

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE SAGINAW BAY WATERSHED

2016-17: A BRIEF REVIEW – An attempt to improve upon the verbal report from our April 3 meeting.

PSBW's major activity for this year has been its effort to write removal criteria for the Beach Closings Beneficial Use Impairment in the Saginaw Bay Area of Concern, still ongoing as of the Annual Meeting.

The Beach Closings Task Force has undertaken a review of current research on bacterial contamination in the Great Lakes, regulations and delisting criteria applied in other AOCs, record keeping and reporting for water quality data in Michigan and the history of efforts to abate bacterial contamination in this watershed. That work continues.

Partnership members have been active in regional and statewide environmental protection and restoration efforts, including: Michigan's Statewide Public Advisory Council; the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative; the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network; land protection organizations, notably the Little Forks and Saginaw Basin Land Conservancies; the Saginaw Bay and Huron Pines Resource Conservation and Development Districts; Friends groups organized to protect the Cass, Flint and Shiawassee Rivers, tributaries of the Saginaw River; Southeast Michigan's Great Lakes Restoration Conference; the public advisory group for the ongoing effort to address dioxin contamination in and downstream from the Tittabawassee River; and work of many units of local government throughout our watershed. All of these efforts have augmented the Partnership's and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's work to address Beneficial Use Impairments in the Saginaw River and Bay.

Information on the Partnership's website, psbw.org, has been updated and now includes references to watershed events and accomplishments, as provided by members each month.

PSBW Treasurer, Pete Frauson, is leading a review, with the Board, of the Saginaw River and Bay's Beneficial Use Impairments to identify the best opportunities for further remediation efforts.

2017-18: A LOOK AHEAD

With cooperation and support from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Beach Closings Task Force will complete its preparation of proposed removal criteria for that BUI. These criteria will begin the review process for eventual acceptance by the DEQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and for recognition by the International Joint Commission.

The Beach Closings Task Force expects to continue its review of possible sources for the bacterial contamination that has frequently closed area beaches. Contacts with researchers, regulators and residents will guide the quest for causes, and solutions, of this BUI. Meanwhile, data mining and organizing will continue for the comparative components of our BUI removal criteria.

PSBW's administrative consultant will coordinate further work to upgrade the Partnership's web presence with the goals of expanding information availability, improving user access to material and encouraging greater participation in AOC restoration efforts.

The Partnership will continue cooperation with the MDEQ and collaboration with local and regional partners to advance Great Lakes restoration, including our ongoing exploration of remaining Beneficial Use Impairments in the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay.

William W. Wright – PSBW Chair – April 7, 2017