Lower Menominee River Area of Concern
Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting
December 4, 2014, 6:00 – 8:15 p.m. CST
UW-Marinette, Marinette, WI
Minutes prepared by Laurel Last

*note: Things written in green denote potential action items.

DESIRED OUTCOMES
- Meeting attendees are updated on AOC sediment and habitat projects and have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss each one
- CAC members learn about eBird report and decide whether this activity meets AOC requirements for bird monitoring
- CAC members are informed about state/federal agencies AOC meetings and Spring SPAC meeting
- CAC members discuss Menominee Conservation District’s AOC roles and responsibilities
- CAC members discuss community outreach needs for 2015

ATTENDEES
Dale Andersen (Menominee Conservation District), Sharon Baker (MDEQ), Cheryl Bougie (WDNR), Mike Bryant (USEPA), Donna Buechler (Menominee Conservation District), Jim Cox (Tyco), Mark Erickson (Co-Chair), Laurel Last (WDNR), Trygve Rhude (Chappee Rapids Audubon Society), Nick Utrup (USFWS; left after the fish passage update), Ben Uvaas (WDNR; left after the eBird discussion), Keith West (Co-Chair)

Introductions, Overview of Agenda – Mark Erickson and Keith West, CAC Co-Chairs

Lower Menominee River Fish Passage Update – Nick Utrup (USFWS)
- Nick sent project update from Rory Alsberg (ECRE) with link to pictures to Sharon
- Sharon will send project update out to CAC members
- Phase I – Downstream Passage at Park Mill Dam (Fish Bypass)
  - Some delays, but projected to be complete by end of 2014
- Phase II – Upstream Passage at Menominee Dam (Fish Lift)
  - On schedule to be complete by April 2015
- Phase III – Downstream Passage at Menominee Dam (Fish Bypass and trashrack replacement)
  - River Alliance of WI has signed GLRI grant agreement
  - Will be moving forward with final design (have 30% design) after team has reviewed new data from WDNR (report out soon)
  - Construction is expected to occur in 2016
- Mark—Noticed large pipe/tubing near Phase II—What is it?
- Nick—Overflow pipe, way to return “reject” fish to river

Review of eBird report and discussion – Ben Uvaas (WDNR)
- Ben shared presentation on “Utilizing the eBird Database to assess Avian Diversity and Abundance in the AOC”
- Laurel will send out PowerPoint slides (pdf) with meeting minutes
TAC has decided that this activity meets the Fish & Wildlife Plan objective for bird monitoring in the AOC

Does the CAC concur?

Mark—Does this mean we need to do this again at a later date (show improvement)?

Ben—Not necessarily. This is educational, it shows that we’ve looked at the data, it shows that the AOC is not as good as reference sites (justifies the habitat work)

After discussion, CAC members agree that this activity meets the F&W Plan objective

State/Federal Agencies Meeting Update – Laurel Last on Wisconsin’s Meeting and Sharon Baker on Michigan’s Meeting

The agencies discuss AOC/BUI work completed in 2014, project needs and planning for 2015, and BUI removals anticipated in 2015

Wisconsin meeting summary
  o Updates on sediment characterization and remediation projects
  o Updates on habitat restoration projects
  o Proposed schedule for management actions
  o Funding needs—South Channel habitat
  o Potential 2015 BUI removals—dredging, fish consumption, benthos
  o Management actions complete in 2016
  o Potential AOC delisting in 2018 (after confirmation monitoring)

Mark and Keith—Thought delisting would happen in 2016, not 2018

Laurel—2016 is target for management actions to be complete, but some monitoring will be required before delisting to confirm objectives are met

Mike—AOC will be “in recovery” after actions are complete

Mark—Who is responsible for the monitoring?

Mike—WI and MI responsible (funds available)

Sharon—Main concern is with vegetation in habitat projects—Do the new plantings survive? Do the invasives come back?

Sharon—Michigan meeting will be tomorrow—basically the same with some updates since the Wisconsin meeting

Betterment Action Update – Jim Cox (Tyco)

• Dredging completed November 4th
• 44,000 cubic yards of sediment removed
• Material greater than 20 ppm arsenic removed
• 70,500 tons disposed
• Water treatment plant decommissioned
• Much of equipment demobilized, finish in spring
• Complete restoration of site next year
• Placement of sand cover over select glacial till areas next year, after receive USACE permit

Menekaunee Harbor Update – Cheryl Bougie (WDNR)

• Cheryl shared PowerPoint presentation with overview and update on project
• Completed dredging, seawall removal, riprap
• Phragmites treatment in September, contractor will be back to chip canes in January
• Due to excessive wood debris, did not have enough material to follow original plan for habitat area
• Will probably bring in outside (non-native) material, then cover with native material
Habitat restoration plan under review by TAC
Plan to bid out in January, with restoration work in 2015 and monitoring for 5 years (Keith and his students)

CAC letter to Menominee City Zoning Commission – Mark Erickson (CAC Co-Chair)
- CAC discussed sending letter to City of Menominee supporting zoning ordinances as a means to protect natural areas (similar to letter to City of Marinette)
- Mark—City Planning Commission is currently busy with other issues; best to wait a while so the letter doesn’t get lost
- Mark and Keith will write and send City of Menominee letter

Menominee Conservation District roles and responsibilities as related to the AOC – Sharon Baker (MDEQ), Laurel Last (WDNR), and Donna Buechler (Menominee Conservation District)
- To save time, decided to have separate subcommittee discussion on this topic
- Sharon and others will report out to full CAC at January meeting

Spring SPAC Meeting – Sharon Baker (MDEQ)
- To save time, decided to move this discussion to our January meeting

South Channel Fish Passage and Restoration Update – Laurel Last
- GLLA funds for habitat work will be used for Phragmites treatment in South Channel area
- Would spray summer 2015, chip canes in January 2016
- Habitat design in progress—concept plans in January
- Discussing accelerating the schedule to allow for some habitat work in 2015
- Planting will still need to occur in spring 2016

Island Rookery Habitat Enhancement Project update – Laurel Last
- Special CAC meeting on this project November 10th—see meeting minutes
- Contractors in town to do vegetation surveys
- Surveys confirmed need to do additional work
  - Little Blueberry untouched by previous project
  - Buckthorn seedlings on other islands
  - Brushpiles remain from previous project
- Project to end in 2016, but hope to set up long-term maintenance plan

Community Outreach needs for 2015 – Laurel Last, Sharon Baker, and Donna Buechler
- Laurel—WDNR Conference call on the 15th to discuss AOC community engagement strategy
  - Capacity funds used to hire LTE to assist with engagement/outreach
  - Capacity funds also available to assist AOCs in carrying out their strategy
  - MI also has capacity funds available
  - Previously identified needs—update AOC display, Menekaunee Harbor sign
  - If removing BUIs in 2015, will need to engage the public there
- What do think should be our goals, priorities?
- Sharon—Menominee Conservation District (Donna) can also help with this
- Dale—MCD can help with stewardship awards, which encourage citizen stewardship
- Trygve—Focus on on-the-ground, visible projects
- Keith—Need to mark milestones
- Trygve—Sometimes newspapers don’t print submissions from state agencies—might be better for someone else to send
• Donna—Send to Eagle Herald, Peshtigo Times, County newspaper—some print, some don’t
• Consider posting information on websites

Agency Updates – Laurel Last and Sharon Baker
• Fish contaminant monitoring report status—fish tissue in queue for lab
• Rio Vista Slough monitoring report status—data back, report in couple of months
• Funding for 2015 fish population monitoring
  o Will continue monitoring in Lower River and reference sites in 2015
  o Not sure yet whether we’ll need additional funding (if so, use capacity grant funds)
• RAP Update
  o Current schedule has CAC and TAC reviewing early January
  o Then, public review period (document online)
  o Final RAP complete in February

Public Comment and Other News
• Trygve—Does anyone have news on Green Island?
• Mark—Nancy says project is still moving forward
  • Mark will ask Nancy for an update and share with group

Identify Future Agenda Items & Meeting Date
• Next meeting January 15th, 2015?
  o Keith will not be available that day
  o Decided on alternate date—January 22nd
• Identify Agenda Topics
  • Spring SPAC meeting
  • Report out on MCD roles and responsibilities
  • CAC outreach in 2015
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ONLINE RESOURCES
MDEQ – http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3677_15430_57388---,00.html
UW-Extension – http://fyi.uwex.edu/aocs/

2013 RAP and F&W Plans available