

SAULT STE. MARIE REGION SOURCE PROTECTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Draft Minutes: December 13th, 2024 – 8:45am to 11:15am Held Virtually: MS Teams

1. Call to Order:

Note: Items from the Agenda have been reordered for this Minute’s document to follow the chronological events.

2. Land Acknowledgement:

The SPC would like to begin by acknowledging that we are conducting this meeting within Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and that the land on which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg Peoples. We specifically acknowledge Garden River and Batchewana First Nations, as well as Métis people who call this land home.

Note: Slight modification in the wording of the above land acknowledgement statement.

3. Sign-in/Attendance/Introductions

- Acknowledgement of guests in attendance and any member regrets: Corrina Barrett, SPA Liaison, sent regrets by Email.
- Quorum is four or more members, plus acting chair: **(Quorum achieved)**
- Hal McGonigal noted having to leave the meeting after completion of motions and approvals.

Members	Administrative
Mike Delfre SPC Chair (Acting)	Gerard Lavoie DWSP Program Manager
Hal McGonigal Prince Township representative	Corrina Barrett Source Protection Authority SPA Liaison
Catherine Taddo City of SSM Representative	Peter Tonazzo Risk Management Official
Orlan Euale Water Industry (PUCServices Inc.)	Nigel Holgate MECP Representative
Larry Woolley Public Sector - SSM Resident	Marlene McKinnon Risk Management Inspector DWSP Communications (acting)
Michael McCarthy Environment	
Vacant Economic Sector - Local Business	

4. Motions, Approvals and Amendments:

- i. Amendment: **M. McKinnon** – Meeting Agenda date correction to (Dec. 13, 2024).
- ii. Motion: Approval of December 13, 2024, Agenda
Moved by: **Larry Wooley**
Seconded by: **Hal McGonigal**
- iii. Motion: Approval of August 22, 2024, Minutes as distributed
Moved by: **Larry Wooley**
Seconded by: **Mike McCarthy**
- iv. Motion: Approval of September 19, 2024, Minutes as distributed
Moved by: **Larry Wooley**
Seconded by: **Hal McGonigal**
- v. Vote conducted on the above Motions/Approvals: **Carried unanimously**

5. General Committee Open Discussion - Questions/Comments/Concerns:

- a) **Orlan Euale** – Commented on having limitation on the distribution of the agenda and minutes package as well as the Pre-Consult Docs: PUC IT department has limits currently for their employees joining the ‘external’ [SPC Team](#) to participate and view related documents/posts etc. Described intention to rectify and hopes it will happen soon. All SPC related media will be posted to the Team and available upon request via SharePoint and/or Email.
- b) **Gerard Lavoie** - A brief overview of the MS Teams interface was presented to members. **Note:** this interface can be utilized within a browser or in the desktop application. All members present in the meeting are included as members on this MS Team and can contribute at any time toward future Agenda items, meeting scheduling, communications, points of interest etc.
- c) **Mike Delfre** – Question for Marlene McKinnon, DWSP Communications, requesting description of where/how to view or connect with Social media channels. Marlene McKinnon responded: Seasonal Source Water Protection campaigns are posted to [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#). The question was specific to how to gain access to the campaign feeds that are shared out.

Note: to have assured and immediate access to the SSMRCA social media feeds, one must be actively following with their personal social media account. These campaigns are not posted to the [SSMRCA website](#). SSMRCA is considering adding [LinkedIn](#) as a social media outlet due to it being a platform readily used by the environmental sector by people in their professional capacity. Addresses linked above were placed in the virtual meeting chat by Marlene McKinnon.

6. Additional Motion: Approve Pre-Consultation Draft SPP Documents for Public Consultation

- i. Direct SPC Communications representative, Marlene McKinnon, to remove the Draft SPP document links and begin next steps toward public consultation regarding draft SPP s.51 amendments.
Moved by: **Mike McCarthy**
Seconded by: **Hal McGonigal**
- ii. Vote conducted the above motion: **Carried unanimously**

7. Regular Business - Sector Updates:

Source Protection Communications Update - Marlene McKinnon, DWSP Communications:

- i. Winter Wednesdays Campaign is currently being developed by Conservation Ontario and expected to be initiated in February of 2025.
- ii. In the meantime, should you want to suggest a Drinking Water Source Protection related information item within the program scope to be posted on social media channels, please connect and advise.

Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP) Update - Nigel Holgate, MECP Liaison:

- i. Acknowledged the province wide SPP Annual reporting challenges, and reflected on how MECP appreciated the hard work, expertise and accomplishments of all SPCs, noting 2017-2022 statistics.
- ii. All Transfer Payment Agreements 2024-2027 province wide have been signed, and interim payments have been distributed.
- iii. Updated [s.34 guidance](#) documents were released to PMs October 10, 2024 and discussed at a program management meeting in early December.
- iv. An updated s.36 guidance document is in development, due to be published by MECP in the New Year. There is currently no s.51 guidance document to follow with regards to the current SSM SPP amendments submission.

- v. Regarding the current SSM SPP s.51 amendment submission to MECP, acknowledged as received. It is to be noted that [s.51 amendments](#) are to be used specifically for typographical and other administrative changes and do not require consultation phases, only notice. For future reference, please be advised that MECP will require amendments to pair correctly with the matching steps (i.e.: s.34, s.36, s.51).

Amendments that should be processed through s.34 or s.36 workflows will not be accepted through the s.51 process.

- vi. Bittersweet news: accepted a new role as a Climate Change Policy Advisor with MECP and will not be the Program Analyst assigned to the SSMR SPP as of January 3rd, 2025. Will be working with the Climate Change Programs Branch contributing to a low carbon fuels strategy. MECP will take steps ensure that the transition to another new program analyst will go smoothly.

8. O. Reg. 287/070 Section 51 Amendment to SSM SPP Documents Update - Gerard Lavoie, and Marlene McKinnon:

- i. Draft Source Protection Plan (SPP), Assessment Report (AR), and Explanatory Document (ED) distributed for pre-consultation comments/concerns to MECP, Municipalities, Garden River First Nation (GRFN) and Batchewana First Nation (BFN) Sept. 6th, 2024, using a SharePoint link, with an **October 18 deadline**, which has now passed.
- ii. No comments were received in pre-consultation, link sent Sept 6th will be removed and draft documents updated.
- iii. Updated SPP draft documents from pre-consultation phase are to be advertised locally and published to SSMRCA website for Public Consultation phase.
- iv. Social media channels to be included for Public Consultation phase.
- v. Feedback document/form to be distributed/published for public commenting on updated draft documents including instructions for how to submit.
- vi. A future motion at next committee meeting will specify the removal date.
- vii. Source Protection Authority will be required to review changes and approve draft s.51 amended documents, after public consultation phase has been closed by the SPC.
- viii. Presentation and submission to source protection authority to approve will happen at next SPA meeting (Mid-February 2025).
- ix. After SPA approval, a submission to MECP for review and approval is required.
- x. Public consultation draft SPP documents will remain on SSMRCA website until MECP has approved them, at which time dates will be updated and finalized.

9. Other Business:

a) Source Protection Committee Vacancy - Economic Sector - Mike Delfre:

Acting Chair, Mike Delfre requested to explore the current legislation pertaining to SPC member make-up, operations, and procedures to potentially address the current vacancy (i.e.: nominations, appointment process). Quorum for SPC meetings is a recent and ongoing challenge. Interest from Chair in learning the process and effect of filling the current vacancy, or nominating persons to be considered by SPA as potential committee members.

Specific considerations discussed:

- Until the Minister officially appoints a committee Chair, or clarification from MECP is given for a way forward on an interim basis, the economic (local business) sector seat must continue to be held for Mike Delfre.
- December 13, 2024: MECP has not yet given notice of the Minister's Chair appointment.
- The process under [O. Reg. 288/07](#) of the Clean Water Act originally informed and directed SPCs in the province of Ontario. [O. Reg. 310/15](#) revoked and amended varying subsections in 2015.
- All appointments to SPC for voting membership must be made only by the SSM Source Protection Authority, and the Chair can only be appointed by the Minister of the Environment.
- Once a Chair has been appointed, SSM Source Protection Authority can fill the member vacancy, without passing a resolution or consulting the SPC Chair, but first advertisements must be published to the internet for a minimum of 30 days and/or newsprint for 60 days informing the public of the opportunity. It does not describe any rules for or against a nomination process for SPC appointments at all in the legislation.
- The number of voting members on the committee appointed by SSM SPA can only be **minimum 6 or maximum 9** per O. Reg. 288/07 s.1 paragraphs (1) through to (7).
- All SSM SPC voting member seats are subject to a 'term of appointment' and will expire per O. Reg. 288/07 s.8 (1). Marlene McKinnon stated that the SP Program Manager in conjunction with SPA does the admin work to put together the recruitment process/package, typical timing for advertisements is late spring and the appointment process requires SPA approval before Dec31st aiming for a specific appointment approval date to be ratified resetting the terms for the entire group.
- Marlene McKinnon described the orientation process for new members as lasting a few meetings, so they can arrange their schedule and go through a learning process regarding the SPP materials.

Larry Wooley asked if the regulation directs SPC membership term length and if a member could not be renewed after a certain duration:

- Regarding SPC member term of appointment, per O. Reg. 288/07 s.8 (2) states “Not less than 6 months, and not more than 5 years” before an appointment/renewal process is required to be undertaken. This provides the SSM SPA ability to appoint/reappoint all membership sectors in one round if deemed appropriate and have next term expiry dates line up accordingly.
- The above process is subject to the same advertising constraints. A first right of refusal is available for experienced members.
- A discussion was had about the appreciation for depth of experience among committee members. This will be useful in future when any new members are welcomed and go through an orientation period.

Would filling the vacant seat resolve quorum challenges?

- It would help but is not an absolute requirement if quorum is still achievable with 5 voting members and an acting chair. Per O. Reg. 288/07 s.13 (1), quorum requires at least two-thirds of appointed members plus a chair (4 voting members + chair) to be in attendance.

Additional Notes:

- Per O. Reg. 288/07 s.1 (1)(b), the SPC may not ‘technically’ be satisfying the required minimum number of appointed voting committee members because the vacancy currently puts membership below the minimum. MECP will need to confirm if this is the case, or if O. Reg. 288/07 s.13 (2), whereas if quorum is achievable despite vacancies, business can still be carried out if quorum rules can still be achieved.
- Per O. Reg. 288/07 s.2(1) 2., the sector member must be reflective of interests of the **agricultural, commercial, or industrial** sectors including **small businesses** who have a direct relationship with DWSP in their operations or are affected directly by policies included in the SPP.

b) Water Protection Organizations Networking

Mike Delfre: There are several community environmental sustainability organizations with an interest in general water stewardship, that participate in or take the lead on programs and projects that align with the SPC mandate. Who are they, and what are the benefits to the community (Source Protection Area) that will come from stronger networking and collaboration efforts put forward by SPC? Is there a need or interest that could be fulfilled in reaching out and fostering relationships? Are there any new or existing organisations that SPC is aware of?

Water Rangers [@waterrangers](#) were mentioned. They are a **citizen-based** water quality testing organization operating across North America and in the United Kingdom with origins from around 2015 in the USA. It includes a social media platform and [tools for citizens and groups](#) to learn and contribute to localized water quality information etc... They provide test kits to the public and partnering organizations. Locally, there are groups and citizens who contribute to this network, funded provincially through the Great Lakes Local Action Fund most recently \$50k to develop and implement ecosystem monitoring in two areas.

The [Nordik Institute](#) is a coordinating partner with **SSMRCA** for a Water Rangers group called: **Sault Ste. Marie Water Rangers Task Team**, started in 2023. They have identified 19 locations and have made 463 observations as of the date of this meeting. Some data collected within this project contributes to MECP programs (**PGMN**) and (**PWQMN**). This team shows excellent potential for a guest speaker, or at least as an agenda item to review during a future meeting.

Education and outreach were described as not having a direct budget from MECP specifically for early learning projects funded in the past (children's water festival). These types of E&O are considered by MECP to be outside of the scope of the drinking water source protection program. Gerard mentioned that E&O projects and events permitted and funded by MECP through the source protection program are required to be put toward community engagement and awareness i.e.:

- current and future policies,
- understanding threats as they relate to WHPAs and IPZs,
- signage etc.

It is a great idea to compile a list and learn about the projects that are happening locally to see where opportunities may exist to collaborate and share resources or add some depth to events planned by other orgs.

Marlene McKinnon mentioned participation in source water protection meetings with Mike McCarthy, who is the Executive Director at Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation District SSM Michigan Source Protection Committee in addition to representing on of the environmental sector seats on SSM SPC. Marlene indicated that there are E&O components on the MI side, where the committee on the ON side could contribute or partner on initiatives etc. thinking more about international collaboration.

Larry Wooley contributed with comments about international collaboration with SSM, MI municipality, saying that they have been good neighbours, and it is good practice to offer materials, processes and information showing our support.

Mike Delfre asked to confirm that there is an equivalency to a Conservation Authority in on the US side of the St Mary's River. **Mike McCarthy** responded that he is the executive director for the **Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation District**. He then clarified that the organization represents a conservation district and that it is the Municipality that holds the authority for source protection matters.

Discussion continued to further the interest in external collaboration, within the scope of the committee. Mike Delfre described how educational Institutions (Algoma University, Sault College, and Lake Superior State University) already collaborate with local organizations.

[Lake Superior Living Labs Network](#) (LSLLN) was mentioned, which is another platform like Water Rangers, but specifically connects academics and community groups across the Lake Superior Watershed to collaborative initiatives using 'Hub Projects', with the **Sault Ste. Marie Hub** containing the following partner organizations:

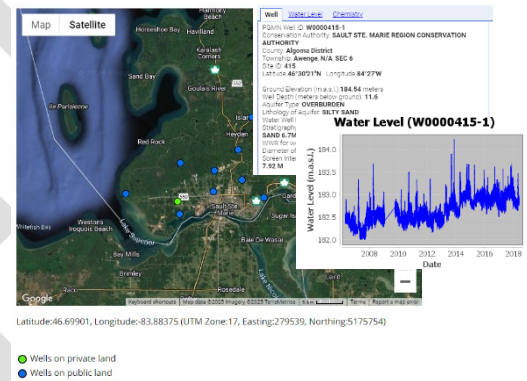
- [Rural Agri-Innovation Network](#) (RAIN) - Division of SSMIC
- ([NORDIK](#)) Northern Ontario Research Development Ideas and Knowledge Institute
- [Clean North](#)
- [Harvest Algoma](#)

[Sault Naturalists](#) and the [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#) were also mentioned as organizations of interest to SPC that do stewardship work in the Sault Ste. Marie Source Protection Area. An inventory or contact list regarding the above of organizations has been recommended to be compiled for committee reference.

Some examples of **MECP** funded water and biomonitoring programs that are aligned with or support DWSP are listed and described below:

- **BPAC - Binational Public Advisory Council** - A stakeholder's group with members from both Canada and the United States. BPAC was formed to assist government agencies that are responsible for preparing a [Remedial Action Plan](#) (RAP) for the [St. Mary's River Area of Concern](#) (AOC). Specifically, BPAC informs the agencies about public views and opinions regarding the clean-up of the St. Mary's River AOC and advocates for projects that achieve the restoration goals. BPAC is dedicated to ensuring that the river water quality and the ecosystem are improved and protected for all users of the river.

- **PGMN – Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network**
Ambient (baseline) groundwater levels (quantity) and chemistry (Quality) conditions are collected by **SSMRCA** and submitted to MECP. Each PGMN well is sampled and chemically analyzed at an MECP approved laboratory for a set of chemical parameters: general chemistry, metals, major ions, a suite of volatile organic compounds, and a suite of pesticides and herbicides. Samples are collected from the wells in the late summer-fall season.



- **PWQMN – Provincial (Stream) Water Quality Monitoring Network**
The PWQMN measures stream and river water quality. This dataset provides stream water quality monitoring data for several parameters, including total and dissolved nutrients, metals, and chloride. Spatial information for stream many monitoring locations across Ontario are available.
- **OBBN - Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network**
Data Describes the benthic-invertebrate (bottom dwelling aquatic invertebrates) community structure and habitat conditions in various waterbodies including:
 - a. counts of different kinds of benthic invertebrates
 - b. water chemistry
 - c. coordinates, sampling agencies, collection dates, and waterbody types
 - d. descriptions of sampling effort and equipment

c) **Active Engagement with local Indigenous communities**

Larry Wooley asked past program manager, **Marlene McKinnon** to recall details about an original SPC membership seat appointed by local Indigenous band council(s). Is the seat still active or available?

- O. Reg. 288/07 s.6 (2) states that notice must be provided to chiefs, along with summarized information about the SPC committee functions and mandate, and membership obligations and duties, that one voting member, is welcomed to be appointed by Indigenous band council(s). This member is in addition to the 6 SPA appointed voting members. No direction in the regulation is provided for regarding revisiting the membership appointment opportunity.
- **Marlene McKinnon** recalled seeing records that there was attendance at some meetings in the past, before her time as program manager, but that was in early days of the SPP development, years ago (pre2008). Batchewana FN and Garden River FN communities are located within the SPA and were included in the pre-consultation notification/invitation to comment process for the s.51 amendments to the SPP.
- **Gerard Lavoie** will bring this to SPA liaison and investigate next steps for reaching out locally asking SPA to support reestablishing a relationship with our neighbouring communities. Further committee, and authority discussions are required. IMHO the responsibility falls upon the SPA to authorize that a notice of membership opportunity be provided to chiefs of BFN and GRFN following O. Reg. 288/7 s.6 as a guide.
- **Mike Delfre** indicated that he has interest in learning more about water keepers, who are any people or group who work together for protecting water and the land that supports it. Is there SPC interest in learning about local indigenous led initiatives and practices that SPC aligns with?

d) **Source Protection Committee Community Profile**

Mike Delfre - Does the community know anything about the SPC i.e.: who we are, why we exist, what we do?

Peter Tonazzo (a committee veteran from day one) recalled using an anecdote about ‘Salt Responsibly’ or ‘Drinking Water Protection Zone’ signs located in one of the WHPA zones, supporting the notion that there is perhaps still a lack of community awareness of the Source Protection Program. He continued to describe how the Risk Management committee has discussed the utility of local source protection marketing over the years, and that as the Walkerton Tragedy (2000) and Inquiry gets further and further away, that there really is an expectation for the Province to initiate source protection awareness campaigns on a broader scale, and/or financially support this at the local level. This is not to say that local marketing initiatives are not warranted that are within capacity of the SPC.

Gerard Lavoie mentioned that the materials from Provincial training slide decks, or information releases, plus materials made publicly available from other Source Protection groups could aid in developing locally specific social media campaigns if advisable and permitted.

Marlene McKinnon shared information about the ‘[Ripple Effect](#)’ video in the comments section of the meeting. Not all committee members have seen it and was intended to be a Source Protection 101 video produced in the early days of the DWSP development. It has been used extensively in marketing, open houses, etc. The video describes the multi-barrier approach from the honourable Justice O’Connor report. Not long in duration, and copies are available at the SSMRCA. It is on YouTube and intended to remain freely accessible to the public. Video was screened for committee.

Mike Delfre recalled past participation as vendor at an Outdoors show hosted by Bushplane Museum, where the public was very engaged and interested in the information on display regarding source protection and drinking water safety.

Marlene McKinnon noted that the financial support and time for that participation came directly from the SSMRCA and that there was no funding from MECP supporting that participation. Activities for that show were recycled from past events and vetted to be appropriate for a local **Children’s Drinking Water Festival**.

10. **Next meeting** - Tentatively scheduled for **January 16, 2025 – 1pm to 4pm**

11. **Adjournment**

Outstanding Action Items:

Date	Description	Status
Dec 13, 2024	Remove pre-consultation SharePoint link to amended AR, SPP, and ED documents	Approved
Dec 13, 2024	Amended AR, SPP, and ED documents published to SSMRCA website for public consultation	Approved
Dec 13, 2024	Feedback document/form to be distributed/published for public commenting on updated draft documents.	Approved
Dec 13, 2024	Ask for guidance from MECP Source Protection regarding regulatory direction on SPC interim membership, and minimum membership requirements.	
Dec 13, 2024	Confer with SPC liaison regarding steps to reestablish Indigenous community representation on SPC	
TBD	Contact municipal clerks of SSM and Prince, requesting to be added to agenda for future municipal council meeting	Not Completed
TBD	Brief presentation of the draft SPP s.51 amendments to Councils.	Not Completed
TBD	Presentation and submission to source protection authority SPA to approve post public consultation next SPA meeting (~Mid-February 2025).	Not Completed
TBD	Submission of Draft Amended SPP to MECP for review and approval.	Not Completed