



March 2017

Volume 8, Number 1

## FOSCR Report to Ministry Captures the Efforts of 2016

***As we move The St Clair River closer each year towards de-listing, FOSCR has stepped up the outreach efforts at numerous speaking events and other opportunities to directly engage the public. While there are many messages to speak on, the primary focus is to let people know about the improvements that have occurred in the river's health and that the day will come when this is no longer an Area of Concern.***

In previous reports from FOSCR to MOECC there has not been recognition of the Friends (directors) individual contributions to this organization. There is great value resulting from the in kind contributions to FOSCR from the director's active participation. Preparing for meetings, reports, administrative needs, writing articles for the e-newsletter, responding to public inquiries and participating at outreach events is a direct result of the annual grant from MOECC and although not itemized, in this report, still reflects great value from the grant.

FOSCR directors have spoken to service clubs, a Green Drinks event in Sarnia, municipal councils, and to a class of Fish & Wildlife students and their professor touring the area from Michigan State University. We also participated in a Kids Training Day staged by the Bluewater Anglers. At all these events, literature on the St Clair River was made available for the public. Currently plans are underway by as many as 5 members of FOSCR to have a display and carry the news of progress towards de-listing to the Go Wild Grow Wild event April 8<sup>th</sup> in London. Last year over 3,000 people attended this event and members felt it would be a venue to attend.

Five members of FOSCR attended a recent Ducks Unlimited Canada event in Point Edward and were recognized for the contributions towards wetland habitat restorations with a presentation decoy. This decoy will be displayed in the lobby of the St Clair Township Civic Centre along with a message about protecting the health of the river.

During 2016 the FOSCR website <http://www.friendsofstclair.ca> attracted over 5,000 visits. The site serves as the primary tool for our outreach to the general public and also serves as an archive for many documents relating to the St Clair River Area of Concern.

In 2016, FOSCR produced 3 e-newsletters to report on things happening that address BUIs in the Area of Concern. The distribution list continues to grow with more than 600 email subscribers.

FOSCR provided support to the St Clair Conservation Foundation for the education specialist to take the River Rap program and other environmental learning to AoC classrooms for teaching. The River Rap program continues to be popular among teachers and students. We are fortunate to have very enthusiastic staff at SCRCA delivering this message directly to classes of students. ([see article below](#)).

FOSCR was very pleased to see the Chatham-Kent Lambton, Children's Water Fest resume with great success | 2016. Eight classes from four schools in the AoC attended. In all over 1800 students participated in the program spread out over 3 days. FOSCR is very pleased to be a long time sponsor of this event contributing financial support to help cover event costs.

FOSCR purchased trees for a tree planting event in Sarnia at the Rosedale School which the students planted.

Ontario Native Scape in cooperation with the Public Works Department of St Clair Township initiated a program where wide road boulevards were planted to native prairie. In all over 12 hectares in the AoC were seeded in 2016. This program should create pollinator habitat and travel corridors, trap blowing snow, reduce mowing costs for the township and improve water quality. FOSCR contributions towards this work was credited for 1.6 hectares. Ontario Native Scape did the site preparation and planting and the township will contribute mowing costs as required as an in kind contribution to the project.

A 5.25 hectare land set aside project along Clay Creek will see two wetlands restored with the balance of the set aside planted to tall grass prairie and wildlife shrubs in spring of 2017. The wetland work is scheduled for March 2017 and FOSCR will support this important project in the AOC..

Using funds received from DOW Chemical, FOSCR assisted Kim Gledhill so she could conduct outdoor education at the DOW Wetlands. Kim was able to complete the commitment to DOW in May and June of 2016. In all 10 classes from area schools took advantage of this program.

FOSCR had collaborated with the St Clair Region Conservation Authority to submit a joint Trillium application to restore habitats and monitor water quality. In April of 2016 we learned that the application was successful. This source of revenue allowed FOSCR to participate with SCRCA biology staff to accomplish 10 fish surveys in and near the St Clair River, 3 privately owned wetland restorations as well as 3 new wetlands on SCRCA owned land. It also meant that SCRCA could proceed with all the requirements to be able to remove the corrugated steel barrier to fish passage in Bear Creek. This involved mussel relocation away from where the work was needed and took a great deal of time but eventually the barrier was removed successfully.

The trillium grant also afforded the opportunity to support the creation of drain buffers in Lambton County, many of them in the St Clair River AoC. FOSCR supported the initiatives of Ontario Native Scape and the ALUS program. The ALUS program creates opportunity for restoration work by compensating land owners for the loss of fragile productive farm land. The statistics for this work are that 15 landowners in the AoC participated by having 15.4 hectares along municipal drains planted to native prairie by Ontario Native Scape.

FOSCR are pleased and proud to have participated in such a variety of activities over the past year and in previous years. With the AoC poised to de-list on as many as 3 more BUIs this coming year, we feel the momentum building for even greater public acknowledgement of the improvements to the river.

- Darrell Randell, President FOSCR

[top of page](#)

## Friends Receive Recognition from Ducks Unlimited Canada



*In February this year, the Manager for Ducks Unlimited Canada, Lynette Mader, attended a DUC event in Point Edward and gave some recognition to FOSCR for help and assistance with so many wetland projects that are making a huge difference in the St Clair River AoC. From left to right: FOSCR President Darrell Randell, Lynette Mader, and FOSCR Directors Terry Burrell, Brenda Lorenz, Archie Kerr and Kris Lee*

The Friends of St Clair River was created to address beneficial use impairments (BUI) in the St Clair River Area of Concern (AoC). The loss of wildlife habitat is one of the remaining a BUIs.

Since beginning in 1997, FOSCR has been a part of implementing habitat restorations and of the protection of existing habitat areas. This is especially true with wetland restoration projects which provide quality habitat enhancements and also improve downstream water quality.



Looking through some records, it is interesting to note that the Bickford Oak Woods acquisition in 2003 received support through the efforts of FOSCR. The photo at left, taken on March 2, 2017 certainly attests to it being a wetland.

In some examples of other wetland projects FOSCR has implemented some on its own or worked with the St Clair Region Conservation Authority, Rural Lambton Stewardship, Kent Stewardship, and Ducks Unlimited Canada.

In all there are over 15 separate projects where FOSCR has assisted to see this type of work completed. Most of the work has been on privately owned lands but some are on publicly owned lands and can be mentioned. The Bowen Creek properties owned by Lambton County are good examples of where FOSCR has assisted. The Peers Wetland along Kimball Road just outside of Wallaceburg is another example. Finally the Snye segment of the Canada Wildlife Service lands in the Bear Creek Management Unit infrastructure was rebuilt a couple of years ago and FOSCR was able to contribute to the costs.

[top of page](#)

---

## It's Your Time to Speak Up for the Great Lakes

Contribute your Thoughts, Concerns and Ideas Online and at March Great Lakes Public Meetings

**Wednesday March 22, 2017**  
**Sarnia, Ontario, and Port Huron, Michigan, Public Roundtable**  
**Lochiel Kiwanis Community Centre, 180 North College Ave., Sarnia, Ontario**  
**1:30-4:30 p.m. public roundtable**

In previous editions of this newsletter, we've told you about reports released by Canada, the United States and the International Joint Commission (IJC) on progress to restore the vitality of the Great Lakes. Both reports are required every three years by the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which provides goals to guide the two countries' work. Just as important **are your views** on how the Great Lakes are faring.

The IJC is offering a variety of ways and places to contribute your thoughts over the next few months, which will be included in the IJC's final report. Now's your chance to influence what actions will be taken for the Great Lakes in the next three-year or triennial cycle. Read on for ways to contribute your voice to the conversation.

Your first option is to review the reports – the [Progress Report of the Parties](#) and the IJC's draft [Triennial Assessment of Progress \(TAP\) report](#) – and provide written comments. The TAP report includes several questions for your consideration that were included to help in writing the final report and its recommendations. We welcome perceptions of the lakes from your unique vantage point, locally and as a Great Lakes citizen. All written comments can be submitted **by April 15** at [Participate IJC](#), by email to [ParticipateIJC@ottawa.ijc.org](mailto:ParticipateIJC@ottawa.ijc.org), or through the mail to IJC, 234 Laurier Ave. West, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ottawa, ON K1P 6K6.

### **Attend an IJC Great Lakes Public Meeting**

The IJC's TAP report is in draft form to gather public input before its findings are finalized into recommendations. We met with citizens in [Toronto and Milwaukee](#) last fall after the governments released their progress report, and their comments are included in this draft TAP report.

In previous editions of this newsletter, we've told you about reports released by Canada, the United States and the International Joint Commission (IJC) on progress to restore the vitality of the Great Lakes. Both reports are required every three years by the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which provides goals to guide the two countries' work. Just as important **are your views** on how the Great Lakes are faring.

The IJC is offering a variety of ways and places to contribute your thoughts over the next few months, which will be included in the IJC's final report. Now's your chance to influence what actions will be taken for the Great Lakes in the next three-year or triennial cycle. Read on for ways to contribute your voice to the conversation.



Your first option is to review the reports – the [Progress Report of the Parties](#) and the IJC's draft [Triennial Assessment of Progress \(TAP\) report](#) – and provide written comments. The TAP report includes several questions for your consideration that were included to help in writing the final report and its recommendations. We welcome perceptions of the lakes from your unique vantage point, locally and as a Great Lakes citizen. All written comments can be submitted **by April 15** at [Participate IJC](#), by email to [ParticipateIJC@ottawa.ijc.org](mailto:ParticipateIJC@ottawa.ijc.org), or through the mail to IJC, 234 Laurier Ave. West, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ottawa, ON K1P 6K6.

### **Attend an IJC Great Lakes Public Meeting**

The IJC's TAP report is in draft form to gather public input before its findings are finalized into recommendations. We met with citizens in [Toronto and Milwaukee](#) last fall after the governments released their progress report, and their comments are included in this draft TAP report.

In previous editions of this newsletter, we've told you about reports released by Canada, the United States and the International Joint Commission (IJC) on progress to restore the vitality of the Great Lakes. Both reports are required every three years by the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which provides goals to guide the two countries' work. Just as important **are your views** on how the Great Lakes are faring.

The IJC is offering a variety of ways and places to contribute your thoughts over the next few months, which will be included in the IJC's final report. Now's your chance to influence what actions will be taken for the Great Lakes in the next three-year or triennial cycle. Read on for ways to contribute your voice to the conversation.

Your first option is to review the reports – the [Progress Report of the Parties](#) and the IJC's draft [Triennial Assessment of Progress \(TAP\) report](#) – and provide written comments. The TAP report includes several questions for your consideration that were included to help in writing the final report and its recommendations. We welcome perceptions of the lakes from your unique vantage point, locally and as a Great Lakes citizen. All written comments can be submitted **by April 15** at [Participate IJC](#), by email to [ParticipateIJC@ottawa.ijc.org](mailto:ParticipateIJC@ottawa.ijc.org), or through the mail to IJC, 234 Laurier Ave. West, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ottawa, ON K1P 6K6.

### **Now the IJC is coming to Sarnia to get your reaction to both reports and your unique perceptions of the Great Lakes.**

The meeting will focus initially on the Agreement topics that are most relevant to this area, but any comments about the Great Lakes are welcome. Local experts addressing key issues will provide brief presentations, and then the floor and conversations will be yours.

[top of page](#)

---

## **FOSCR Continues its Work to Educate Youth on River Issues**

### **River Rap**

*Everyday I see people busy making cash  
Not thinking what they throw in their trash  
Spilling out oil,  
Those plans need to be foiled  
We poison our water and foul the air  
Damages we can't repair*

*Making a spill, is a major concern  
Our clean water, we gotta conserve,  
So let's learn.  
Cleaning it up, and paying a fine.  
By 2029, the river should be fine.*

*Chey*

Friends of the St. Clair River and St. Clair Region Conservation Authority continue a long running education partnership. Thanks to sponsorship support from FOSCR, we are able to offer a curriculum-based program on the St. Clair River AOC to students (Gr 7-12). The focus of this partnership is to provide local students with an opportunity to learn about the St. Clair River, the challenges it faces, and the efforts taken to improve this natural treasure.

During the past few years, SCRCA has developed a strong initiative to build greater opportunity to reach High School level students. This initiative has consisted of two main pathways: becoming involved at the school board level with Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programming & building stronger relationships with individual teachers. The River Rap program is a natural fit in many of the high school science programs & as a result, there has been an increased uptake

from schools across the watershed.

To reach students of all learning styles & abilities a big piece of the 'River Rap' program is the culminating activity. Students write their own 'RAP' song & are encouraged to perform it for their peers. Some kids choose to sing, dance, beat-box, others choose a more poetic form. Creativity abounds, the learning becomes fun & the students use their personal voice to share what they have learned.

The continued support of FOSCR allows SCRCA to provide local students with an LOCAL example. As part of the science curriculum, every student in Ontario must answer; 'what is the human impact (both negative & positive) on the environment?' The 'River Rap' program provides students with an overview of our collective negative impact & then as a group allows students to brainstorm ways to minimize &/or eliminate that impact, while increasing our positive impact. Students can relate to a local issue, it means something to them, their past, their current & their future lives in this area. This is why creating place-based learning opportunities is so valuable.

#### River Rap Program - 2016 Statistics:

Date	School	Grade	# of participants
March 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	Queen Elizabeth - Sarnia	Gr 7-8	82
April 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	Lakeroad - Sarnia	Gr 7-8	81
April 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	Tecumseh - Chatham	Gr 7-8	31
April 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	Sir John Moore - Corunna	Gr 7-8	30
		<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>

#### 2017 Statistics:

Date	School	Grade	# of participants
January 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	Our Lady Immaculate - Strathroy	Gr 7/8	26
February 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	Great Lakes Secondary School	Gr 11	8
March 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2017	Sacred Heart - Sarnia	Gr 7/8	28*
March 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	Chatham Kent Secondary School	Gr 9-11	200*
March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2017	Sir John Moore - Corunna	Gr 7/8	29*
		<b>Total</b>	<b>291*</b>

\*numbers represent estimates as classes have been booked, but not delivered

[top of page](#)

---

## Friends of the St. Clair U.S. to Host Public Information Meeting

On Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. Friends of the St. Clair River is continuing their educational speaker series by offering a free presentation "Restoring the Canadian side of the St. Clair River". The presentation will be led by Kris Lee and Donna Strang, Canadian representatives from the Binational Public Advisory Council for the St. Clair River Area of Concern.

The presentation is 45 minutes and meets at the St. Clair County Administration Building Auditorium, 200 Grand River Avenue, Port Huron.

Kris and Donna will discuss the origins and priorities of the Canadian Friends of the St. Clair River nonprofit organization, how and why the organization came to be; the funding and structure of Canadian restoration efforts, as well as memorable notations about the St. Clair River from the Canadian perspective.

For more information on this workshop, contact Friends Stewardship Director, Kirsten Lyons, at <mailto:Stewardship@SCRiver.org> or 810.294.4965.

---

## **Great Lakes politicians urging White House to maintain support for water cleanup and protection**

*Article reprinted from the Sarnia Observer, written by Paul Morden*

News the U.S. White House has proposed gutting the \$300-million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is raising alarm in the region.

Officials around the Great Lakes have been reacting in recent weeks to reports that a proposal from the White House Office of Management and Budget could see funding for the initiative cut by 97 per cent to \$10 million.

The initiative was launched in 2010 by then U.S. President Barack Obama to speed up efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes, with a major focus on cleaning up Great Lakes areas of concern, preventing and controlling invasive species, reducing nutrient runoff that contributes to algal blooms and restoring habitat for native species.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, an international group representing 125 communities, including Sarnia-Lambton, has issued a statement expressing "deep concern" over the possible funding cuts.

"It certainly has created a firestorm," said Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley.

"It's a gutting of everything a large number of groups, including the Great Lakes mayors, have been trying to do for the last decade."

That includes long-term efforts to see the St. Clair River removed from the list of areas of environmental concern on the Great Lakes, Bradley said.

"There were many on both side of the St. Clair that were looking forward to that goal being achieved in the next couple of years," he said.

Kris Lee is the Canadian co-chair of the St. Clair River Binational Public advisory Council assisting government agencies working on the remedial action plan for the river.

"Luckily, I think the U.S. has done most of its projects" on the area of concern on the river, Lee said.

"We are close to being delisted, so the current projects and what we've done, hopefully, will last us."

But Lee said she's concern the budget cuts could led to job losses for agencies on the U.S. side of the river, including those involved in monitoring water quality.

"The U.S. has done a wonderful job during Obama's eight years... in all of their habitat areas," she said.

That includes habitat restoration projects along the Michigan shore of the river.

"The fish are coming back, so hopefully what they've done so far will last now," Lee said.

Bradley said he believes there will "a lot of opposition, including from his own party" if President Donald Trump's funding cut proposal moves forward.

Paul Mitchell, a Republican representing Port Huron's district in Congress, joined other politicians from the state signing a bipartisan letter urging the U.S. president to maintain the initiative's funding.

"This program is critical to preserving our beautiful Great Lakes, Mitchell said in a statement.

Some 40 million residents of the U.S. and Canada take their drinking water from the Great Lakes, Bradley said.

“We've seen enough with Walkerton in Ontario, and what's happened in Flint,” he said.

“You just simply cannot take the water supply, and the need for clean water, for granted.”

David Ullrich, executive director of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, said cuts of the magnitude proposed by the White House “would be devastating to the efforts of our two countries over the past five decades to restore the resource.”

The cities initiative says it's also concerned that the U.S. administration recently announced a halt to work to stop Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes, where it could threaten the region's \$7-billion fishery.

“That's an economic and environmental disaster, if that happens,” Bradley said.

---

To unsubscribe from our distribution list and no longer receive this newsletter just click here: [Please remove me](#)

*BPAC is a community-based partnership including governments, industry, first nations, academia, as well as environmental organizations and private citizens that work collectively in helping to improve the health of the St. Clair River. Our key goal is to implement the Canadian Remedial Action Plan (RAP) in order to restore the beneficial uses and remove the River from the list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern.*



Ontario

This E-Newsletter is produced with support from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment



**Filename:** FOSCR E-News March 2017 print copy.doc  
**Directory:** C:\Documents and Settings\Ken Hall\Desktop\E-News\Mar 2017  
**Template:** C:\Documents and Settings\Ken Hall\Application Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot  
**Title:**  
**Subject:**  
**Author:** Ken Hall  
**Keywords:**  
**Comments:**  
**Creation Date:** 3/27/2017 7:37 PM  
**Change Number:** 1  
**Last Saved On:** 3/27/2017 7:50 PM  
**Last Saved By:** Ken Hall  
**Total Editing Time:** 12 Minutes  
**Last Printed On:** 3/27/2017 7:53 PM  
**As of Last Complete Printing**  
    **Number of Pages:** 8  
    **Number of Words:** 3,490 (approx.)  
    **Number of Characters:** 19,895 (approx.)