Lakes revitalization** and increased local interest and care for water resources, sustainability, and GLRI investments.

Our project provides insight into how current **GLRI and AOC restoration projects translate to social outcomes** that can impact resource equity and quality of life for Great Lakes communities.



Project Highlights

1

Assessing community dynamics and social value given to GLRI restoration work, using community interviews.

2

Mapping of spatial data for investigating patterns between historical injustices, GLRI project distribution, and community demographics.

3

Equity-informed recommendations for the HOW Coalition's GLRI and AOC advocacy.

Case Study AOC Communities

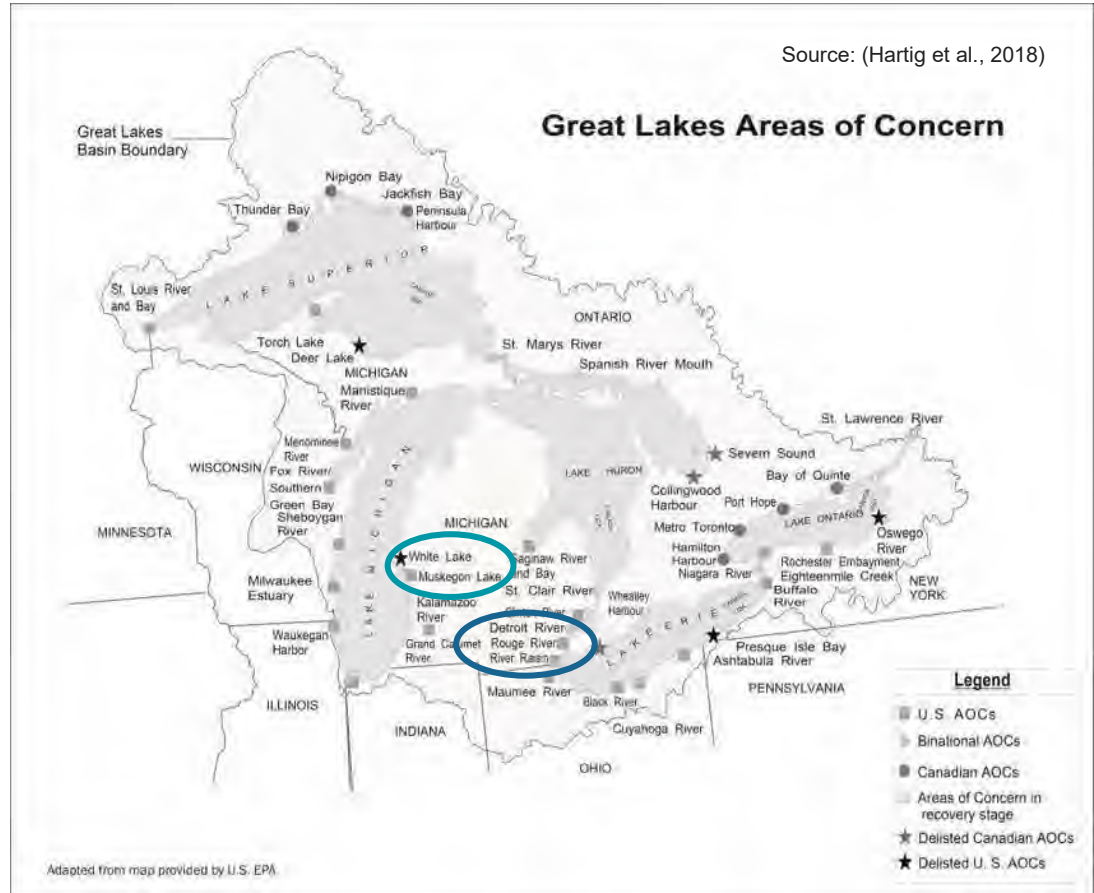
Western Michigan

- Muskegon Lake
- White Lake

Eastern Michigan

- Rouge River & Detroit River
- River Raisin

Source: (Hartig et al., 2018)





Community Interviews

Goals:

- Listen to how AOC communities have been impacted by their impaired freshwater resources
- Understand how current and past AOC restoration efforts are perceived
- Learn about each community's larger context of issues and priorities from new perspectives other than the "usual suspects"

Findings:

- Context Gathering Interviews: 19
- AOC Community Interviews: 26



Community Interviews

AOC Community Interviews Narrative Themes

River Raisin	Rouge River	Muskegon Lake	White Lake
GLRI and AOC Structure	Local Groups and Leaders	Local Groups and Leaders	Sense of Pride
Education	GLRI and AOC Structure	Demographics and Justice	GLRI and AOC Structure
Sense of Pride	Demographics and Justice	Community Concerns and Priorities	Community Concerns and Priorities
	Community Concerns and Priorities		



Restoration Process Themes



Community Context Themes

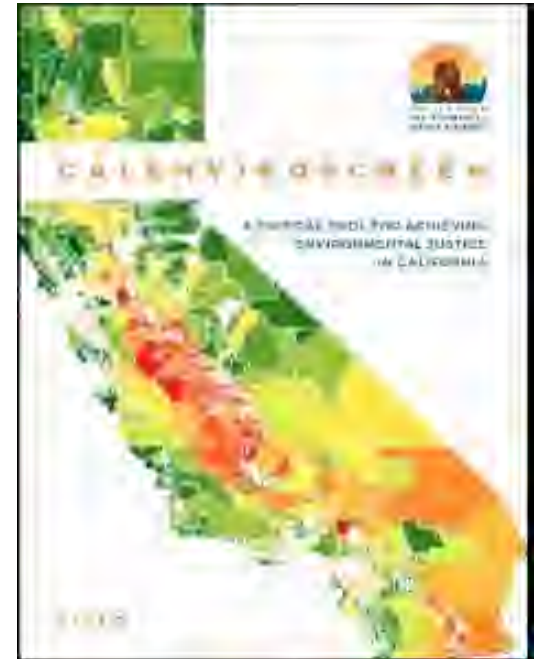


Restoration Outcomes Themes

Mapping Spatial Patterns

Goals and Methods:

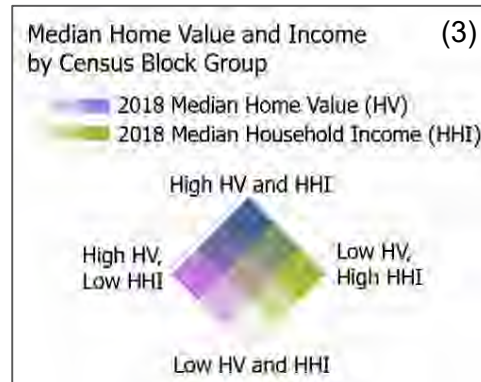
- Highlight the value and uses of geospatial data and tools
 - Mapping cumulative impacts
 - Examples: CalEnviroScreen, EJSCREEN
- Connect historically unjust policies (i.e., redlining) to the development of and environmental hazards and disproportionate impacts to communities today
- Understand how GLRI project locations relate to demographic factors



Mapping Spatial Patterns

Spatial datasets of interest:

1. GLRI project distribution [EPA](#)
2. Redlined neighborhoods [Mapping Inequality Project](#)
3. Median Home Value and Household Income [ESRI](#)
4. Race Demographics [US 2010 Census](#)
5. Michigan EJ Scores [UM SEAS](#)
6. Social Vulnerability Index [CDC](#)





Mapping Spatial Patterns

Michigan EJ Scores

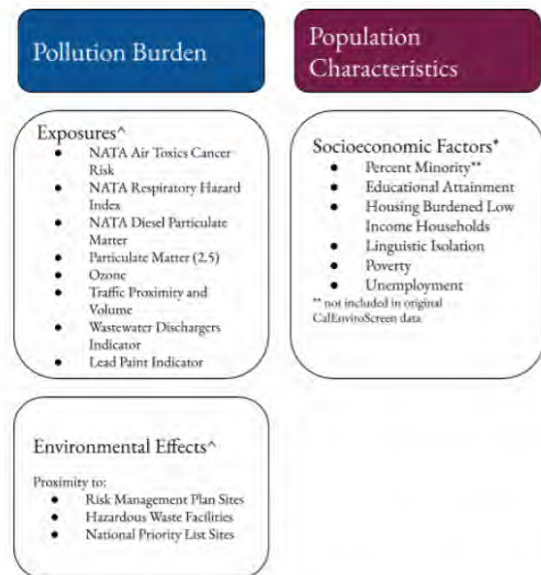
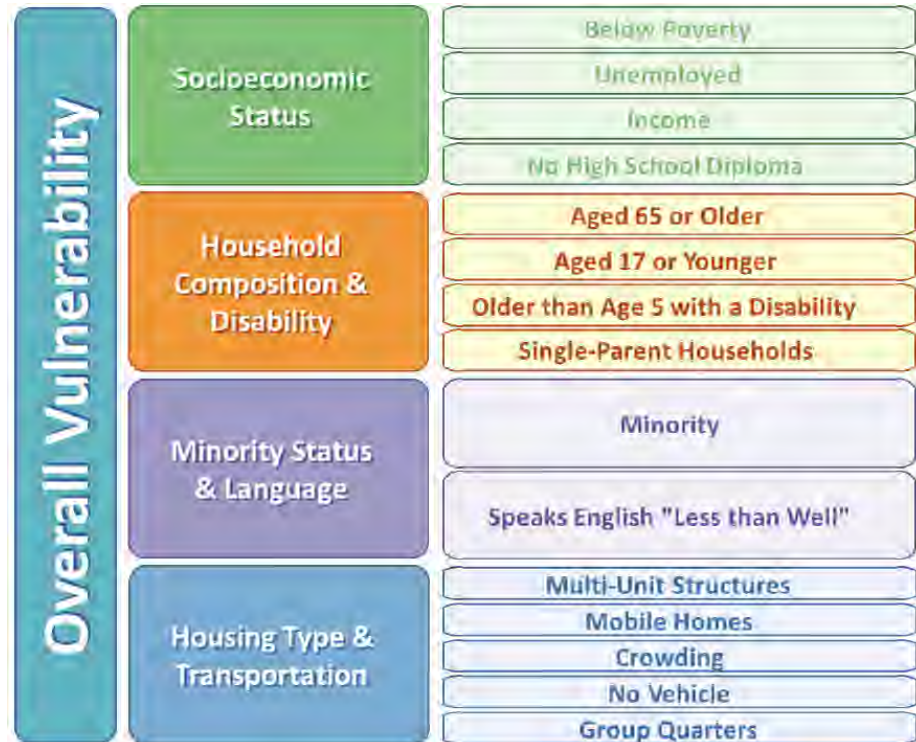


Figure 12. Main components used by the team in the Michigan-specific analysis used to calculate environmental justice scores.

[^]Data within these subcomponents used data from US EPA's EJScreen tool.

*The exclusion of the health-based indicators of vulnerability included in CalEnviroScreen's "Sensitive Populations" subcomponent results in an increased weighting of "Socioeconomic Factors" within the main component of "Population Characteristics" and the overall score.

Social Vulnerability Index





River Raisin AOC

01

GLRI and AOC Structure

- Public Advisory Council (PAC) housed within the city Commission on the Environment and Water Quality
- PAC works with local community organizations on: awareness, volunteering, and education efforts

02

Education

- Educational materials: field guide & documentary
- Partnering with indigenous tribes at the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, school programs, and local water festivals

03

Sense of Pride

With restoration, the community has seen:

- Increased public access and affinity towards river
- New business opportunities
- Increased recreational enjoyment of the river

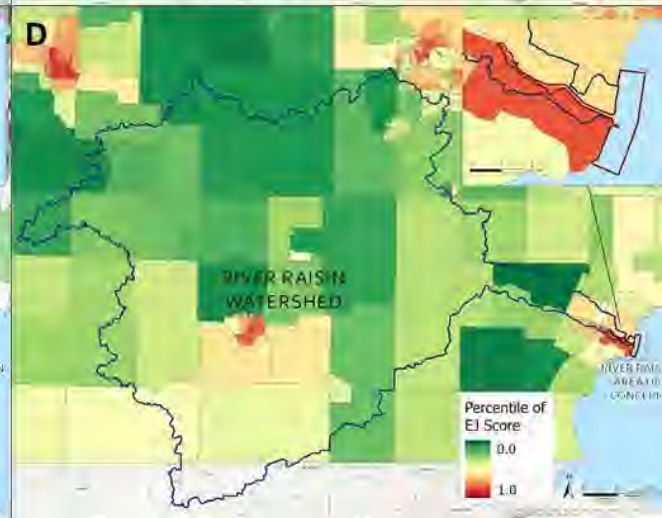
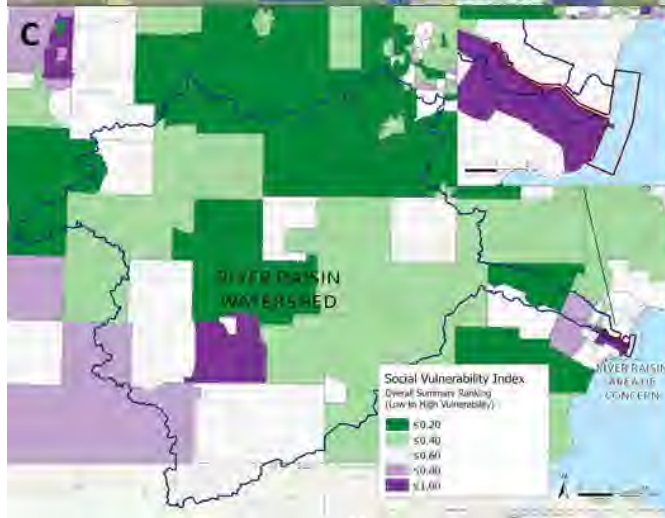
River Raisin AOC

Diverse range of household income and home value

Notable regions: the mouth of the River Raisin (AOC) and around Adrian, MI

Greater racial diversity and higher values of community vulnerability and cumulative impact from EJ score in those areas

- 5 census tracts within top 20% EJ score in all of Michigan





Rouge River and Detroit River AOCs

01

Local Groups and Leaders

- Local organizations with strong connections and history of engagement with community members
- Disconnect between community organizations and AOC project process

02

GLRI and AOC Structure

- Lack of information sharing and community input on restoration work
- Barriers to project planning and implementation

03

Demographics and Justice

- Diverse communities, some have little connection to water and barriers for engaging with water resources
- Persistent racism, institutional legacies, and historical restrictions

04

Community Concerns and Priorities

- Relationship with industry
- Subsistence fishing and public access
- Water flooding issues and stormwater management

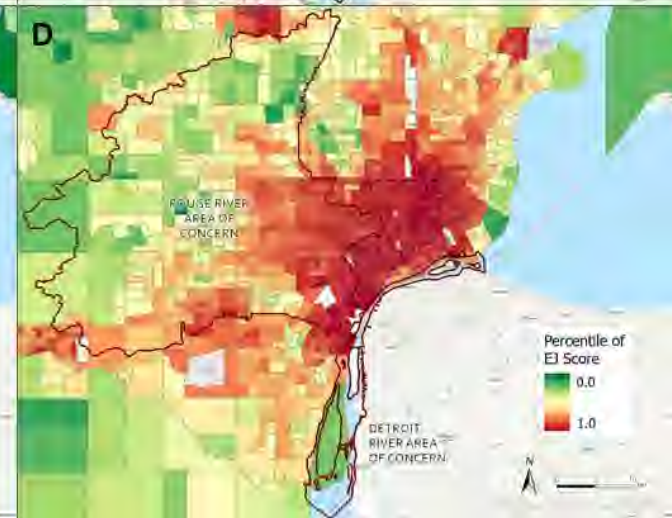
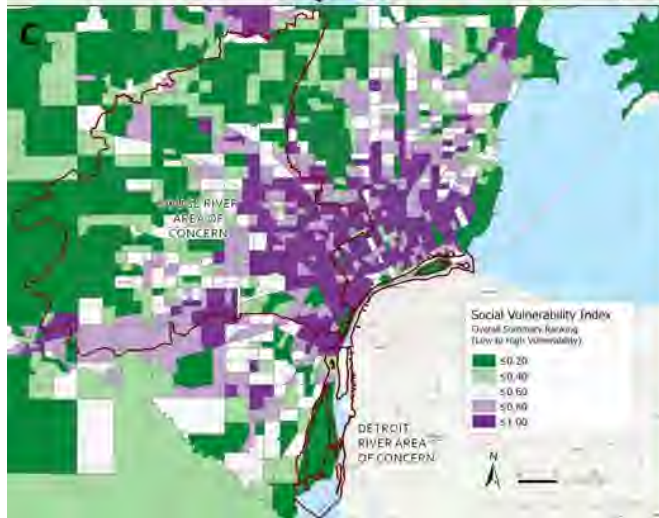
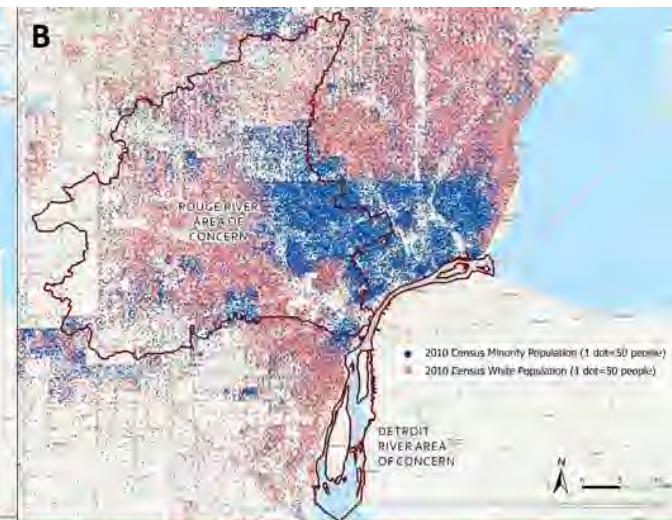
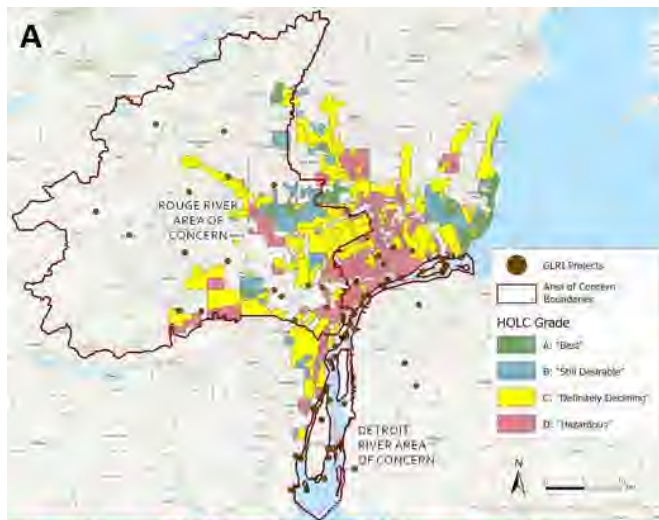
Rouge River & Detroit River AOCs

Redlined neighborhoods with lowest grades are near and within Detroit

Consistent relationships across all maps

Notable regions:

- Melvindale, Detroit, and River Rouge within top 10% for vulnerability and EJ score
- Census tracts around River Rouge are within top 2% for EJ scores





Muskegon Lake AOC

01

Local Groups and Leaders

- The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) plays a primary role in grant processes and community engagement
- Relationship and collaboration with the PAC

02

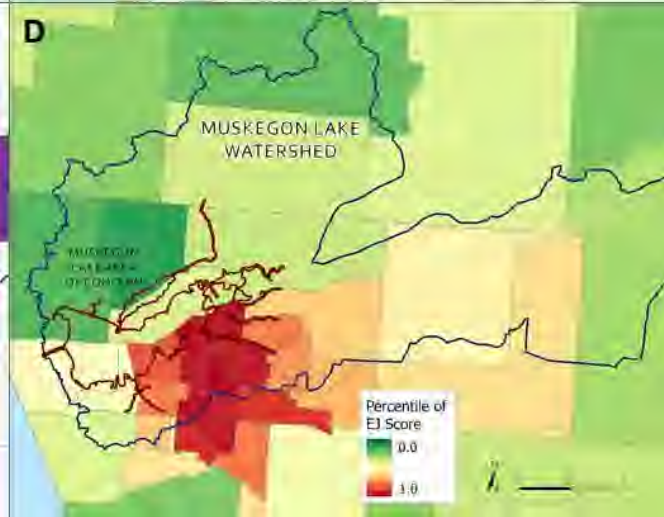
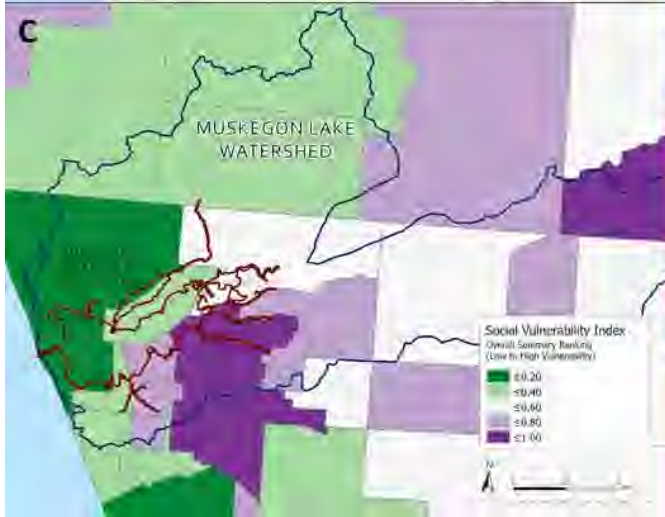
Demographics and Justice

- Underrepresented communities have limited connection to Lake Muskegon & restoration
- Strength in identifying and connecting through neighborhood associations

03

Community Concerns and Priorities

- Knowledge and availability of public access points
- Balancing city development with community use
- Disability accessibility considerations



Muskegon Lake AOC

Redlined neighborhoods with lowest grades are south of Muskegon Lake

Similar to Detroit, maps show consistent patterns

Notable regions:

- Jackson Hill, Marquette, and Muskegon Heights
- 7 of 12 census tracts south of Muskegon Lake in top 10% of most vulnerable
- 9 of 12 in top 10% of EJ score



White Lake AOC

01

Sense of Pride

With restoration and delisting, the community has seen:

- Changing perceptions and increased social investment in the community
- Increased tourism and recreational opportunities

02

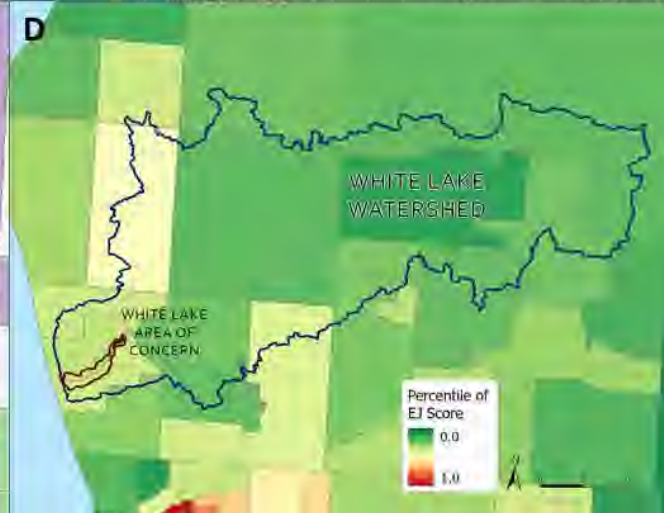
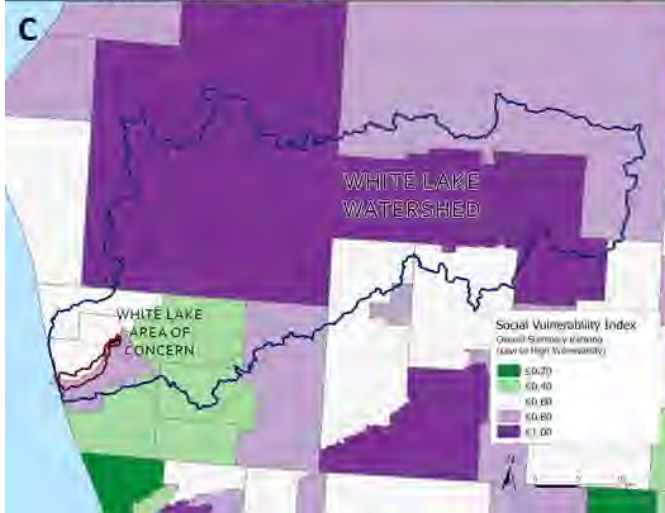
GLRI and AOC
Structure

- PAC driven and self-directed restoration process
- Importance of the local newspaper for community awareness and perception

03

Community Concerns
and Priorities

- Lingering concerns of water quality and health
- Invasive species, flooding, and climate change



White Lake AOC

Range of median income and home values, with especially high home value around the AOC

Low racial diversity across the watershed

Interesting contrast in relationship between community vulnerability and EJ score

Comparison as a delisted site, and potential for future mapping on social benefits



Recommendations

Actions the HOW Coalition can pursue with community organizations across the Great Lakes

Equity efforts the HOW Coalition should prioritize in their GLRI advocacy work with Congress (Policy recommendations)

Equity efforts the HOW Coalition should prioritize in their GLRI advocacy work with Congress (Administrative recommendations)



Recommendations

Actions the HOW Coalition can pursue with community organizations across the Great Lakes

**Connect and empower
community organizations
that work within or adjacent
to Areas of Concern.**

Facilitate equitable information
sharing and collaboration in
restoration work and community
engagement efforts.

**Catalog and highlight
example projects that
consider equity outcomes
AOCs and GLRI projects.**

(ex. local job creation, increased
public access)



Recommendations

Equity efforts the HOW Coalition should prioritize through their GLRI advocacy work with Congress (Policy)

Additional funding and capacity resources should be made available to underserved communities.

(ex. for granting applications and maintenance of GLRI and AOC projects)

Include specific social justice language and goals in GLRI planning, granting, and project evaluation.

(ex. local job creation, increasing public access, incorporating community use interests for restored spaces)



Recommendations

Equity efforts the HOW Coalition should prioritize through their GLRI advocacy work with Congress (Administrative)

Call for greater requirements and resourcing for public engagement in the restoration process.

Develop intentional support channels for stewardship after delisting.



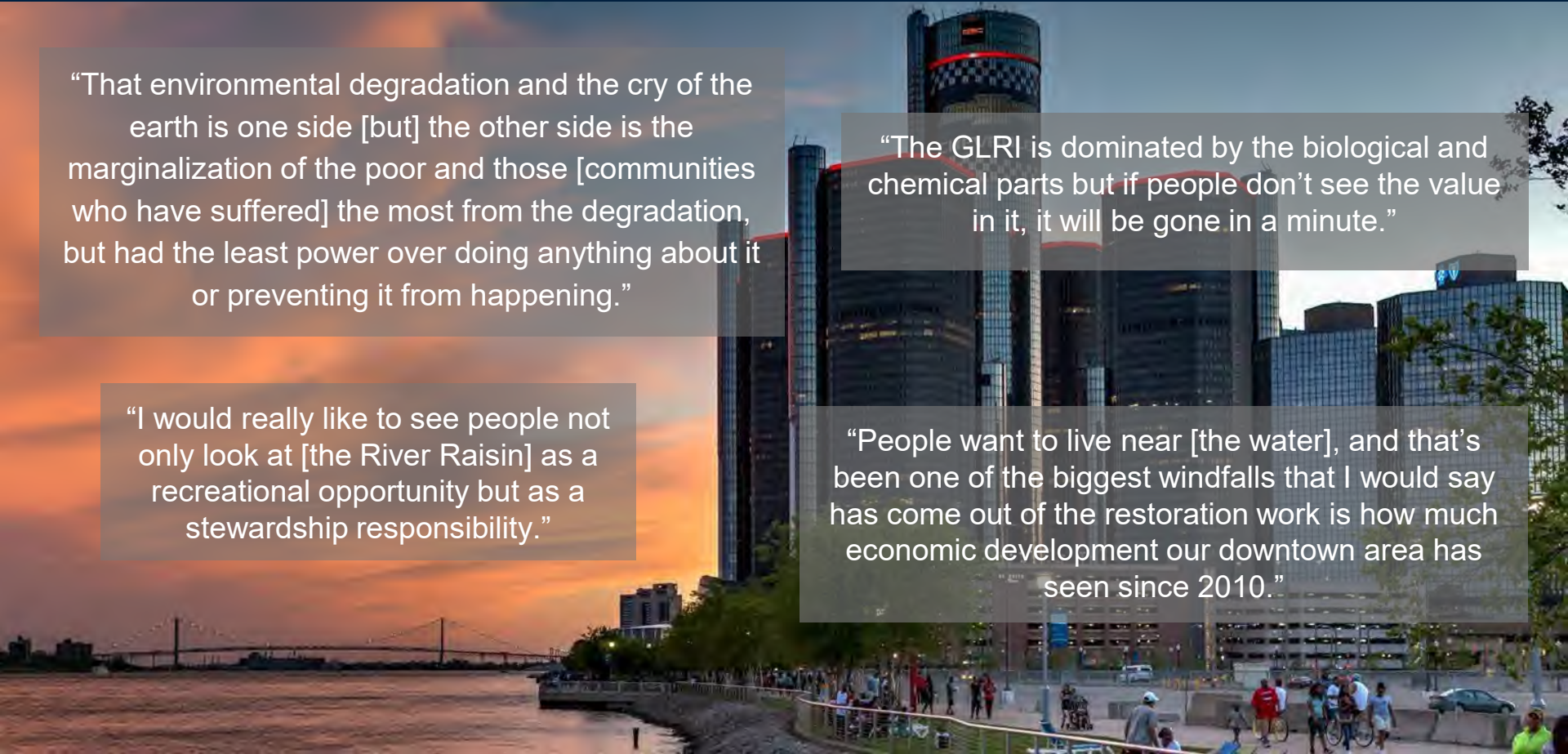
A Critical Point for the Region's Future

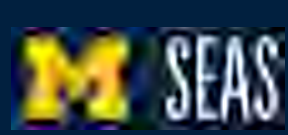
“That environmental degradation and the cry of the earth is one side [but] the other side is the marginalization of the poor and those [communities who have suffered] the most from the degradation, but had the least power over doing anything about it or preventing it from happening.”

“I would really like to see people not only look at [the River Raisin] as a recreational opportunity but as a stewardship responsibility.”


“The GLRI is dominated by the biological and chemical parts but if people don't see the value in it, it will be gone in a minute.”

“People want to live near [the water], and that's been one of the biggest windfalls that I would say has come out of the restoration work is how much economic development our downtown area has seen since 2010.”





Thank you!

An aerial photograph of a coastal region. In the foreground, there is a large body of water, likely a river or bay, with several small islands and peninsulas. The water is a deep blue, and the surrounding land is green with trees and some industrial or agricultural structures. In the background, a city is visible, with buildings and a large body of water (likely Lake Michigan) in the distance. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

Questions?
GLRIEquityTeam2021@umich.edu

SPAC ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE
MELANIE FOOSE & KIMBERLY PASSICK, EGLE
HORST SCHMIIDT, TORCH LAKE AOC
KATHY EVANS, MUSKEGON LAKE AOC
JACKIE SERRAN & TRISHA BLICHARSKI, DETROIT RIVER AOC
CHERYL VOSBURG & DOUG MCLAUGHLIN, KALAMAZOO RIVER AOC
PAULETTE DUHAIME, ST. CLAIR RIVER AOC

MEETING DATES: APRIL 28, 2021 & JUNE 11, 2021

April – Discussion on PACs developing an Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (EJ/DEI) plan and/or standards.

June – Presentation by the Clinton River Watershed Council & Friends of the Rouge River on their ongoing Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion organizational audit.

- ▶ Setting standards should include a good understanding of the demographics of each AOC.
- ▶ Policies should be developed to recruit & keep diverse members involved.
- ▶ PAC recruitment is a problem in all AOCs. We may need to take the work of the PAC to minority and underserved communities.
- ▶ Assessment of community needs will be useful in engaging communities. Community surveys on various topics have been used successfully by some PACs.
- ▶ Additional funding to PACs will be needed to promote diversity and target underserved communities.

- ▶ The PACs will need some expert advice on how to develop plans/standards.
- ▶ The subcommittee would like to have a representative from each PAC. Minority representation would be optimal.
- ▶ What do the PACs need to develop an EJ/DEI plan?
- ▶ The subject of EJ/DEI should be on every SPAC agenda moving forward.

- ▶ Guests at the June 11th meeting were: Anne Braise & Eric Diesing, Clinton River Watershed Council; Marie McCormick, Friends of the Rouge River.
- ▶ In 2020 they received a grant from the Erb Foundation to do a EJ/DEI organizational audit including surveys of individuals to assess bias.
- ▶ Documents are being edited to remove bias.
- ▶ EJ/DEI training is being conducted for all the councils then each council will develop a plan.
- ▶ They recommend ongoing work with the consultant to evaluate effectiveness of plans.

- ▶ APPLICATIONS TO VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS LIKE PACs.
- ▶ Evaluate who does the recruitment of new members. A diverse staff will attract diverse members.
- ▶ How are messages & information delivered? Evaluate language, media, etc.
- ▶ Community mapping & asset mapping can help identify minority and underserved communities.
- ▶ Learn as much as you can about the communities, their needs & attitudes, before reaching out to them.
- ▶ EJ/DEI needs to be integrated into all of our processes.

- ▶ WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH LIMITED RESOURCES?
- ▶ Identify personal & organizational bias with training videos from the Equity Foundation, www.usdn.org/equity-foundations-training.html.
- ▶ Municipalities & community organizations may already be doing EJ/DEI work that the PACs could coordinate with.
- ▶ Evaluate “gatekeepers” or barriers that might be obstructing people from becoming involved
- ▶ Evaluate what is being done now that meets EJ/DEI criteria. What is working & what can we learn from it?

▶ ACTION ITEMS:

- ▶ All members of the SPAC Environmental Justice subcommittee will do the online training at the Equity Foundation website and share this training with their PACs.
 - ▶ The Clinton River Watershed Council and Friends of the Rouge River will share their RFPs for hiring EJ/DEI consultants with Melanie Foose to use as a guideline for SPAC/PAC use.
- ▶ SPAC EJ SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO SPAC.
- ▶ Request that EGLE hire a consultant to help the AOC program develop an EJ/DEI plan.
 - ▶ Request that EGLE prioritize funding for EJ/DEI work in the next grant cycle.
 - ▶ There should be a representative from each PAC on the EJ subcommittee.



Bridging the Implementation Gap: Designing a Course of Action with Michigan Public Advisory Councils

Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori, Emily Rau,
and Paige Schurr



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY



SEAS

SCHOOL FOR ENVIRONMENT
AND SUSTAINABILITY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

01

BACKGROUND

02

METHODS

03

RESULTS

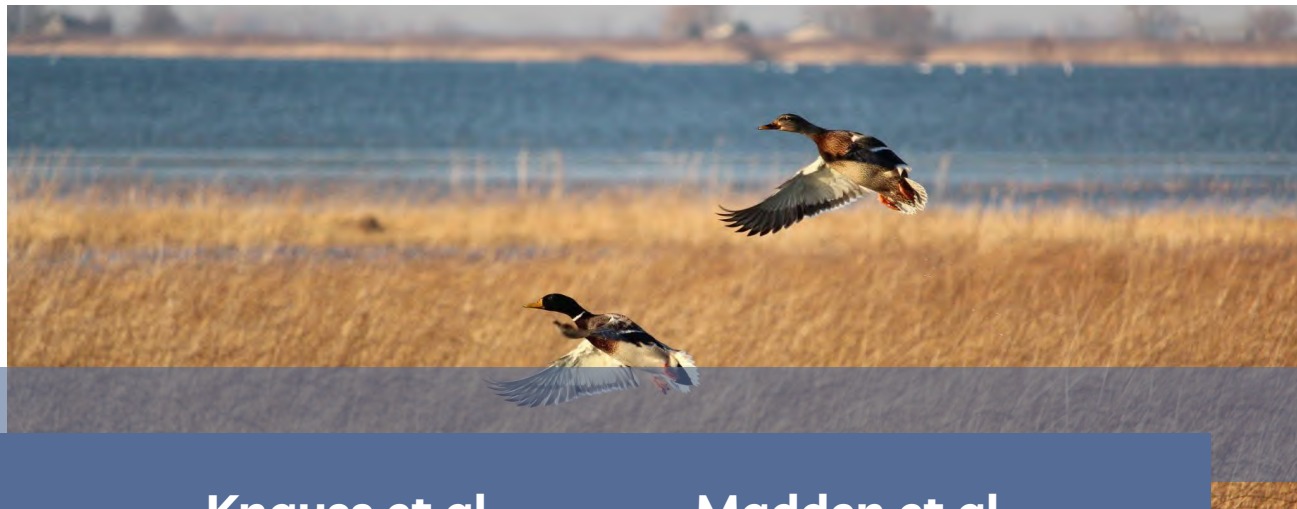
04

COMMON THEMES

05

RECOMMENDATIONS

THREE PREVIOUS SEAS CAPSTONES



Vogelsong Zejnati, 2019

- Identified attributes that enable and constrain PACs' ability to influence RAP implementation progress
- Provided nine recommendations to the AOC program

Knauss et al., 2019

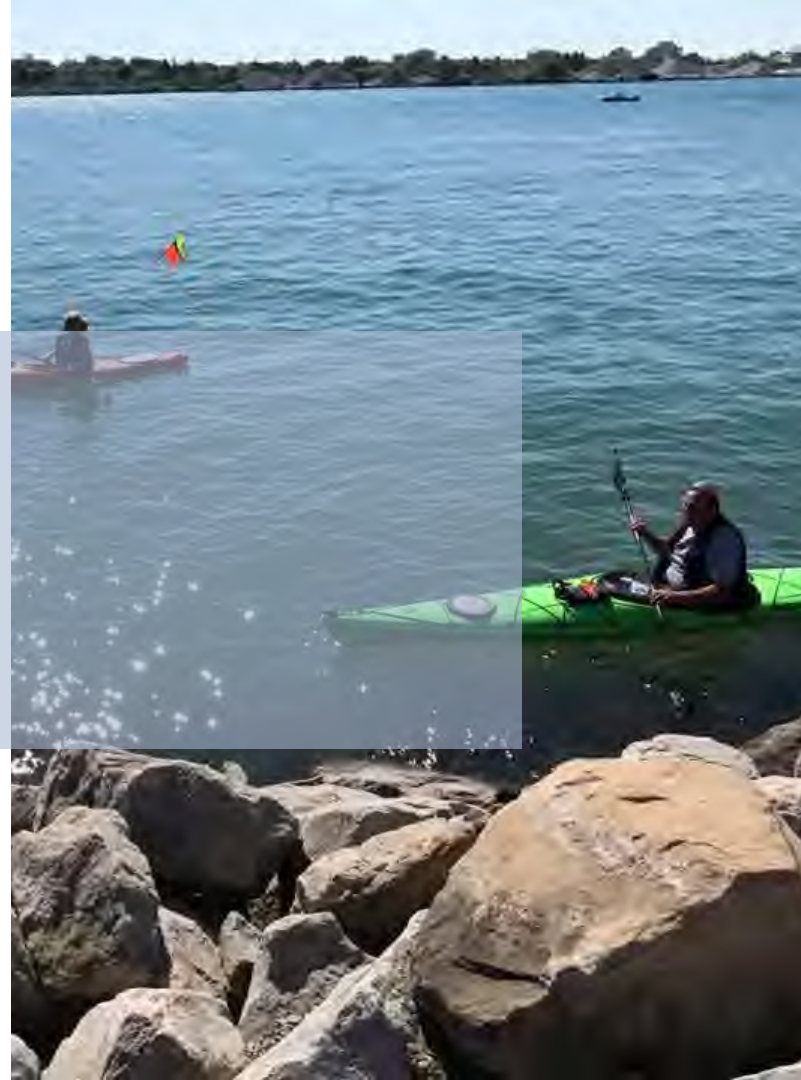
- Identified how the Michigan AOC program can best prepare AOC communities and their PACs for long-term success after delisting
- Provided nine recommendations to the AOC program

Madden et al., 2020

- Identified challenges of community engagement and participation in the most complex AOCs
- Provided six recommendations to the AOC program

THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

- Defined as the disconnect between the information and knowledge that researchers have uncovered and what practitioners know and incorporate into practice
- It is not merely a gap that knowledge and evidence must traverse, it is best to think of this gap as a space to be filled by partnership and collaboration
- Research must become embedded into the “collaborative social and decision processes comprising the spaces where policy scenarios and grassroots action play-out”





IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEM

It is challenging to turn the 24 recommendations into action because:

1. The process of implementation is abstract
2. Each PAC is unique, with their own cultures, identities, histories, and contexts
3. PACs have to overcome limited time, resources, and collective expertise



PROJECT GOAL

Work alongside Michigan PACs and EGLE to translate previous SEAS master's capstone recommendations into concrete implementation plans

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1

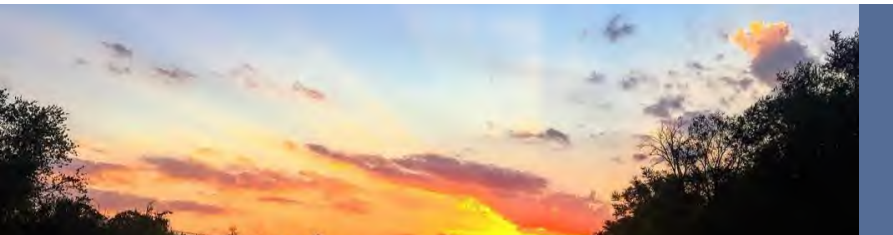
To determine which of the eight recommendations each PAC is interested in.

OBJECTIVE 2

To collaborate with PACs and create individualized implementation plans that document what strategies they outlined as potential paths forward.

OBJECTIVE 3

To provide recommendations to EGLE and the PACs that we feel will contribute to strengthening PACs' organizational structure, capacity, and durability.



DATA GATHERING

- **Phase I Interviews**
 - Designed to determine the interest and readiness of each individual PAC to implement their selections from our proposed set of recommendations
- **One-Page Theme Documents**
 - Contained each PAC's organizational strengths, areas for improvement, and the recommendations they were interested in implementing
- **Phase II Conversations**
 - Used probing questions to build dialog around the recommendations of interest among PAC members and their AOC coordinator





QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

- **Hand-coded Interviews**
 - Developed a codebook to determine the accuracy of our original one-page theme documents and to further build out the implications of our research
- **Auto-coded Interviews**
 - To ensure our hand-coding was as unbiased as possible, we auto-coded Phase I interview transcripts through a process with NVivo software
- **Relationship between coding techniques**
 - Our hand-codes lumped themes into one recommendation, while our auto-codes in NVivo allowed us to see how they differed in internal details.



IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

- Drafted implementation plans for each of the 10 Michigan PACs
- Crafted all of our recommendations and suggestions to directly echo the words of participating PAC members
- Designed by the PACs, for the PACs
- Intended to promote durable action

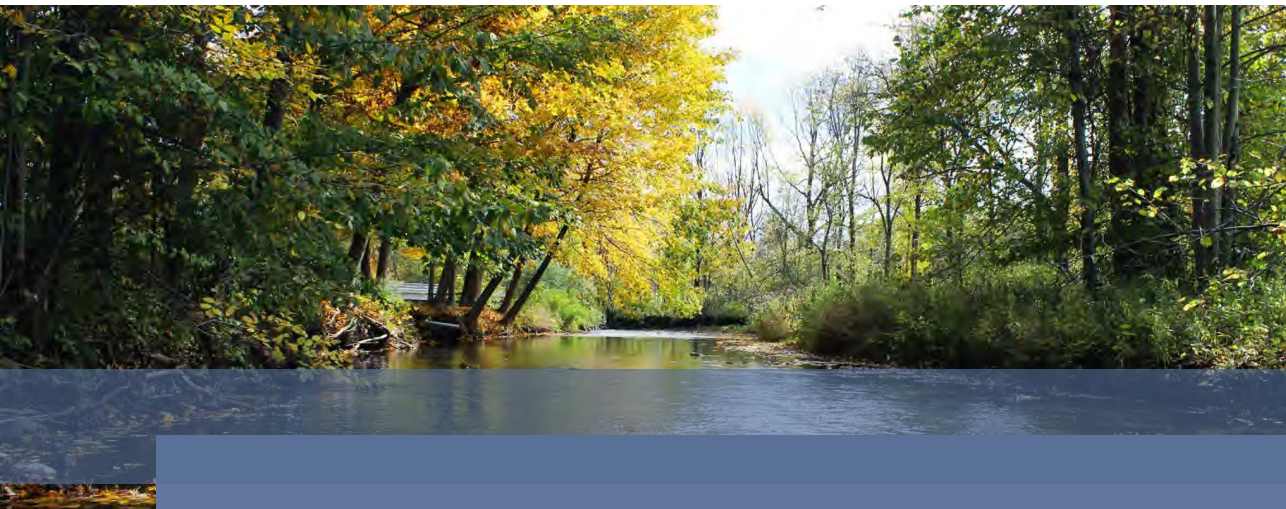


IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

- Separated each plan into three main sections:
 - (1) Organizational Structures to Institute
 - (2) Action Items to Achieve
 - (3) Additional Insights.
- Divided the first two main sections into one- to two-year and three- to five-year time frames

KEY PAC INTERESTS

PAC Name	PAC Structure	PAC Champions	PAC Recruitment	Partner Organizations	Community Stewardship	Community Education	Life After Delisting	Funding for Life After Delisting
Clinton					X			X
Detroit					X	X		X
Kalamazoo			X	X		X		
Menominee	X		X				X	
Muskegon						X		X
Raisin						X	X	X
Rouge		X	X			X	X	
Saginaw	X		X			X		
St. Clair	X		X					X
Torch	X			X		X		
Total	4	1	5	2	2	7	3	5



COMMON HAND-CODED THEMES

PROGRESS

- At least one PAC gave a vote of progress to all eight recommendations
- PAC Structure: recommendation with the most votes of progress

INTEREST

- All eight recommendations have some level of interest from PAC members from across the state
- PAC Recruitment: recommendation with the most votes of interest

READINESS

- At least one PAC voiced readiness to implement each of the recommendations, except PAC structure
- Partner Organizations: recommendation with the most votes of readiness



COMMON AUTO-CODED THEMES

- The top five most prevalent topics of discussion were:
 - Community - **1441 Mentions**
 - Planning - 845 Mentions
 - Funding - 640 Mentions
 - Outreach - 569 Mentions
 - Grants - 517 Mentions
- Community: the only auto-coded theme mentioned by all ten PACs



Common Implementation Plan Themes

- These themes are holistic and should be considered in relation to each other
 - Expand community education and outreach
 - Increase active recruitment of members and partnerships
 - Develop plans for transitioning into life after delisting
 - Expand PAC organizational structures

Photo courtesy of Peter LeBurger, Friends of the St. Clair 2020 Photo Contest

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a lush, green forest. The water is clear, reflecting the surrounding trees and the bright sky. Two people are seen kayaking down the river, leaving a small wake behind them. The forest is dense with various shades of green, and the overall scene is peaceful and natural.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Include Underrepresented Communities
2. Build External Funding Sources
3. Prepare for Stewardship After Delisting
4. Design Collaborative SPAC Meetings



INCLUDE UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES

PROBLEM

Many PACs do not have a strategy to meaningfully engage underrepresented communities.

SOLUTION

1. EGLE hosts quarterly diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training sessions with a DEI consultant for all Michigan PAC members.
2. Each PAC creates a three-year strategic plan to increase diverse representation in their respective PACs, partner organizations, and community education activities.

BUILD EXTERNAL FUNDING SOURCES

PROBLEM

PACs do not have the resources to pursue their own funding but need expanded funding to advance projects outside of the AOC's scope and invest in their future after delisting.

SOLUTION

1. EGLE and PACs collaboratively recruit and hire skilled development staff for each PAC.
2. PAC support grants should support paid staff to allow PACs to become autonomous after delisting





PREPARE FOR STEWARDSHIP AFTER DELISTING

PROBLEM

Many PAC members expressed general confusion and uneasiness around delisting.

SOLUTION

1. EGLE designs and circulates a survey to understand where PACs need clarity about preparing for delisting and how PACs can be supported in their preparations for delisting.
2. EGLE and PACs collaboratively produce a strategic plan for each PAC based on the survey results.
3. EGLE develops a “delisting transition plan” that describes how EGLE’s role will gradually end a year after delisting.
4. The AOC program uses SPAC meetings as a working space to describe and discuss the delisting process and what successful stewardship after delisting might look like.

DESIGN COLLABORATIVE SPAC MEETINGS

PROBLEM

While PACs have many of the same goals and challenges, they do not have an avenue to collaborate and learn from each other.

SOLUTION

1. The AOC program restructures SPAC meetings to provide a space for PAC members to discuss ongoing interests and struggles and develop plans to address specific objectives.
2. Culture change for SPAC meetings from informational to action-oriented.
3. SPAC meetings should include one-hour long breakout sessions, each composed of various PAC members from different PACs, AOC coordinators, and other guest attendees.





THANK YOU

To all of the AOC staff at EGLE for engaging with us throughout the process. Special thanks to Rick Hobrla and Melanie Foose for your knowledge and constant feedback.

To all the PAC members that participated in interviews and conversations, provided feedback on implementation plans, and sent us so many beautiful photos.

To our advisor, Dr Paul Seelbach, for your guidance and wisdom.



QUESTIONS?

Report Recommendation:

Change the culture of the SPAC meeting from informational to action-oriented and provide a space for PACs to collaborate and discuss work such as:

- Effective PAC structures
- PAC recruitment tactics
- Meaningful community education
- Stewardship events
- Planning strategies for stewardship after delisting
- Funding options for stewardship after delisting

Report Recommendation: Include one-hour long breakout sessions at each SPAC meeting

- Each breakout group shall be composed of various PAC members from different PACs, AOC coordinators, and other guest attendees.
- All PAC members shall be invited to join SPAC meetings and these breakout sessions.
- Other community leaders and government officials should be invited to attend SPAC breakout sessions.
- Breakout sessions shall provide a space for PAC members (and others) to discuss ongoing interests and struggles and to develop plans to address specific objectives.

Breakout Room Guidelines:

- Four breakout rooms with 5-6 people in each room (SPAC members and EGLE staff)
- 30 minute breakout discussion
- Designate one member of your group to report out to the full SPAC

Breakout Room Questions to Consider:

(These questions will also be posted in the chat box)

- What do you think of the current SPAC meeting structure - current one-day videoconferences and previous 2 day in-person meetings?
- How often should the SPAC meet? (SPAC by-laws say “meetings shall be held three or four times per year, unless otherwise determined by the membership”).
- What do you gain with the current SPAC meeting structure? (That you would not want to lose).
- How could we change the structure of the SPAC meetings to better serve each PAC and the SPAC?
- What could we eliminate from the current SPAC meeting agendas/What should we add to future SPAC meeting agendas?