

MINUTES OF THE SECOND PIAG MEETING
Sheraton Hotel
123 Queen St. West, Toronto, Ontario
3 November 2007

Note: Action Items are shown as bold and are provided as a summary in Attachment 4.

1. Approval of Agenda (Attachment 1)

James Bruce called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Roll Call & Introductions

Kay Felt asked the attendees to introduce themselves.

PIAG Members present were: James Bruce (Canadian Co-Chair), Kay Felt (U.S. Co-Chair), James Anderson, Doug Cuddy, Dick Hibma, Kenneth Higgs, William Hryb, John Jackson, Mary Muter, David Powers, Roger Smithe, Sam Speck, Alan Steinman, Dan Tadgerson, Dan Thomas and Jeff Vito. David Irish, Don Marles and James Weakley were excused.

U.S. Co-Chair Irene Brooks was present as a guest.

Study Co-Leaders present were Eugene Stakhiv and Ted Yuzyk.

Study Co-Managers present were Anthony Eberhardt and Syed Moin.

Public Information Officers present were Thomas Black, Gregory McGillis and John Nevin.

3. Minutes from September 25 PIAG conference call meeting

The minutes of the meeting of September 25, 2007, were approved as presented to the meeting.

4. Status of Action Items

It was requested that PIAG send a letter in support of funding for three permanent International Gauging Stations in the interconnecting channels: St. Marys, St. Clair and Niagara Rivers, to the respective governments. **John Nevin will coordinate finalization of a letter regarding new gauges** (Attachment 2).

A discussion was held concerning PIAG's planned response to U.S. senators who have expressed concerns about Great Lakes water levels. **Kay Felt will develop a response.**

Items Carried Forward from First Meeting:

A public information officer (PIO) and communications consultant are in place (Tom Black – full-time with part-time assistance from Suzanne Truskowski-Crawford).

John Nevin, Tony Eberhardt, Kay Felt and Gene Stakhiv will make a presentation to congressional staff November 8-9 in Washington, D.C.

5. State of the Great Lakes Water Levels

a) **Past Studies:** Gene Stakhiv presented information about the past studies that have been conducted as to water levels on the Great Lakes.

- 1976 IJC Report to the Governments of Canada and the U.S.: “Further Regulation of the Great Lakes.”
- 1993 Levels Reference Study Board Report submitted to the IJC.

Gene Stakhiv reported his synthesis of the results of these studies:

- The Great Lakes are a large, self-regulating system – human intervention cannot significantly modify the extremes in water levels.
- The lakes must be managed as a system with basin-wide regulation, irrespective of political boundaries.

There was discussion of the need for PIAG members to include in their public presentations information about the regulatory structure in which the IJC operates in relation to the two nations and their respective local governments; and that there are regulatory requirements that must be fulfilled before the governments can carry out IJC recommendations.

b) **Current State:** Syed Moin reported on current lake levels. Lakes Michigan and Huron are about 52 cm. below the long-term average. Lake Superior is up 25 cm. since last month. There was interest in PIAG members having access to automatic updates of water levels. **Tony Eberhardt will provide information to PIAG regarding the process to receive these automatic updates.**

6. Topics for Discussion

a) **Semi-Annual Progress Report to the IJC.** Ted Yuzyk covered the accomplishments since April of 2007, which were described in the Study Board’s Report.

- First PIAG meeting held on July 31-August 1.
- Three Study Board meetings.

- Meetings of Task Teams and 15 Technical Work Groups
- Revision of the Study plan to shorten the time frame for the St. Clair River part of the Study by one year.
- Memorandum of Understanding reached with Environment Canada.
- Scientific accomplishments.
- Staffing by public information officers and the Study's outreach campaign.

Peer review options were discussed. It was emphasized that although the Co-Leaders and Co-Managers may recommend peer review evaluators, the IJC will be key in the peer review process. Paul Pilon and Mark Colosimo will serve as liaisons between the Study Board and the IJC.

There was a discussion of the process for expediting the St. Clair River part of the Study: Plans call for shifting funding in the early years to address St. Clair River priorities. A preliminary report is anticipated by January of 2009, which will be subject to peer review. June 2009 is the target date for a final report on this portion of the Study. There was discussion of funding delays from the Canadian side that may affect contracting of work and create jurisdictional barriers.

Kay Felt reported on the discussion at the Study Board meeting earlier in the week about the need to be sensitive to issues related to scientific integrity and the compressed timetable. The Study Board, with Commissioner Olson present, emphasized that the Board wants to be informed immediately by the scientists if it appears at any time that the compressed timetable may affect the scientific integrity of the work.

b) Sediment Presentation

Ted Yuzyk reported on the preliminary findings of Dr. Krishnappan who has completed video taping the bottom of a 30-mile portion of the St. Clair River bed which shows that the bed is well armoured and is not eroding at this time. Erosion, therefore, appears not to be a factor in recent declines in water levels. The current work shows that sediment transported by the water flow comes primarily from lower Lake Huron, not the river bed. Further work will be conducted over the next two months on this part of the project.

It was noted that there are prior studies on these issues which will be helpful for comparative purposes, one by David Duane in the 1980s, and another by Lau and Krishnappan ten years later.

The scientific questions for this part of the Study include:

- Is the St. Clair riverbed eroding?
 - Has the conveyance changed?
 - If so, what are the contributing factors?
- c) **Observations on Hydroclimate Workshop.** James Bruce reported on the workshop held on the preceding two days, which many members of PIAG attended.
- d) **PIAG/TWG Liaison.** John Nevin reported on progress in making assignments of PIAG members for Technical Work Group liaison. Progress has been somewhat delayed because a number of PIAG members did not express preferences. **John Nevin, Kay Felt, and James Bruce will assemble an assignment matrix, which they hope to complete by November 9.**

There was a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of PIAG liaisons to a TWG. Liaisons are expected to attend TWG meetings, have a strong interest in the subject matter, be well informed and objective, and refrain from advocating a specific agenda. (Attachment 3)

7. **Outreach Program**

John Nevin and Kay Felt reported on the outreach program that is being developed.

- a) **Information Plan** John Nevin reported on the proposed elements of the information plan:
- PIAG newsletter and plans for an editorial board.
 - A professionally designed logo.
 - Press tours.
 - Progress reports.
 - Letters to key government officials.
 - Protocols for developing and translating messages.
 - Regular mail and e-mail lists for distribution.
 - Fact sheets, frequently asked questions and a standard PowerPoint presentation for PIAG members.

- Scheduling public meetings of stakeholder organizations.

The key goals are:

- Being proactive and opportunistic.
- Being disciplined about messaging.
- Avoiding politics and confrontation.
- Seeking cooperation.
- Treating science as our friend.

John Nevin will prepare press releases on the new PIAG members.

Tom Black will develop lists including the following: environmental media and editorial writers; city, county, state, provincial and federal officials; interest-related associations; environmental NGOs; relevant conferences, workshops, and other meetings; community water-related events and local chapters of the League of Women Voters.

There was extensive discussion during which several people stated the Plan seems to be more ambitious than PIAG has the resources to accomplish. PIAG asked that John Nevin formalize the specifics of this presentation into a formal Communications Plan. **John Nevin will incorporate the comments received on his presentation into a formal work plan, which PIAG and the Study Board will assess to determine what key items can be accomplished within the budget for communication activities.**

- b) **Public Meetings.** Kay Felt led the discussion on planning for public meetings.
- i) **Format / Scope - Meetings / Workshops:** There was an extensive discussion that covered methods for notifying the public about upcoming meetings, including news releases and possibly a news conference announcing the upcoming meeting lineup. More consideration should be given to the advisability of holding IUGLS public information meetings at the same time as existing public meetings and conferences, the consensus was that ultimately PIAG should schedule more of its own meetings.
 - ii) **Where and When.** Should public meetings be coordinated with upcoming PIAG meetings?

Location ideas included Annis Water Institute at Grand Valley State University in Muskegon, Michigan; Thunder Bay and/or Georgian Bay, Ontario.

There was also discussion of an Army Corps of Engineers presentation being done by study managers for an international audience. **Tony Eberhardt and Syed Moin will continue to work on a draft presentation.**

All PIAG members were asked to provide information to Tom Black on events and conferences at which PIAG members could make presentations. He will also collect information on upcoming public events related to lakes, water, sport fishing, and similar events for this purpose.

Jeff Vito, Jim Anderson, John Jackson and Alan Steinman volunteered to form the first ad hoc group to work with John Nevin and Tom Black regarding planning public meetings.

- iii) **Contacts to Date.** Public meetings have not previously been scheduled in anticipation of the addition of public information officer staff, which has now been accomplished.

8. Other Business

- a) **Communications and Responses.** John Nevin reviewed the communications received from and responses to the following:
 - i) IJC
 - ii) U.S. Senators
 - iii) Great Lakes Commission Resolution
 - iv) Georgian Bay Association
- b) **Media Scan - Distribution:** Ted Yuzyk reviewed media coverage. To date there have been some 125 news articles related to low water levels, the so called “drainhole” and the Study. There has been considerably more press coverage than with the previous Study. If PIAG members wish to receive the list of press clippings, they should contact Tom Black.
- c) **Report on the Web Site.** Syed Moin reported that the website HYPERLINK: <http://www.iugls.org> has been in operation for five months, with a steady increase in hits and pages viewed. In the last week the site had 15,000 hits in one day. There are plans to make it more interactive.

9. Roundtable

Jim Bruce led the following Roundtable.

Irene Brooks – Impressed with progress being made so far.

Dick Hibma – Regrets inability to attend the climate workshop; looks forward to Canadian conference.

Doug Cuddy – Enjoyed climate change workshop; things are going well; he looks forward to TWG involvement.

Alan Steinman – Will mention PIAG and IUGLS on his radio show; will brief U.S. Rep. Peter Hoekstra's staff; noted two upcoming conferences: August 2008 in Milwaukee - Ecological Society of America (many Great Lakes issues); and May 2009 in Grand Rapids - North American Benthological Society.

Kenneth Higgs – A little disappointed with dearth of climate information given that the IJC was established in 1909; seems like a long time not to have gauges established. RE: Logo: be careful not to separate this Study from other studies; it's part of an ongoing process.

William Hryb – Public Information people are integral in the Study. The public is savvy; our message must be terse, tight, and correct. If we don't give media the right information, we are in danger of losing public confidence. Teamwork is crucial.

Mary Muter – Appreciates opportunity for Rob Nairn to present Baird findings; believes that was basis on which St. Clair River task was added to IUGLS.

James Anderson – Wants a "state of the science" event, in particular ecosystem sciences.

Jeff Vito – Anxious to get involved; very interesting; outstanding people to work with.

John Jackson – Challenging, looking forward to it.

Roger Smithe – Impressed with the meeting; thanked Canada for their hospitality. We want people to be up to date on the Study, not in the dark, but we don't want people to get incomplete, out-of-context information.

Sam Speck – Feels good about the expertise that has been brought to bear; confident we will be successful.

David Powers – Has Bay City Times environmental reporter next door to his office. Wants to be well-informed in anticipation of plethora of questions.

10. Next Meetings

The next PIAG meeting will be held in 2008 at a date to be determined, probably in early March so that activities and reporting can be in the next Semi-Annual Report to the IJC, which is due the week of April 14.

A conference call was scheduled for Wednesday, December 5 at 2 p.m. EST, in part to finalize meeting dates and locations. **John Nevin will coordinate the conference call logistics.**

11. Adjournment.

PIAG adjourned at approximately 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
