

Michigan State Public Advisory Council (SPAC) Business Meeting Agenda



River Raisin Battlefield Park Visitor & Education Center
333 N. Dixie Hwy.
Monroe, MI 48162
October 11 – 12, 2022

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

In Attendance (in order of introduction):

Robert Burns, Detroit River AOC

Bill Craig, Rouge River AOC

Horst Schmidt, Torch Lake AOC and SPAC Chair

Eric Diesing, Clinton River AOC

Erica Clites, Michigan Sea Grant

Brian Egen, River Raisin AOC

Barry LaRoy, River Raisin AOC

Dan Stefanski, River Raisin AOC

Milward Beaudry, River Raisin AOC

Marie McCormick, Rouge River AOC

Erma Leaphart, Sierra Club, Detroit River, and Rouge River AOCs

Patty Troy, St. Clair River AOC

Paulette Duhaime, St. Clair River AOC

Meija Knafl, River Raisin AOC

Fallon Chabala, Muskegon Lake AOC

Stephanie Swart, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)

Laura Ogar, Saginaw Bay/River AOC

John Riley, EGLE

Mike Alexander, EGLE

Rick Hobrla, EGLE

John O'Meara, Rouge River, Detroit River AOCs

Melanie Foose, EGLE

Kimberly Passick, EGLE

Special guests:

Robert E. Clark, Mayor, city of Monroe

Scott Bentley, Superintendent, River Raisin National Battlefield Park

Liesl Eichler Clark, Director, EGLE

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Welcome from the City of Monroe – Mayor Robert E. Clark welcomed everyone present and acknowledged that we all share similar concerns while working in AOCs. He stated that we are better when we work together. He expressed the hope that everyone will enjoy the afternoon’s tour to see the work that has been done in Monroe.

Welcome from the River Raisin Battlefield National Park – Scott Bentley, Superintendent Bentley thanked the group for selecting the park for this meeting. He agreed with Mayor Clark that partnerships are key to getting work done. The river is the lifeblood of this community and restoration done improves all areas of life from recreation to the local economy. He gave a brief history of the battle that occurred at this site in the War of 1812 and invited everyone to look around and watch the short film that is available in the visitor’s center.

Welcome – Horst Schmidt welcomed everyone to the first SPAC meeting since 2019 and thanked Brian Egen and Melanie Foose for organizing everything. He acknowledged all the work that has been done since the start of the pandemic and expressed appreciation for being able to meet in person.

Roll Call – attendees went around the table and introduced themselves for the record.

Review of Agenda - Horst went over the agenda, answered a few questions, and Rick announced that around 1 PM there may be a special guest stopping in for a short time. Bill Craig moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Brian Egen. Approved unanimously.

Review and Approve Minutes – Patty Troy moved to approved, Eric Diesing seconded. Passed unanimously.

Review of Action Items – Melanie went over the five items from the last meeting and all were completed.

SPAC Officers Elections Nominating Committee Report – Patty Troy shared that she, Horst Schmidt, and Bill Craig solicited the PACs to identify persons with an interest in serving as the new SPAC chair and vice chair. They are recommending Brian Egen for the position of SPAC Chair and Eric

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Diesing for the position of SPAC Vice-Chair. There was an opportunity for other external or self-nominations. No additional nominations were received.

SPAC Officer Elections – Horst suggested accepting the nominating committees’ recommendations by acclamation and there were no objections. Brian and Eric both accepted the positions and the election concluded. Rick thanked both Brian and Eric on behalf of EGLE for their willingness to serve. He also thanked Horst and Patty for their service over the past two years as Chair and Vice-Chair.

New SPAC website – Melanie presented the newly updated SPAC web page and highlighted sections that contained the SPAC bylaws, a chart of the current SPAC representatives, and a section containing meeting minutes dating back to 2010. Kimberly Passick discussed that some minutes mentioned various presentations and that some of them could be provided to anyone interested on an individual basis. The presentations could not be posted along with the minutes as there were difficulties ensuring accessibility. Melanie will check into adding links to each PAC’s website and will be submitting a photo to post on the SPAC web page. Any comments can be sent to Melanie at FooseM@Michigan.gov.

New SPAC logo - Melanie debuted two potential SPAC logo designs that were created by EGLE’s graphic design artists and asked for input and whether the group would like to vote on the options today. There was discussion that these options did not communicate that the SPAC was for AOCs and asked about the option for a tagline to be added. There was also concern that the round logo could be difficult for persons with vision impairments as the colors used were similar. There was discussion regarding hiring a branding consultant however, there was concern that may not be the best use of funding. There was also an idea to find students who may have interest in working on a branding package as a project. It was explained that this would serve as a unifying image for internal correspondence, agendas, etc., and was not intended for widespread outreach. Horst, as chair, recommended that this topic be tabled. The topic will be added to the next agenda for further discussion. Comments can be sent to Melanie at FooseM@Michigan.gov. The two logos that were presented as options are shown on page 4.

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Presentation: River Raisin AOC Contaminated Sediments - Mike Alexander shared the details of contaminated sediment work in the River Raisin, beginning with a Michigan State University sediment survey in 1991. Over the years there were remedial investigations, monitoring, and the most recent sediment remediation project completed in 2016 which included dredging and a cap. There is ongoing monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the cap, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and EGLE are working together to review the yearly monitoring data. A copy of the presentation will be included with these minutes.

EGLE Director, Liesl Eichler Clark, arrived during the presentation. She expressed gratitude for the dedication of EGLE staff and everyone on the SPAC for the work that they do every day to help protect and preserve Michigan's natural resources. Director Clark was able to stay for the remainder of the afternoon meeting and accompany the group during a portion of the project tour.

Presentation: River Raisin AOC Pre-Field Trip Overview - Brian Egen & Barry LaRoy shared some details on various dam projects that will be part of the tour along with photos that illustrated the historical and current conditions of those sites. They highlighted the two dam removals, four rock arch ramp fish passage projects and the Waterloo Dam Bypass Fish Passage Channel projects. DNR surveys have found evidence that the fish passage projects including the Waterloo Dam bypass channel is allowing passage for Great Lakes fish. The start of the tour will be at Sterling State Park which features a large wetlands marsh and prairie restoration project. The Port of Monroe is also included on the tour and highlights the synergy between environmental work and commercial interests. They also pointed out updated interpretive signage placed along the river that are used by the community and

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visitors. These updates were funded by their most recent support grant. A copy of the presentation will be included with these minutes.

River Raisin AOC Field Trip – attendees left the visitor center to begin the tour. The weather consisted of mostly clear skies and 74°, with light to gusting breezes. The tour ended at the visitor’s center at 5 pm.



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Wednesday, October 12, 2022

In Attendance:

Melanie Foose	Horst Schmidt	Eric Diesing
Rick Hobrla	Paulette Duhaime	John O'Meara
Mike Alexander	Patty Troy	Bill Craig
Doug McLaughlin	Milward Beaudry	Meija Knafl
Laura Ogar	Dick Micka	Marie McCormick
Stephanie Swart	Barry LaRoy	Kimberly Passick
John Riley	Brian Egen	
Bob Burns	Erma Leaphart	

Welcome – Horst called the meeting to order and greeted everyone present.

Roll Call - Horst facilitated a quick call-out for the minute taker to record the attendees.

EGLE Update - Rick Hobrla

- Working remotely/In-office – staff are typically in the office two days a month with the exception of Rick and Kimberly who are there two days a week. This will likely continue long term. With covid more under control, travel restrictions have been lifted and staff have been able to participate in more in-person meetings, conferences, and other events. It is expected that PACs will likely still hold some meetings virtually and are encouraged to meet in person as they can.
- Staffing – Michelle Selzer is now with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as their western Lake Erie specialist. Work to backfill her position is underway. John Riley has been reassigned as the department Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) specialist. The NRDA trustees are currently undertaking a good deal of work in both Kalamazoo and Saginaw. He will likely have overlap with the AOCs in his NRDA work and he will continue to provide support to his AOCs until the position is backfilled. Rick announced that although he has not formally filed his paperwork, he expects to retire at the end of this year. He and Mike Alexander will be working to post and fill his position in order to allow some overlap for his successor to job shadow as he transitions into retirement.

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- Funding/Budget – the program is operated under a grant from USEPA. The most recent three-year grant (which was extended for six months) ended in September.
- 2022-2027 EPA Management Assistance Grant Work Plan – EGLE was recently awarded a five-year grant, however, as is usual, funding is actually dispersed on an annual basis.
- PAC Support Grants – any grant that extends beyond October 2023 will contain a clause that it is contingent upon USEPA providing funding for the next year. The draft Request for Proposals is undergoing final approval but it is not anticipated that anything of significance will change. PACs should be working with their AOC coordinators to create and submit their work plans. Proposals that are received and approved quickly have the potential to be backdated to October 1, 2022.

Rick also shared that 54 of Michigan’s original 111 BUIs have been removed and there are two currently working through the removal process. Once those two are approved, Michigan will have officially removed more than half of their BUIs. He encouraged PACs to use every opportunity to celebrate these types of accomplishments.

Patty Troy, on behalf of the group acknowledged the hard work and dedication of Rick Hobrla over his 45 year career and presented him with a gift from the members of the SPAC and those who do work in the AOCs.

USEPA Update – USEPA staff were unavailable to travel to this meeting. Rick did share on their behalf that tentative dates have been set for the next AOC Conference. September 12-14, 2023 are the proposed dates and Green Bay, Wisconsin is the proposed location. If there are specific topics or other things they would like to see at the next conference, please share those with Rick at HobrlaR@Michigan.gov

SPAC EJ-DEI Subcommittee Update – Doug McLaughlin reported out for the group. The most recent meeting was October 3 and Alfredo Hernandez with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) attended as a special guest. Discussion centered around the impact of the implicit bias training that was offered in January. It was agreed that the training was received positively overall and was a valuable experience for the group. There will be efforts for continued training in the future. The group was also introduced to a racial equity tool kit that is offered by MDCR. One key outcome is that it was agreed that meeting more frequently would be beneficial and the group is moving toward

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meeting on a monthly basis. A poll was created to establish availability to get those meetings scheduled. Anyone that is interest in participating in this group is welcome to attend.

SPAC Habitat Subcommittee Update – Bill Craig shared that the group has met three times so far this year the last being October 3 and he has volunteered to chair the group. They group’s focus is on issues with monitoring and long-term maintenance of habitat projects. Some questions that they are seeking to address are; how do we maintain these projects once construction is completed to assist with delisting, and what happens in life after delisting? The group will work on finding ways to address these concerns and find possible solutions.

There was a discussion about issues involved in this topic and Bill invited anyone who had interest to attend the meetings which is better suited to broad discussion of these issues.

SPAC Members Group Photo – the group assembled for a group picture that will be posted on the SPAC web page. Below is one of the multiple photos that were taken.



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PAC By-Laws – Melanie set up a discussion on how work that the DEIJ is doing has highlighted a possible need for PACs to update their bylaws. Melanie has collected the bylaws from each PAC. She invited discussion on the need or desire for PACs to update their individual bylaws. There was a discussion in the group about finding gaps in bylaws, how to be intentional with language that is welcoming, and the benefits and challenges that can arise in updating these documents along with the potential consequences of not updating them. There was a suggestion to post each PAC’s bylaws on the SPAC web page with revision dates so they are available for anyone to view. Melanie will look into having those posted. Rick shared that from EGLE’s perspective it is a good idea for each PAC to have bylaws, that bylaws should be revisited periodically, and that PACs should look at other examples and feel free to borrow good ideas from each other.

PAC Report Outs

Detroit River AOC – Bob Burns reported out on their current [habitat projects](#). They have three that are not yet completed, which are the final remaining projects. Hennepin Point, Sugar Island, and Upper Detroit Riverfront Parks project. The Upper Riverfront parks project involves the removal of seawall sections and creation of wetland areas. The City is working with USEPA on design for the habitat project; however, the flood mitigation measures which are also under consideration need to be incorporated into the habitat design. Within the next two to three years, all habitat projects will be complete. Sediment remediation is also a priority and , including the Monguagon Creek – Upper Trenton Channel project (MCUTC) which is in design, and the Wilson Park project which will include capping sediment remediation and an associated habitat project. They just published a biennial report card, which is an introduction to the AOC, explanations of BUIs, maps, pictures, and more as an outreach tool.

Rouge River AOC – Bill Craig reported that there are 18 habitat projects in various stages of process from design to monitoring. Some have been completed for several years and are in the maturing phase. Next year will be a busy year with three channel projects dealing with contaminated sediments. They will be focused on community engagement and with a revision and update to their bylaws.

Kalamazoo River AOC – Doug McLaughlin reported that they are currently working through issues with Legacy Act, Superfund, Natural Resource Damage Assessment, and AOC work and how those entities work together. There is a time-critical project removal of the Trowbridge Dam in process that

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is complicated by the relationships between these programs. The projects includes sediment removal, dam removal, stream restoration, and habitat restoration and it is expected to take a long time. Through their PAC grant they've developed some data dashboards for [fish collection](#), [sediment and soil](#), and [phosphorus](#). While some of this data is difficult for the public to decipher due to its technical nature, they like having it readily available.

Saginaw Bay/River AOC – Laura Ogar reported that they are currently discussing what the PAC's next steps are. They are looking to develop a management actions list to work toward delisting. They have a revised scope of work to focus on outreach to inform the community about the processes of AOC work. Rick shared that USEPA has just awarded EGLE a grant to do monitoring in Saginaw Bay and its tributaries to provide data to inform the development of a TMDL (total maximum daily load) for nutrients. Bretton Joldersma, the Lake Huron Coordinator has been working diligently for several years to help secure the funding for this monitoring.

St. Clair River AOC – Paulette Duhaime shared that they recently did a good deal of work on a response to the Great Lakes ecoregion survey that was sent to all of the AOCs. The results of the survey were to be shared at the Great Lakes forum this past September, but she had not received those results yet. They have produced a binational fact sheet to inform the public on where they stand on the drinking water BUI. With their next grant they intend to produce a simplified public brochure about work they've done to protect the water supply from spills and how the drinking water is being protected. There was a diesel spill lately and it was encouraging to see the rapid reporting and response, the facilities were shut down quickly as a precaution and no contamination was found. They hope to remove the drinking water BUI jointly with Canada in the near future. On the U.S. side, the fish consumption BUI remains and they will be asking for more sampling to work toward removing it. On the Canadian side, they recently celebrated the removal of four BUIs; Fish Tumors or Other Deformities, Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproduction Problems, Beach Closings, and Restrictions on Dredging Activities. At their next meeting in November they will have emergency managers from the U.S. and Canada, and industry representatives provide an overview on spill response and how current procedures are working.

River Raisin AOC – Brian Egen felt that the tour and presentation pretty much spoke to the progress that they were making. He reported that they will continue monitoring, they are working on a

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recruiting/onboarding packet to encourage more participation in the PAC, they are considering associate memberships with citizens and businesses, they have been looking at partnerships with stakeholders in the greater River Raisin watershed, and will be starting work on a master plan for life after delisting. They are excited about pursuing educational outreach and they have a new member who is a school superintendent to help with that work. They recently published their updated field guides, and they have completed their documentary film which they hope to enter into some film festivals and increase outreach and education.

Clinton River AOC – Eric Diesing reported that they produced a [documentary](#) that is posted on their website. They are also producing a book that will highlight restoration work in the AOC. Their habitat projects are all complete and are in the monitoring phase for at least three years. There are several research projects occurring in the area by various organizations including universities such as Michigan State University and University of Michigan. For BUIs they will be looking at Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae next year. He will be working with others to develop a survey monitoring plan to assess where they on that BUI. There is also a sediment removal project in 2023.

Torch Lake AOC – Horst Schmidt shared that they recently had a tour of the Superfund site with two academic speakers. A report on the outcome of the benthos pilot study will be coming out next spring. It will also include a conceptual design to see if the project can be expanded. The Legacy Act work at Lake Linden is going to take a substantial amount of time.

Muskegon Lake AOC – Stephanie Swart shared that they have completed all management actions. There are four BUIs remaining. The removal documents for the Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations and Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat BUIs are currently being prepared and will be released for public notice soon. There is continued monitoring for the two remaining BUIs; Degradation of Benthos and Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae. Their goal is to delist in 2025. She also shared a coloring book that was recently created and printed using funding from their support grant as an outreach tool. They are willing to share the RFP (Request for Proposal) they used to locate an artist for the project if other PACs are interested in creating something similar.

Manistiquet River AOC – John Riley reported that management actions are complete with one BUI remaining; Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption. If the most recent sampling results are acceptable the BUI could be removed in 2023 and the AOC could be delisted by 2024-2025.

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St. Marys River AOC – John Riley reported that management actions are complete with three BUIs remaining: Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption, Degradation of Benthos, and Fish Tumors or Other Deformities. Fish sampling is needed to gather more data before these BUIs are removed. They are working toward a bi-national delisting. .

SPAC Travel Reimbursement - Kimberly Passick shared updated travel reimbursement standards for the designated SPAC representatives and a new form that can be used to submit requests. The form is a fillable PDF that can either be completed and sent electronically or printed and sent by mail. She will be processing these requests and questions can be sent to PassickK@Michigan.gov.

2023 SPAC Meetings

- Possible Spring Legislative Briefing – Rick advised that it may be ambitious to hold one this spring as there will be a new manager in the Great Lakes Management Unit. As this program is federally funded it is merely informational for state legislators. There was discussion about ways to communicate the work being done in the AOC program with legislators. Some resources and information recommended by Erma Leaphart related to this can be found at the [Healing Our Waters website](#).
- Call for Topics/Agenda Items – these can be sent to Melanie at FooseM@Michigan.gov.
- Annual By-Laws and Roles and Responsibilities Review – Rick suggested that this be an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss frequency of review and if there is any need to make revisions.
- Host AOC volunteer for next face-to-face meeting – Clinton has offered to investigate being host for the next in-person meeting.

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Action Items

- Melanie will look into adding links to the PACs on the SPAC web page. She will also submit photos to add to the page. If anyone has additional comments or suggestions for the SPAC web page, they can be sent to Melanie at FooseM@Michigan.gov.
- The topic of an SPAC logo will be added to the next meeting's agenda for further discussion. Any comments can be sent to Melanie.
- Melanie will look into the possibility of having the PAC bylaws posted on the SPAC web page. She can provide them individually to anyone that would like them.
- Add review of the SPAC bylaws to the next meeting's agenda.

Horst announced that we had come to the end of a successful meeting. Motion to adjourn made by Bill Craig, seconded by Eric Diesing. Approved unanimously.

Meeting ended at 12:18 pm.



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Tour of [River Raisin Area of Concern](#)

Board Bus at [River Raisin Battlefield National Park Visitor & Education Center](#)

Travel to [Sterling State Park](#)

Sterling State Park Tour with Jason Morgan, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Travel to [Port of Monroe](#)

Port of Monroe with Paul LaMarre III, Port Director

Travel to Front Street Parking Lot for River Raisin Fish Passage No. 4

River Raisin Fish Passage No. 4 and River Raisin Dam No. 3 Removal Site

Travel to Veterans Park for Waterloo Dam River Raisin Fish Passage Bypass Channel

Waterloo Dam and River Raisin Bypass Channel

Travel back to River Raisin Battlefield National Park Visitor & Education Center

