

Minutes of the Public Interest Advisory Group Conference Call
November 11, 2008

Note: Action Items are shown as bold and are provided as a summary in Appendix 1

Meeting convened by Jim Bruce and Kay Felt at 3:35

1. Roll Call

Present from PIAG: William Hryb, James Weakley, Kathryn Bartter, James Bruce, Richard Hibma, Kenneth Higgs, Mary Muter, John Jackson, Kay Felt, James Anderson, Al Steinman, Daniel Tadgerson, Dan Thomas, David Powers

Present from IUGLS Study Team: John Nevin, Syed Moin joined at 3:45 pm

2. Minutes

Minutes of August 11 PIAG meeting in Midland, Ontario were approved.

3. Discussion of Semiannual Report and Semiannual meeting

Dr. Syed Moin explained that the IUGLS Semi-annual Progress Report was approved by commissioners on October 29th and is posted on the web. He noted that the Study Board is analyzing whether scientific analysis can be completed in time to meet the February deadline for release of the draft St. Clair River report. Study co-chairs will meet with IJC in early December to reach a final decision on the time of the release of the report based on outcome of November 24-24 St. Clair River Task Team meetings.

Discussion of specific aspects of the report, including the comparison of vertical velocities in various cross sections of the river. These measurements were done by the U.S. Geological Survey using data from the ADCP in the St. Clair River. Results indicate the third dimension was always less than 10 percent of the longitudinal velocity, making it difficult for the Study to even look at 3D modeling (horizontal velocities of 200 cms compared to vertical velocities of between 5 and 20 cms) and confirming the view that 1 D or 1.5D models will be adequate to model flows.

Discussion that the 1D and 2D model results show a conveyance change between 1971 and 2000 but not after 2000. It was noted that we don't know when the change happened and if it was gradual or episodic and that work with respect in the Hydroclimate TWG that will shed light on what the hydraulic modeling has shown.

Discussion regarding potential use of the 3D model that is being developed for pollution transport, whether it has been calibrated and if there are enough sheer forces to move sediment.

4. Process for formulation of Draft Report on St. Clair issues and schedule, etc.

Discussion regarding the timing of the draft report; TWGS are being pushed to meet their deadlines; coordinator has been engaged (Tom Shillington) and background chapters have already been written (since those do not depend on results).

5. Report on St. Clair Task Team Meeting

Ken Higgs reported that he was impressed by the studies undertaken and the complexities of the issues, including the interaction of man's activities and natural changes. The objective of the meeting was to assess whether the task team is on schedule to provide answers on time and to integrate uncertainties and work with other groups

The Task Team is addressing the question: What is causing the declining head difference between Lake Michigan and Lake Erie, including the work of the Hydroclimate TWG, data verification TWG, sediment TWG and uncertainty analysis. Good progress is being made on every aspect of the study to determine declining head difference. Lots of data has been collected and new instrumentation has been or will be installed. However, much additional data and more comprehensive data (such as regarding evaporation) is needed.

It was noted that one of the recommendations should be that additional data collection is essential for long term management. Indeed, the Study has collected lots of data that should have been collected all along.

Additional discussion about the February deadline and the need to accelerate the process to meet that deadline. The challenge is the interdependence of various projects and the need for some projects to come to a conclusion before others can be completed. PIAG was also informed that IJC concurred with a 60-day comment period on the draft report and notified that the next PIAG meeting would be by December 12 in Windsor, following the Study Board meeting. Also noted Jim Anderson and Dave Irish will be attending the upcoming St. Clair Task Team meeting November 24-25.

6. Report on Hydroclimate TWG

Much effort going into reducing the uncertainties in the net basin supply data. Now have three modeled estimates of evaporation from the Upper Lakes – GLERL and two others. Now able to compare the ability of those models with the measurements that are being made directly from the lighthouse on Stannard Rock. Will be an effort to put an eddy covariance device on Lake Huron early in the next season. GLERL data on runoff to the lakes has been significantly modified and posted on the website. Other challenges and sources of uncertainty remain that must be addressed. Looking at the data, are there real break points or simply changes in observation or calculation method? Work is under way to examine the role of reductions in ice cover in increasing evaporation over the lakes. This is providing input to the hydraulic modeling team to determine why and when changes in conveyance may have occurred.

7. Report on Circles of Influence and Public Meetings

Circles of Influence workshops were held in Ann Arbor and Harrison Township, Michigan, and public meetings were held in Midland, Collingwood and Owen Sound. Attendance at Col included a wide range of interests, including environmental groups, municipal governments, state and federal agency experts and riparians. Ann Arbor participants had questions about the scope of study and were interested in potential remedial options in regard to the 16 inches of lowering attributed to sand and gravel mining and dredging since the late 1800s. Resident from the shores of Lake St. Clair at the Harrison Township meeting talked about the need for a more coordinated approach to coastal management, encouraging cooperative work across agencies at the federal, state and local levels. The accretion problem on Lake St. Clair was also raised and the need to stop studying and “do something.”

PIAG was informed that a Col meeting for First Nations will be held in Toronto on November 20th. It was also noted that there is agreement with Deputy Minister and staff to provide a briefing for Ontario on November 27th. Discussion regarding the importance of connecting with Ontario officials to prepare them to start thinking about cooperative action in places like Lake St. Clair to protect interests in the shore area.

8. Status of Public Information Program

A communications plan for release of the draft report is being developed. **It was proposed that the plan be discussed at the December 12 PIAG meeting. The third issue of the On the Level newsletter is still being developed and also be available for review at the next meeting.** The next public meeting will be in Toledo, Ohio, on November 19th at the University of Toledo, Lake Erie Center.

9. Date and Place of Next Meeting

It was again noted that the next face to face meeting will be on Friday, December 12th, in Windsor, Ontario.

10. Other business

It was noted that some PIAG liaisons to TWGs were not being notified of meetings. **Commitment to make sure liaisons received all necessary information was made by the Study.**

11. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:25 pm.

Appendix 1 – Action Items from 11/11/2009 Conference Call

1. Communications Plan for release of draft St. Clair River Report to be provided to PIAG and placed on the agenda at the 12/12/2009 meeting (Lead: NEVIN).
2. 3rd issue of On the Level newsletter will be provided to PIAG for discussion at the 12/12/09 meeting (Lead: NEVIN).
3. Make sure PIAG TWG liaisons are properly notified of calls and provided all documents on an ongoing basis. (Lead: MOIN, EBERHARDT)