

MINUTES OF THE THIRD PUBLIC INTEREST ADVISORY GROUP
CONFERENCE CALL
February 8, 2008

Note: Action Items are shown as bold and are provided as a summary in Attachment 3.

Kay Felt and James Bruce convened the call at approximately 9:30 a.m.

(Approval of Agenda (Attachment 1))

II. Roll Call

PIAG Members present were: James Bruce, co-Chair; Kay Felt, co-Chair; David Irish, John Jackson, Mary Muter, Roger Smithe, Sam Speck, Alan Steinman, Dan Thomas.
Not present: James Anderson, Doug Cuddy, Richard Hibma, Kenneth Higgs, William Hryb, Donald Marles, David Powers, Dan Tadgerson, Jeff Vito, and James Weakley.

IJC Participants present were: Ted Yuzyk, Canadian Study Leader; Tony Eberhardt, U.S. Study Manager; Syed Moin, Canadian Study Manager; John Nevin, Public Information Officer; Tom Black, Public Information Officer.

Other Participants: Wendy Leger, Bill Werick.

Discussion of Circle of Influence Cooperation

Wendy Leger and Bill Werick began the meeting by reviewing hypothetical Circle of Influence questions they had distributed to PIAG members (**Attachment 2**). The Circle of Influence concept is designed to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to help formulate specific performance metrics that can be applied in the Study evaluation process. For example, stakeholders might suggest the threshold below which water levels become critical for residents and other users in a given area under given applications, such as commercial navigation, recreational boating, shoreline enjoyment/damage, municipal water access and so on.

Circle of Influence workshops should be considered complementary to the broader public input. The stakeholders can evaluate the Study by the metrics they helped formulate. Stakeholders can evaluate alternatives the Study Board is considering and see how this affects their metrics.

The other purpose of the workshops is to give the technical experts clear, concise input on what the stakeholders want. It was noted that for Georgian Bay residents, low water levels can affect things like access to supplies, or police and fire protection. Such considerations must be evaluated separately from concerns affecting recreational boating.

The adverse effects on Georgian Bay wetlands were discussed as one of the most important concerns pertaining to lower water levels. As water levels drop, the wetlands give way to rock, and aquatic life is forced out onto the granite shoreline. McMaster University is exploring ways to quantify the effects of lower water levels on wetlands, employing satellite imagery and other technologies.

The Study Board will begin making decisions affecting Georgian Bay wetlands next year. This type of dynamic discussion is necessary to make sure the experts of the Study Board have the information they need for planning the Study process, Bill Werick said.

Kay Felt asked Bill Werick how the information would be made available. He replied Wendy Leger would document Circle of Influence discussions and keep all concerned informed. Each workshop will have its own paper record, and generally at least one PIAG representative will attend.

The question was raised whether false expectations could be raised regarding what the International Joint Commission can achieve to control water levels. The Circle of Influence approach could set up the Study for failure in light of factors such as climate change and unpredictable weather patterns. Additionally, actions benefiting one part of the Great Lakes could harm other parts.

This is a legitimate concern, Werick said, but Circle of Influence has made it clear that the regulation of Lake Superior only has a modest effect on levels of other Great Lakes. Printed materials could be developed to convey this reality to the states and provinces.

A discussion ensued about whether recommendations of the 1993 Levels Reference Study should be revisited, and Jim Bruce said the Study Board and PIAG will consider those recommendations. Gene Stakhiv concurred, but added that he was involved in the 1993 study, and much more accurate information has subsequently been obtained. He said many of the 1993 analyses will be refined.

Discussion moved to a series of questions Wendy Leger had distributed. Suggestions were made to revise the wording of two of the questions, which will be done. Discussion also addressed the size and makeup of Circle of Influence. The workshops are small – often involving fewer than 15 people – and their intent is to inform the plan formulation and evaluation process. Participants can represent a region, a stakeholder sector, or both. They are engaged for the duration of the study and a dialogue with them is ongoing. Gene Stakhiv stressed there must be a context – the IJC mandate. It lays out principles and guidelines about what must be accomplished.

A question was raised about whether Circle of Influence workshops are devoted to a particular topic. Bill Werick replied that is generally not the case; flexibility is intended. Although the Plan Evaluation Group (PEG) overlaps somewhat with PIAG, its scope is not as broad.

Kay Felt said it is important to see that diverse interests are represented in Circle of Influence, or the group's input could be skewed.

Circle-generated criteria for the Study Board to consider might include maximizing of economic and/or environmental benefits (overall or by sector); or a focus on minimizing and reducing loss (overall or by sector). Considerations for the Study Board should include whether recommendations A) Are practical and easy to implement; B) Represent a fair distribution of benefits and costs; and/or C) Consider the ramifications of climate change.

Defining specific metrics or methods for measuring performance indicators must be another priority. For example, would measuring wetlands improvement be quantified by monetary or other terms or by some type of ratio? Circle of Influence will identify whether the right type of information is being collected for evaluation. Concerns raised would be documented, and the Study Team alerted if it had not previously considered a particular concern or if new policy questions were raised. Workshop participants would be able to view the Board's consideration of their input using the Sharepoint data base.

A question was raised about a potential disconnect between Circle participants outside the construct of the overall study. How would the PIAG decide which concerns to follow up on, and how would PIAG integrate them within the larger construct of the study? Al Steinman asked for assurance that all aspects of the study are examined and evaluated on equal footing.

Kay Felt said the Study Plan is just a starting point, and participants should consider whether there are issues of importance that so far have not been included in the plan. Bill Werick acknowledged there will be limits on what the Study can do compared to expectations. Circle of Influence hopes to clarify those. Conflicts are to be expected; they were present during the Lake Ontario study. Sometimes limited money, resources and time might prevent the Study Board from pursuing every suggestion. Gene Stakhiv said this iterative process involves the Circle of Influence determining where PIAG stands, what's important, areas of disagreement, and key issues.

Given the size of the Great Lakes region and interdependence of the lakes, one lake can flourish while others struggle. How should the Study Board strike a balance weighing the conditions and consequences for each lake under different conditions?

Dr. Stakhiv cited President Carter's approach to world development, which strived for equity, economic efficiency, environmental quality, and social justice. The question is how to reduce them to decision guidelines.

Several word changes were advised for the Circle of Influence questions, including replacing "happy" as an adjective for reactions to the Study with words like "satisfied" or "met study expectations." It was also suggested that feedback be sought on whether the study was fairly done.

Sam Speck observed that Ohio residents often want certain things done, e.g., dredging, but their desires change depending on who will pay for it and how much it will cost. He emphasized budgetary responsibility must be factored into the Study Board's considerations.

Suggestions were requested for groups and organizations the Circle of Influence should contact. Jim Bruce asked Mary Muter to review the public meetings list he distributed at the Study Board meeting on Jan. 31. **Syed Moin will post the list of public meetings on the web site. John Nevin is assembling a packet of papers including the public meetings that he will distribute to PIAG members.** The plan is to send it to PIAG as soon as the Study Board's comments are received.

Wendy Leger asked that PIAG members go through the proposed questions and provide feedback to her by Friday, Feb. 22. At Kay Felt's request, Wendy will distribute a memo explaining to PIAG members the response she is seeking.

IV. Update on public meeting preparations

Tom Black provided an update on the PIAG meetings planned for February 19 in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan; February 20 at SEMCOG headquarters in Detroit; and February 21 in Point Edward, Ontario in conjunction with the St. Clair Regional Conservation Authority. A local public access cable station will videotape the Grosse Pointe Farms meeting, and no decision has been made yet on who will serve as meeting moderators. **Tom Black will contact Dr. Jonathan Bulkley and Jim Bredin to see if either would be available to serve as a meeting moderator.**

Other discussion covered the locations and dates of spring meetings, and whether PIAG would meet in Muskegon in early May. Al Steinman said he had made arrangements for U.S. Rep. Peter

Hoekstra to be present at a public meeting in Muskegon on Saturday May 3. He has reserved the Annis Water Resources Institute for May 2-3. A public meeting will be held in Muskegon on May 3, but the full PIAG will not meet in Muskegon due to a conflict with the planned meeting of the Study Board on May 1-2..

Jim Bruce said the present plan is to hold meetings in the April 28-30 time frame in Saginaw-Bay City and Port Huron. **It was agreed that PIAG will meet on April 30 in Port Huron.**

The timing of these public meetings and the full PIAG meeting allows the PIAG to take advantage of the April report to the IJC of the Study Board's scientific results achieved over the past six months.

Dave Powers suggested having the Circle of Influence group meet with the Save Our Shoreline group during the Bay City-Saginaw meeting on April 28.

Procedures for handling web inquires and inquires to PIAG members

Kay Felt said when a public inquiry comes in, Tom Black or John Nevin will prepare an answer, and she or Jim Bruce will review it. If the question comes from a geographical area of a PIAG member, that member will be notified of the response and may help tailor the response as local issues or circumstances dictate. This procedure applies to both letters and web inquiries. If a person calls with a question, the call recipient should take notes and follow up with a written response.

Gene Stakhiv said many of the inquiries are of a technical nature; there are very few generic inquiries. This will require responses from Task Teams or Technical Work Groups. Responses should be coordinated through Gene, Ted Yuzyk, Tony Eberhardt, or Syed Moin. Ted Yuzyk said he believes the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will address many of the inquiries.

The FAQs in their first draft were lengthy and will be honed down, then circulated to PIAG members for review and suggestions. Applicable PIAG members should be informed of formal requests for information, and proper protocol must be followed in the responses.

Other Business

Al Steinman said he had not heard anything from the Technical Work Group to which he is assigned as a liaison. The TWGs are just starting to be established. Kay has received calls or e-mail invitations to participate, but no specifics yet.

Mary Muter said she would like to be informed of the goings on at technical meetings. Syed Moin said he will provide minutes from Task Team meetings to PIAG members who request them. **Tony Eberhardt and Syed Moin will prepare a Task team and TWG schedule for distribution.**

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Attachment 1

**International Upper Great Lakes Study
Public Interest Advisory Group
Conference Call Agenda**
Friday, February 8, 2008
9:30-11:00 a.m. EST

Toll Free: 1-866-352-2219
Code: 384921#

Type of Meeting: PIAG Conference Call #3
Meeting facilitators: Kay Felt/Jim Bruce
Invitees: All PIAG Members, Bill Werick, Wendy Leger, Study Team

- I. Approval of Agenda – Felt
- II. Roll Call – Felt
- III. Discuss PIAG & Circle of Influence cooperation (Werick, Leger)
- IV. Update on public meeting preparations (Nevin & Black)
- V. Discussion of procedures for handling web inquires and inquires to PIAG members (Yuzyk/Felt)
- VI. Upcoming study related workshops and meetings
 - a. TWG workshops (Eberhardt)
 - b. St. Clair River Task Team meeting (Moin)
- VII. Other Business
- VIII. Adjournment

Attachment 2

Note to PIAG from PEG

We are writing to engage your interest and support for four workshops identified in the Plan Evaluation Group (PEG) first year work plan. These workshops are designed to elicit quantifiable metrics of public opinion on the management of water levels on the Upper Great Lakes and to support a portion of the larger PIAG responsibilities. In addition, these workshops reflect our conviction that the public must be able to understand, use and trust the evaluations of alternatives performed in the Upper Great Lakes study. The PEG has the responsibility to make sure that the evaluations are not just technically adequate but that they reflect the factors members of the public will apply when considering whether one option or another better addresses their concerns. This approach has been used successfully in other studies, most recently the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River regulation study, and we can show you how the evaluations benefitted from them.

PEG would like to demonstrate this approach in stages, first in a teleconference with PIAG members on February 8 so you can see for yourself the kinds of questions PEG would ask and the nature of the answers being sought. We would then hold three subsequent workshops in the next few months with interest groups the PIAG identifies. This gradual staging will allow PIAG to monitor the process so that it best fulfills the obligations of PIAG and the Study Board.

The PEG's ultimate goal is to build an evaluation tool that truly represents a shared vision of how the study board's recommendations will affect water levels in the Upper Great Lakes and the impacts those decisions will have on the various stakeholder concerns. Done well, every major interest group will use the tool – this is the “shared vision model” (SVM) – knowing that it measures what they want to know objectively and in the terms that are most understandable and meaningful to them.

Our proposal is to work with the PIAG to find key individuals of existing advocacy groups who represent, and are trusted by, their constituency; and to go to meet with these representatives in their locations and learn from them. We call these circles of influence workshops because the trust and communication we can build with these key people will radiate out between them to the people who trust them. The PEG approved year 1 work plan identifies four circle of influence workshops, to be held before the end of March 31, 2008.

Generally these are small workshops (less than 25 people) where we work with participants and ask them to describe problems and opportunities from their point of view, and to define specific, fairly precise planning objectives, such as “Minimize lost boating opportunities in Georgian Bay due to low water levels from April to October”. We'll work with them to see whether we can develop some preliminary metrics (“keep the water levels between x and y from April through October”) that we can use to determine if the problem is going to get better or worse given potential future demands, climates, and regulation plans. We will also ask them to define critical thresholds for their interest group that once crossed could cause a shift in the way they operate (e.g. can no longer safely operate their boats).

The PEG wants to hold the first of these workshops with the PIAG itself so that PIAG members can see the process first hand as well as provide an initial set of objectives and metrics. This would serve to get your input, inform you of what we are doing and how the study is progressing, as well as to get your feedback on the effectiveness of the workshop, before moving on to other stakeholder groups.

Given the current PIAG schedule, we propose to do this as a virtual workshop, by conference call, on Feb. 8, 2008. The focus of this workshop will be to:

- a. Inform you about what we are doing in the study (plan formulation, preliminary evaluation and tradeoff/decision process)
- b. Help us determine specific planning objectives and potential performance indicators for designing and evaluating regulation plans.
- c. Identify some of the key characteristics you want to see in a plan.
- d. Identify specific regional concerns.

We will send you out some more material to review and an agenda prior to the meeting.

This will be the start of a number of meetings with a set of circle of influence groups. At the end of the day, our hope is that these groups will have more knowledge and trust in the study, and we will know more precisely what is and is not acceptable to them in a new regulation plan and towards a successful completion of the study.

In meetings like this, it is not unusual for participants to have different expectations of what the meeting will accomplish. To help improve the chances that your investment of time is worthwhile, we ask that you do the following now. Pretend that the February 8 workshop is over and you feel satisfied by having participated and you think, "I was surprised by how good this meeting was. It really exceeded my expectations!" What happened that was so good? You can e-mail us with your answer. We will also ask people to volunteer these answers at the beginning of the meeting.

Could you please let us know if you would be able to participate in a "virtual workshop" via conference call on Friday, Feb. 8 at 9:30 a.m.

Thanks.

Bill Werick and Wendy Leger

Attachment 3**Action Items from 3rd Public Interest Advisory Group Conference Call, February 8, 2008**

No.	Description of Action Item	Action Lead	Due by:
1	Post list of public meetings on IUGLS web site.	Syed Moin	February 15
2	Distribute meetings list, backgrounders to PIAG.	John Nevin	February 11
3	Review proposed Circle of Influence questions, provide feedback to Wendy Leger.	All PIAG members.	February 22
4	Distribute memo to PIAG members specifying the type of input Circle of Influence organizers seek.	Wendy Leger	February 11
5	Contact Study Team members, inquire whether one would be available to serve as public meeting moderator on February 19 in Grosse Pointe Farms.	Tom Black	February 8
6	Agreement to schedule next full PIAG meeting for Wednesday, April 30 in Port Huron, Michigan.	All PIAG members.	April 30
7	Prepare a Task team and TWG schedule for distribution.	Tony Eberhardt, Syed Moin	February 22