

SPAC Habitat Monitoring and Long-Term Maintenance Subcommittee
Meeting Summary
July 15, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. via Teams

List of Attendees:

- ☒ John O'Meara, Chair, Detroit/Rouge River AOCs
- ☒ Amy Funck, ARC
- ☒ Noel Mullett, ARC
- ☒ Alice Bailey, ARC
- ☒ Emily Levine, ARC
- ☐ Erma Leaphart, Healing Our Waters
- ☒ Bob Burns, Detroit River AOC
- ☒ McKenzi Waliczek, Detroit River AOC
- ☐ Paulette Duhaime, St. Clair River AOC
- ☐ Lynnea McFadden, St. Clair River AOC
- ☐ Melanie Foose, EGLE
- ☐ Doug McLaughlin, Kalamazoo River Watershed Council
- ☒ Bela Ballez, Kalamazoo River Watershed Council
- ☒ Mikela Dean, Clinton River Watershed Council
- ☒ Jennifer Tewkesbury, EGLE
- ☐ Brian Egen,

John O'Meara discussed the need to emphasize these committee meetings at the main SPAC meetings.

This will be John O'Meara's last meeting before retirement. Alice Bailey and Noel Mullett will be taking over for John.

John O'Meara stated that the website continues to be updated and enhanced as information comes in. Some highlights related to the website include:

- Would like to be able to show the website at the SPAC meeting again, to refamiliarize everyone with it, re-energize, and make the plea to those that are not actively participating to contribute information / links on their AOC, in order to make it more fully comprehensive.
- Events of interest are featured, and please remember to add events that you are aware of.
- Looking for ideas so that once someone ends up on the landing page, they can find all the links they need, and it can be a closed loop system.
- The goal is that as representatives, etc. change it continues to stay up to date as a resource.
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John O. Meara requested any thoughts, ideas, or suggestions to add to the website for expanded participation.

McKenzi Waliczek suggested adding the HOW conferences as an event of interest. Bob Burns says the PAC is represented by organizations that are giving presentations at the HOW C including FDR.

Jenn Tewkesbury suggests that as habitat work in the AOCs is wrapped up, the website will need to branch out to any habitat work that is not specifically GLRI funded. It can be kept as a repository for the ability to do habitat restoration that isn't AOC related.

John O'Meara concurs that it can be used as a tool for habitat restoration such as monitoring and maintenance examples. He encouraged the subcommittee to take up two charges:

1. SPAC to get the other AOCs and former AOCs to try to get linked on the site
2. For the subcommittee to think of other topical things that the site could be a repository for.
Can continue to update the website that way.

John continued that the website was a big focus for the last few years; but there now needs to be a next tangible thing to focus on. He would like ideas that could be tackled through discussion and development, not just within the AOC world. As an example, story boards, feature films (such as River Raisin produced). One could be developed for the state from different PACs/ Friends groups and package into a "State of Michigan Restoration " media (film, story board, etc).

Jennifer Tewkesbury says we have the capability, the state has a GIS group that have done story maps. She stated that it seems like a good idea to bring up at the fall meeting and get feedback from the group. Kalamazoo River just released their short film, which could also be put on the SPAC website. The film was done by Brian Egens brother that also did the River Raisin film.

Robert Burns did a 3 minute video on a the Stony Island project. There is capability of doing one for the state that can perhaps incorporate existing content, some new content as well.

Noel Mullett suggested making it a "Pure Michigan" habitat type commercial.

Jennifer Tewkesbury will bring up in a team meeting with other AOC coordinators.

Jennifer Tewkesbury stated that it could also be a tool for the EPA to use as well to show to mgmt. etc.

Jennifer Tewkesbury would like to add that this group came together to assist the AOCs with habitat stuff. Are there other ways that this group could provide assistance / take the lead on. Can be discussed at whole SPAC meeting as well. Original purpose has largely been accomplished.

Jennifer Tewkesbury thanked John O'Meara for everything he has done to help the subcommittee.

Elevine@ectinc.com is the contact for website updates going forward.
Bela Ballez is looking for anyone with experience with a pocket forest project.

Bob Burns mentioned that Stony Island now has large beaver population with a substantial beaver hut built. This spring there were 150 white pelicans laying over on migration at Celeron Island.

John O'Meara says we need to continue to capture the continuity and the expansion of previous projects; build it they will come. Celebration should continue beyond the ribbon cutting, such as at Stony Island where things were planted but other natives came in as well once the system is jump started. All like celebrating what has been done – Michigan is the big AOC due to shoreline and therefore has a lot to share.