

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST ADVISORY GROUP MEETING**

**Thomas Edison Inn**  
**Port Huron, Michigan**  
**April 30, 2008**

**Note: Action Items are shown as bold and are provided as a summary in Attachment 8**

Kay Felt and James Bruce convened the meeting at approximately 9:05 a.m.

**I. Roll Call**

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

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

**II. Approval of Agenda (Attachment 1)**

The April 30, 2008 PIAG meeting agenda was approved.

**III. Approval of previous meeting minutes (Attachments 2-3)**

Minutes of the December 18, 2007 and February 8, 2008 PIAG conference calls were approved.

**IV. Presentation/Discussion: Semiannual Progress Report to IJC (Attachment 4)**

Eugene Stakhiv and Ted Yuzyk reviewed the six Study questions and the 24 projects that are underway in order to answer the Study questions. Many of the projects overlap and complement each other.

Bathymetric survey data is needed for all projects to progress; some of that data has been accumulated slowly because of the need for attention to quality control issues. In light of alternative reports and previous studies, and the complexity of the issues, it is necessary to proceed with care in selecting the data to be used, and the methodologies for modeling and analyses. Analysis incorporating climate change contributes to uncertainty.

It was noted that a large part of an informal peer review process is done at the Technical Work Group level. The formal peer review process is now underway. As a first step in this review, the Independent Review Group (IRG) agreed with the St. Clair River hydraulic and sediment modeling strategy and the level of investigation adopted by IUGLS. Additional questions will be presented to the IPR at the end of June.

An update on modeling strategy was given. The peer reviewers have agreed that 3-D modeling is not needed at present; however, that will be re-assessed as the project

progresses as to certain limited areas. It was noted that the Great Lakes Observing System is preparing a 3-D model which may be available by September 2009.

The Study is progressing on budget and on schedule, and a narrative description may be emerging as results are being analyzed and interpreted.

Discussion also covered the Lake Ontario Study (LOSL) and lessons learned. For example, IUGLS is improving information management through such tools as SharePoint, and attention is being given to earlier communication with the public (e.g., public meetings, newsletters and press releases), so that public input is available for consideration as the Study progresses.

#### **V. Public meetings to date: Reports and PIAG feedback (Attachments 5-6)**

Reports were given on Michigan public meetings in Grosse Pointe Farms (2/19), SEMCOG in Detroit (2/20), Bay City (4/28) and Port Huron (4/29); Jim Bruce's presentation at the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority in Point Edward, Ontario (2/20); and Dick Hibma's and Doug Cuddy's presentations to interest groups on Georgian Bay. It was noted that there would be another public meeting in Muskegon, Michigan (5/3).

Discussion included the need for better effort to engage senior members of the Ontario provincial government. Marine-related businesses on Canadian side of Lake Huron are concerned about whether they can remain open this summer if water levels drop. Other public concerns and questions dealt with shoreline muck and the difficulty of obtaining clean-up permits, the Great Lakes Compact and the Annex Agreement, evaporation issues, and the absence of First Nations involvement in the Study, which is currently being addressed. It was discussed during the April annual IJC meeting that having a PIAG meeting coincide with IJC meetings in Ottawa or Washington, D.C. would help the IJC better understand the public outreach process.

**It was agreed that Jim Anderson would develop a strategy for arranging meetings with the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, as well as meetings with caucuses of all Ontario political parties to share Study information and receive feedback.**

#### **VI. Review proposed PIAG public meeting schedule, outreach efforts (Attachment 7)**

Meetings are planned for the third week in June in Thunder Bay, Ontario; Duluth, Minnesota; Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin; and Mequon, Wisconsin. There was tentative agreement on the week of August, 11. for public meetings in Georgian Bay, including Little Current, Parry Sound, Midland and Owen Sound; and possibly a PIAG meeting on August 15 in Georgian Bay. Roger Smithe asked if an Island boat tour could be arranged in Georgian Bay.

Several PIAG members stated public meeting presentations should be less technical, and background information on IJC and study organization should be scaled back, especially the charts since they cannot be read. It was noted that while environmental interest groups have attended meetings, they have not been vocal as yet; it is important to try to anticipate the concerns they will raise as the Study progresses. It was noted that while the first round of public meetings is mainly informational as to the Study organization and process, the second round will offer more results. Discussion also covered whether Study technical experts could prepare materials for PIAG members to

deliver at public meetings, rather than give the presentations themselves in order to free their time for work on the Study. Technical experts probably will be necessary when the time comes to deliver results. It was noted that preparation and travel time for public presentations are considerable; therefore, the schedule for public meetings must be expeditious. Discussion also covered conducting public meetings in conjunction with existing meetings of other groups.

Circles of Influence was described as a part of the public outreach effort to help with identifying/clarifying public values, preferences, and priorities. The “muck” issue was addressed, with some PIAG members advising against spending too much time on it since it is not part of the Study mandate, but others stating it cannot be ignored as it is influenced by lake levels. **Venues, dates and times for additional public meetings and PIAG to be finalized in the next few weeks.**

### **Review of IUGLS Communications Plan**

John Nevin led a discussion on communications and media strategy. IUGLS has entered into an arrangement with the IJC Ottawa and Washington, D.C. offices to share a media data base that will facilitate outreach to the news media. The committee discussed feedback to the premier issue of “On the Level,” the editorial content, deadlines, and production process. The question was raised whether the newsletter content should represent the Study as a whole or PIAG. It was suggested that short bios of Study participants and pictures would help put a “human face” on the Study; also that next issue should contain more information on commercial navigation, and that Technical Work Groups should be solicited for story ideas. Suggestions were made to put newsletter articles (in draft form with a hard deadline for response) onto SharePoint for PIAG members to access. It was agreed that all PIAG members would be given an opportunity to review future articles, with comments due by a set deadline. Final editorial approval will remain with PIAG Co-chairs, Study Co-chairs, John Nevin and Tom Black.

Newspaper editorial board meetings were discussed as an outreach strategy, but several people stated it is difficult for Study leaders to participate in a large number of these meetings due to the travel, time constraints, etc. When PIAG members are a part of editorial board presentations, they must specify whether particular comments represent their particular constituent group or the entire PIAG. It was agreed that a long-term strategic communication plan is needed for IUGLS. John Nevin stated communications are planned to be more proactive. A number of materials are being developed for web posting, such as fact sheets and frequently asked questions, and more materials still need to be developed. One PIAG member suggested developing “boilerplate” components for PowerPoint presentations to make it easier to tailor them to local audiences. **Finalize transcripts, fact sheets, FAQs for posting. Gather editorial copy, begin editing/layout process for July newsletter, revise PowerPoint for PIAG use in both a short and long format. Prepare communication plan.**

### **Review status of action items.**

Tony Eberhardt provided an update of these items. He stated Syed Moin still needs to provide photographs of the stand-up display to Tom Black for purposes of soliciting bids from graphic artists on placard redesign. Exhibit on the Lake Superior Study featured separate displays for each of the Technical Work Groups. IUGLS may want to consider doing this. **Provide photo (s) of standup display to Tom Black.**

### **Demonstration of SharePoint, IUGLS website update.**

Syed Moin gave a demonstration of the SharePoint information management system and all PIAG members present were provided with login information. He said a user intending to edit a shared document should first download it before editing. An alert will be activated if a modification is made, and will indicate who did the revision. PowerPoint tutorials for SharePoint are available on the site. It was also noted that if a PIAG member has a need to retain a particular document or item, it should be downloaded, as the site is updated periodically. **SharePoint login information will be mailed to PIAG members not in attendance.**

### **PIAG Roundtable**

James Anderson - Wants to work more closely with Ontario governmental and environmental organizations. He made an offer, which was accepted, to prepare a plan to facilitate this outreach. He also asked about the feasibility of preparing a hierarchical "decision tree" to avoid confusion between the Study Board and PIAG.

Dick Hibma – Suggested that there be a preliminary slide for public meetings that is a lesson on standard terminology that will be used. He suggested that PIAG members should prepare and prioritize a preliminary suite of values to be updated as the Study progresses and as there is public input. He listed fish habitat, wetlands, use of property and recreational boating as examples of such values. On the issue of the value of the Great Lakes as a source of drinking water, Jim Bruce asked what attention is being paid to water intakes throughout the Great Lakes in the Ontario Source Water Protection program. Dick Hibma replied there are 18 "source protection regions" in southern Ontario. Most of Ontario residents' drinking water comes from the Great Lakes. That is an example of the kind of values that should be developed and prioritized.

Ken Higgs – Expressed concern about the St. Clair River part of the Study and whether the timeframe and available dollars would interfere with obtaining good scientific analysis. Is there too little time being spent on substance? He urged that attention be paid to the public reception of the LOSL study so that lessons to be learned are not missed.

Roger Smithe – Reported on TWG discussion about developing models to correlate erosion with varying lake levels. He raised questions about Circles of Influence discussions and the numbers of participants who can be included so that there is wide representation, but without inhibiting discussion.

David Powers - Thanked the presenters for attending the Bay City public meeting. He felt the meeting was highly informative and gave attendees the opportunity to raise their concerns, including the difficulty of obtaining permits to deal with the effects of variation in water levels, such as muck.

John Jackson - Would like a clarification of how and when public input will be obtained for the Ecosystem Technical Work Group. He raised questions about the LOSL study and how guidance will be obtained for IUGLS from the experience of that study.

Doug Cuddy – Dr. Krishnappan's video shows a stable riverbed; yet, in earlier presentations there was discussion of tremendous changes in river cross-section going back 35 years. He asked whether these conclusions are contradictory. Gene Stakhiv

explained that there are some findings that are perplexing. There are efforts underway to determine whether the data is correct and to refine analysis as to these issues. Doug Cuddy also expressed concerns about whether there are ways to increase the degree of predictability of water levels from year to year.

Don Marles - Asked about developing a simple, non-technical presentation for public meetings. He suggested asking attendees to describe how lake levels are affecting them personally. He also asked whether any studies have been done or are contemplated assessing the effect of loss of ice cover on evaporation. Syed Moin and Gene Stakhiv reported that data has been recorded over time on ice cover, and that the information will be made available. **Make information on ice cover available for PIAG.**

Samuel Speck - Stated he was impressed by the size and integrity of the IUGLS project and process. He appreciates the breadth of interests that could be competing and/or conflicting with each other. Regarding the communications strategy, he advised continued editorial board meetings, and also an effort to reach out to larger interest groups.

Dan Tadgerson - Looking forward to seeing the release of Study data. When he discusses the issues with other tribe members in the Great Lakes, they say the water levels have been cyclical for thousands of years and will come back. Often, however, permits to harvest wild rice are not issued because water levels are too low, a situation he urged be addressed. He also raised questions about the availability of information on isostatic rebound.

Jim Bruce - Noted the increasing significance of coastal zone management and recommended an Environment Canada/Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources publication on the topic.

Alan Steinman – Suggested obtaining information on values of public meeting participants and the possibility of using interactive vote counters to gauge the importance of certain values. He also suggested distributing evaluation cards at public meetings and this was agreed. **Draft meeting evaluation card.**

David Irish – Expressed concern about the level of PIAG involvement. He also expressed concerns about the scope and number of projects underway in light of the funding available and whether recreational boating and tourism would be adequately covered. He suggested PIAG members and other Study representatives wear name tags while attending or participating in public meetings. **Name tags should be made for PIAG members.**

Kay Felt – Expressed confidence that PIAG will continue working closely with Sam Speck after he assumes his seat on the IJC. She echoed concerns that had been expressed by others about the need for a strategic communications plan, including attention to education of governmental officials about IUGLS process and methodology and outreach to environmental groups. She echoed the concerns of PIAG members about lengthy telephone conference calls (1 hour should be the maximum), and the need for more face-to-face contact. She reminded PIAG members that PIAG service is personal. Representatives or proxies should not be sent. She also urged PIAG members to take an active part in Technical Work Groups and other committee processes, and to inform the co-chairs if PIAG liaisons are not included; it was noted that several of the Lake Superior TWGs are just organizing, and contact should be established soon. She thanked PIAG members for suggesting agenda items, which were included at this meeting, and urged them to continue to raise issues and any questions or concerns.

**Other Business**

It was noted that a question was raised earlier about the availability of Army Corps of Engineers studies of the St. Clair River that were done in the 1960s. Gene Stakhiv reported that extensive materials have been collected and are now being reviewed. The relevant materials will be released as soon as the review is complete.

**Adjournment**

PIAG adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m., after which the members went to observe the location of the St. Clair River flow gauge, which has been damaged by debris, and to learn of the plans for installing another gauge at a more protected site.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Attachment 8****Action Items from the third Public Interest Advisory Group meeting, April 30, 2008.**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Description of Action Item</b>	<b>Action Lead</b>	<b>Due by:</b>
1	Prepare strategy and arrange meetings with Ontario provincial officials.	Jim Bruce □ Jim Anderson	June 1
2	Finalize venue locations, dates, times and arrangements for public meetings and next PIAG meeting.	Tom Black/John Nevin	May 15
3	Finalize February meeting transcripts, FAQs, fact sheets for web posting.	Tom Black	June 13
4	Prepare comprehensive long-range communications plan	John Nevin	??
5	Begin compiling editorial content, preliminary page layout for July 1 newsletter.	Tom Black	May 20
6	Provide photo (s) of stand-up display to Tom Black to enable soliciting bids from graphic artists.	Syed Moin	May 16
7	Prepare information on ice cover and relationship to evaporation.	Syed Moin/Eugene Stakhiv	
8	Develop draft meeting evaluation card.	John Nevin	May 23
9	Revise PowerPoint for PIAG use in both a short and long format.	John Nevin	May 23
10	Mail SharePoint password/log-in information to PIAG members not present.	Syed Moin	May 16
11	Prepare PIAG name tags	Tom Black	June 15