

**Lake Superior Freshwater Estuary Center (LS-FEC)
Public Involvement Team Meeting
September 20, 2007 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, Superior DNR Service Center
Meeting Minutes**

Present: *Bob Cragin, Larry MacDonald, Amber Westerbur, Diane Thompson, Bob Browne, Bruce Lindgren, Nancy Larson, Julene Boe, Bonita Martin, Ted Smith, Gene Lemmenes, Becky Sapper, Cathy Techtmann, Pat Robinson (via phone)*

Introductions and Agenda Review

Introductions were made and an addition to the agenda was made to include a discussion on the Freshwater Estuary Ed-venture field trip that is being coordinated as part of the Making a Great Lake Superior Conference.

Site Selection Technical Team Update

Becky updated the team on the work of the Site Selection Technical Team (SSTT) and the progress that has been made since the last Public Involvement Team meeting. The SSTT finished creating the detailed site selection criteria that needed modification due to our freshwater system. The SSTT then ran the sites through the criteria and voted on a 'short list'. Their recommendations included

Short List from SSTT 7/18/07 Meeting:

- St. Louis River**
- Bark River**
- Bark River– St. Louis River – Fish Creek**
- Bark River– St. Louis River – Fish Creek – Stockton**
- Bark River – St. Louis River – Fish Creek – Big Bay**

The State Liaison Team met on 8/9/07 and offered the following changes to the recommendations of the SSTT.

SSTT Recommendations of NERR candidate sites from the 7/18/07 meeting	State Liaison Team Amendments from their 8/9/07 meeting	Rationale for State Liaison Team amendments to the NERR site candidate list, as unanimously recommended by the SLT
SINGLE COMPONENT		
St. Louis Estuary*	Retain	Possibly a multi-component site in itself. Need input from SSTT
Bark Bay	Drop	Remove Bark Bay due to site sensitivity, lack of facilities, overuse potential if a single NERR site
Fish Creek	Add	Concern that eliminating Bark leaves only 1 single site option for recommendation, the St. Louis. Fish provides only remaining single site option based upon the outcomes from the SSTT process.
MULTI-COMPONENT		Caveat that NOAA is not supportive of multi-component sites. Concern expressed by SLT over a multi-component over-reaching already stressed state resources.
St. Louis*-Bark-Fish	Retain	A viable combination of representative sites as recommended by SSTT
St. Louis*-Bark-Fish-Big Bay	Drop	Additional expense and accessibility issues associated with island sites.
St. Louis*-Bark-Fish-Stockton	Drop	Additional expense and accessibility issues associated with island sites



The SSTT made a request back to the SLT to stay with the original recommendations of the SSTT and remove Fish Creek as a single site option and keep the Island sites available as reference areas. At their 9/7/07 meeting, the SLT reconsidered the SSTT concerns, but based upon administrative factors they upheld their prior decisions regarding the short list.

Short List As of 9/7/07

St. Louis River

Fish Creek

St. Louis River – Bark River – Fish Creek

At their 9/11/07 meeting, the SSTT evaluated all of the publicly owned component areas within the St. Louis River Estuary to determine if the site should be considered as one complex or if individual areas within the estuary should be considered. After evaluating the component areas with the St. Louis Complex, the SSTT voted 13 in favor, 2 opposed to keep the St. Louis Estuary as a single unit and not to prioritize the individual components within the complex at this time.

Pat Robinson shared a draft white paper (attached) describing the Lake Superior “String of Pearls” Program. The paper introduced the concept of developing a formal, connected network of Wisconsin Lake Superior estuaries for fostering local stewardship and partnerships, encouraging collaborative education and research, and leveraging resources and funding. Partnering “Pearls” sites would be proposed at the community level with program development and administration done through a local advisory council with assistance from the NERR Outreach Coordinator.

Pat explained that the intention is not to create “mini-NERR’s” or multi-component NERR sites. This would be an opportunity for estuaries that were not selected for NERR designation, or those not eligible for consideration in the NERR program, to connect to the NERR site’s through a community led initiative focusing on research, education, and outreach. There would be an emphasis on local leadership and citizen involvement, applied research, monitoring, and demonstration projects related to freshwater estuaries at partnering “Pearl” sites. The program would continue building on the collaborative efforts between partners at the local, state, and federal level to foster stewardship of Lake Superior’s estuaries.

Public Involvement Input

Cathy discussed how public involvement will be incorporated in the Site Selection process. She stated that it was necessary for the SSTT and SLT to develop a short list of candidate sites in order to proceed with more focused public involvement. Prior to this, public involvement had been primarily focused on building awareness of Lake Superior’s freshwater estuaries.

The public involvement goal, prior to the 11/30 meeting, will be to meet with elected bodies and important stakeholder groups such as hunting and fishing groups associated with the estuaries currently on the short list to provide updated information on the project and solicit any concerns or issues. These groups include the Ashland, Bayfield and Douglas County boards, City of Superior, City of Ashland, and Towns of Bell, Clover and Eileen. Presentations have already been made to the Ashland Rod and Gun Club, M&I Bank Seniors Program, and a presentation to the Murphy Oil Citizen Advisory Panel is scheduled. The feedback received will be discussed at the 11/30 meeting. Discussions from this meeting will be used to continue working toward the nomination of a candidate site to NOAA. Cathy stressed that public involvement and outreach will continue throughout the process, including mandated public hearing in the vicinity of the proposed site.

The Team then brainstormed on important groups to reach out to including:



For the St. Louis:

- Harbor Technical Advisory Committee(HTAC) – contact Jason Serck, City of Superior
- Duluth Seaway Port Authority – Jason Serck
- Town of Oliver Board
- Douglas County Fish and Game League
- Rotary
- Optimists
- Chamber of Commerce
- Superior Municipal Forest Park Board
- Great Lakes Carriers Association
- St. Louis River Citizens Action Committee
- Douglas County Economic Development (Andy Leeshack)
- School Boards
- UW-Superior, UM-D and St. Scholastica

For the Bark River and Fish Creek:

- Herbster Community Club
- Cornucopia Business Association
- School Board
- Friends of the South Shore Estuaries
- Northland College
- League of Women Voters
- Inland Sea Society
- Alliance for Sustainability
- Apostle Island Sportsman’s Club
- Trek and Trail/Living Adventures

All areas:

- Tribal interests
- Jauch/Sherman
- Mayors in Superior/Ashland
- Almanac North (TV)
- Venture North –Dave Carlson

It was discussed that since it would be impossible to reach all of these audiences prior to November 30th, that informational presentations should be offered in two locations, in the Superior and Ashland areas, and invite as many of these groups as possible to attend. Julene Boe stated the St. Louis River CAC could host one in Superior. It was suggested that it could be held at the Library and the Public TV station could broadcast it. League of Women Voters will be asked if they can host a presentation in Ashland. PIT members were encouraged to accompany Becky/Cathy as they give the presentations to these audiences. Cathy will get a list of dates as soon as we have them.

Becky and Cathy then showed the different public involvement tools ready for use in providing information and soliciting feedback. These tools were developed based on the Team’s recommendations in the Public Involvement Plan and include a power point presentation, 3-panel display, brochure, fact sheet and media kit.



The Team suggested these additions to the power point presentation: adding the NERRS map of existing sites; adding a timeline on the steps to visually depict the entire process, including examples of other NERR sites within the presentation; and discussion of the fact that there could still be times of periodic research closures in specific areas.

The fact sheet needs a date for a point of reference on the last paragraph, first page.

The Team suggested a kick-off press event, as recommended in the Public Involvement Plan, to begin this stage of the Site Selection Process. We would need to consider time and location of such a kick off event.

Ted Smith expressed that there are groups that are not necessarily headquartered in the area including industry and maritime interests that may need to have perceptions cleared before they become an issue that we won't even be aware of. He strongly recommends reaching out to both Industry and the Maritime sectors of the community.

Another comment was made that the Great Lakes Compact is not a well received project in the Superior area and to be sure that the LS-FEC effort is not associated with the Compact or its process.

Cathy reiterated that November 30th meeting is an opportunity for the Public Involvement Team to speak directly to the State Liaison Team and express any concerns or thoughts, and share community feedback. Public involvement input, SSTT recommendations, and SLT administrative considerations will all be part of the decision process for a final site(s) recommendation. .

Making A Great Lake Superior – Field Trip

Nancy Larson explained that she is helping to coordinate a field trip that will occur on 10/31/07, the last day of the "Making A Great Lake Superior" conference. The trip is a St. Louis River Estuary Ed-Venture bus tour. She would like to model the tour based upon the SSTT and PIT field visit in July, and Nancy asked for volunteers to help organize the tour. Bob Cragin, Cathy Techtmann, Becky Sapper, and Bonita Martin agreed to help. Anyone else interested should contact Nancy Larson at 715.685.2674.

Meeting adjourned: At 12:30 pm

NEXT MEETING DATE:

A joint meeting of the Site Selection Technical Team, Public Involvement Team, and State Agency Liaison Team will occur on November 30, 2007, at **the Iron River Community Center, 9 am to 3 pm.**