

**Great Lakes Water Quality Board  
204<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**Summary of Discussion**

May 8-9, 2019

Green Bay, Wisconsin

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**U.S. Member Participants**

Dave Ullrich (Co-Chair)  
Jon Allan  
Sandy Bihn  
Marvourneen Dolor  
Jane Elder  
Frank Ettawageshik  
Stephen Galarneau  
Brandon Hofmeister (phone)  
Kelsey Leonard  
Karen Sands  
Joe Tomandl III

**Canadian Member Participants**

Rob de Loë (Co-Chair)  
Sandra Cooper  
John Jackson  
Mark Mattson  
Mark Wales

**U.S. Member Regrets**

Christopher Korleski

**Canadian Member Regrets**

Mark Fisher  
Michael Goffin  
Christopher Hilken  
Irving Leblanc  
Ling Mark  
Gayle Wood

**Observers**

François Houde –Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques  
Pauline Meyer – Office of Congressman Mike Gallagher

**Commission Staff**

Raj Bejankiwar – Great Lakes Regional Office  
David Burden – Great Lakes Regional Office (Director)

**Commission Liaisons**

Victor Serveiss – U.S. Section  
Paul Allen – Canadian Section

**Secretariat**

Antonette Arvai – Great Lakes Regional Office

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## **WEDNESDAY MAY 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2019**

### **Tour of sites around Green Bay**

Members toured sites in the Green Bay area to view and learn about local actions to reduce excess nutrient runoff from agricultural farms and the on-going efforts to cleanup historical PCB contamination in the Lower Fox River/Green Bay Area of Concern.

- Brickstead Dairy, LLC
- Fox River Sediment Clean-up, Green Bay Processing Facility

A special thank you was extended to the following people who led and/or provided presentations during the tour:

- Kevin Fermanich (Professor of Geoscience, University of Wisconsin - Green Bay)
- Erin Houghton (Watershed Program Manager, NEW Water Green Bay Metropolitan Sewer District)
- Whitney Prestby (Natural Resource Educator, University of Wisconsin - Madison)
- Barry Bubolz (Great Lakes Restoration Area Coordinator, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services)
- Brent Peterson (Demonstration Farm Project Manager, County Land & Water Conservation Department)
- Matt Komiskey (Physical Scientist, USGS Wisconsin Water Science Center)
- Beth Olson (Project Manager - Fox River PCB Cleanup, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)
- Garry Kincaid (Wastewater Engineer - Fox River PCB Cleanup, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)

### **WQB Public Event**

The WQB hosted a public engagement event the evening of May 8<sup>th</sup>. The event was organized by the board's Engagement Work Group and focused on a panel and audience discussion about long-term strategies to restore the vitality of Green Bay and Lake Michigan. The discussion was moderated by Jane Elder, WQB member and Executive Director of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters. The panelists included Dr. Kevin Fermanich (Professor of Geoscience, University of Wisconsin - Green Bay), Julia Noordyk (Water Quality and Coastal Community Outreach Specialist, University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute), Michael Troge (Project Manager in Conservation Planning, Oneida Nation), and Daniel Diederich (Owner, Diederich Farm and Green Bay Watershed Advocate). Tahassi Hill (Councilman of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin) gave the opening prayer. The panel discussion centered on the issues of climate change adaptation and excess nutrient management. Local efforts being undertaken were highlighted, such as agricultural best practices, investments in green infrastructure and the creation and enhancement of wetlands. Attendees also raised issues of concern in their local communities, including potential contamination from per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and the proposed development of an open-pit mine on the Menominee River.

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## **THURSDAY MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2019**

### **Best Western Green Bay Inn Conference Center, Green Bay, WI**

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions (Co-Chairs)**

The co-chairs welcomed everyone to the 204<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the board. The co-chairs acknowledged and gave thanks to those tribes upon whose land the meeting was being held including, the original First People of Wisconsin, the Ho-Chunk Nation and the Menominee; the Oneida Nation whose current territory surrounds the area; the Ojibwe Nation communities; the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohicans; the Forest County Potawatomi; and the Brothertown Indian Nation. Members and other participants identified themselves, including member of the public Pauline Meyer and François Houde.

#### **2. Review and Approval of Agenda (Co-Chairs)**

The agenda was reviewed and approved with no additions or changes.

### 3. Reflections on Day 1 Tour and Public Event

Co-chairs thanked the Engagement Work Group, and the Wisconsin residents of the board, for their efforts in planning and organizing both the tour and public engagement event on Day 1 of the meeting. WQB member Jane Elder was also thanked for moderating the evening event.

In reflecting on the Day 1 meeting events, members found the field tour informative and useful in observing on-the-ground work that is taking place. Similarly, the board enjoyed the interactions and discussions at the public event and hearing the issues of concern from those in attendance. In terms of the public event it was suggested for future consideration, that there be a more structured division between time allotted for questions focused on the panel topics and time for general comments; that WQB projects and activities be highlighted; and ensuring venues are easily accessible (e.g. on a public transit route).

Overall, members liked the new meeting structure, finding it to be a better balance of time between board activities and meetings (i.e. Day 1 - morning field tour, afternoon work group meetings, and evening public event; Day 2 – full WQB meeting).

### 4. Cross-Board Collaboration

In an effort to increase cross-board collaboration and communication, WQB members serving on other advisory board work groups have been requested to provide updates on the progress of these projects at each WQB meeting.

Currently, WQB members serve on the Science Advisory Board's (SAB) Great Lakes Early Warning System (GLEWS) project and the SAB Science Priority Committee's (SPC) Interacting Stressors project. The GLEWS work group held an expert workshop in May 2018 to develop a framework for a Great Lakes Early Warning System as a means to identify a preliminary list of emerging ecosystem threats and stressors. The work group is currently working on their report, expected to be completed by fall 2019.

The Interacting Stressors work group held an expert workshop in April 2019, which sought to examine the impacts of stressor pairs (e.g. invasives and toxics) and the management implications. A final report on this project is expected in late fall 2019. The board is interested to learn of the findings and outcomes of this project and will request that a plain language summary be included with the report, due to the technical nature of the project.

**ACTION ITEM: Co-chairs will send a request to the SPC Co-Chairs that a plain language summary be included with the Interacting Stressors final report.**

### 5. Work Group Updates

Work groups reported out from their meetings the day prior including a status update on project activities and expected outputs.

#### ***Legacy Issues (K. Sands)***

An update was provided to members for the work group's nuclear decommissioning and manure projects. In early April an informational, background document on the state of nuclear power plant decommissioning in the basin was submitted to the WQB for review. The report is currently being revised in response to board member comments. An interim consultant report was submitted to the work group in mid-April, which is currently under review by the work group. The consultant is expected to present their work to the board in late fall 2019. Students of the Harris Public Policy Lab (University of Chicago), as part of their master's program curriculum, are working with the work group to compile and assess the economics and funding of nuclear power plant decommissioning plans in the Great Lakes basin. This work will be used as a supplementary piece to the background and consultant report.

The work group's report on the oversight of animal feeding operations for manure management is currently under review by the full board. The report will be revised in response to board member comments and resubmitted for board approval to forward to the Commission.

#### ***Emerging Issues (J. Elder)***

Members were provided with updates on the work group's climate change adaptation and wetlands projects. The work group held a session at the Latornell Conservation Symposium in November 2018 to seek input on the board's 2017 climate change work via a facilitated discussion with session participants. A similar session originally scheduled at the October 2018 Healing Our Waters (HOW) Conference did not occur, due to the cancellation of the conference. Instead a survey, that included the same questions posed at the Latornell session, was sent to HOW registrants. The work group will use the outcomes of these efforts to develop advice and recommendations for the WQB to consider in forwarding to the Commission.

In December 2018 the work group co-hosted with the Great Lakes Coastal Assembly and the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes, a webinar-based engagement session with wetlands experts to discuss the challenges and opportunities to achieving a net habitat gain for Great Lakes coastal wetlands. The work group will begin development of a report for the WQB to consider in forwarding to the Commission.

#### ***Engagement (K. Leonard & M. Mattson)***

The work group's recent efforts have been focused on the planning and organization of the field tour and public event for this meeting of the WQB. The work group continues to identify opportunities to improve and enhance the WQB's field tour and engagement events, such as connecting with a local partner at the start of planning; continuing to seek participation from board members who reside in/near the meeting location; and seeking board feedback on preliminary plans for tours and events. The work group has also been considering the idea of holding engagement events, separate from WQB meetings, on specific topics or issues.

The work group will soon begin discussions on planning for the next binational poll. There are also plans for the development of further communications materials on the 2018 binational poll.

### **6. Triennial Assessment of Progress (TAP) 2020**

In mid-July 2018 the Commission established a Study Board (SB) to provide advice and guidance to the Commission on government progress in meeting the general objectives of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (Agreement). This was to be accomplished through the development of a SB report on a small number of priority topics, which would be used as a basis for the Commission's triennial assessment of progress. Two topics were ultimately selected for the focus of the SB's report - climate change adaptation and nutrients.

In light of the lack of Commissioner quorum for the past 6 months and the U.S. government shutdown early this year, challenges arose in contracting and staffing support of the SB work and receiving direction from the Commission on the development of the overall TAP report. As a result the TAP 2020 report, including the SB's work, as originally conceived will need to be re-envisioned. Options for the completion of the TAP report are currently being considered in light of these challenges, but it is expected to include public consultation on the Progress Report of the Parties (PROP) and an assessment of the PROP and State of the Great Lakes reports.

Also stemming from this, will be a broader discussion among IJC staff, Commissioners and advisory board co-chairs, on how to advance priority issues on the health of the Great Lakes in the context of priority setting and work planning; using the TAP as an overview of what has been done towards achieving a swimmable, drinkable, fishable Great Lakes.

Members will continue to be kept updated on the progress of the Commission's triennial assessment of progress, as well any further role the WQB will play as the process moves forward.

#### **7. Advice on TAP 2020 and Beyond**

Members had discussion on potential advice that could inform the TAP 2020 report, particularly on the issues of climate change adaptation and nutrients, and priority issues to consider for TAP 2023 and beyond. With regard to input on TAP 2020 members provided comments that included, acknowledging that both climate change and nutrients are critical issues that should remain a priority; that the term "climate change" should continue to be used; ensuring the TAP report focuses on the specific objectives and Annex commitments under the Agreement; and that the principles of precaution and prevention be highlighted. In response to future priority issues, members identified issues including, per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances; management of new/emerging contaminants; and exploring approaches to identify and prioritize issues of the future based on trends in external forces observed now (e.g. population growth, increased urbanization).

**ACTION ITEM: Board Secretary will work with WQB Co-Chairs to identify next steps for conveying advice to the Commission.**

#### **8. Enhancing the Effectives of WQB Operations**

In light of the change of co-chairs that will occur as of January 1, 2020, it is an opportune time to discuss the strengths and opportunities to improve the effectiveness of WQB operations. Due to time constraints encountered during the meeting, and to ensure a fruitful discussion, this item has been deferred for discussion at a future WQB meeting. A survey will be sent to the board on this topic to assist in informing those future discussions.

**ACTION ITEM: Board Secretary will send a survey to board members on the topic of enhancing the effectiveness of WQB operations.**

#### **9. Great Lakes Issues**

Members were provided an opportunity to bring potential Great Lakes issues to the attention of the board. Issues raised included: continuing to find ways to connect people to the lakes; the link between wastewater, source water, and drinking water and the contaminants that threaten these systems and their treatment processes; and notice of research being conducted on AOC restoration communities and the social and community responses that have resulted.

#### **10. Schedule of 2019 WQB Meetings**

The dates of the remaining WQB meetings for the year were reviewed:

- July 9 @ 3:00-4:30 PM ET – Teleconference
- Late October 2019 (in-person) – In conjunction with the IJC Semi-Annual Meeting (Ottawa, ON)

#### **11. Public Comments & Adjourn**

Pauline Meyer, Environmental Policy Staffer for Congressman Mike Gallagher's Office, thanked the board for the opportunity to listen and learn, particularly on the issues of nutrient runoff from land and the protection and creation of wetlands to help mitigate flooding.

The co-chairs thanked members and others for their participation and adjourned the meeting.