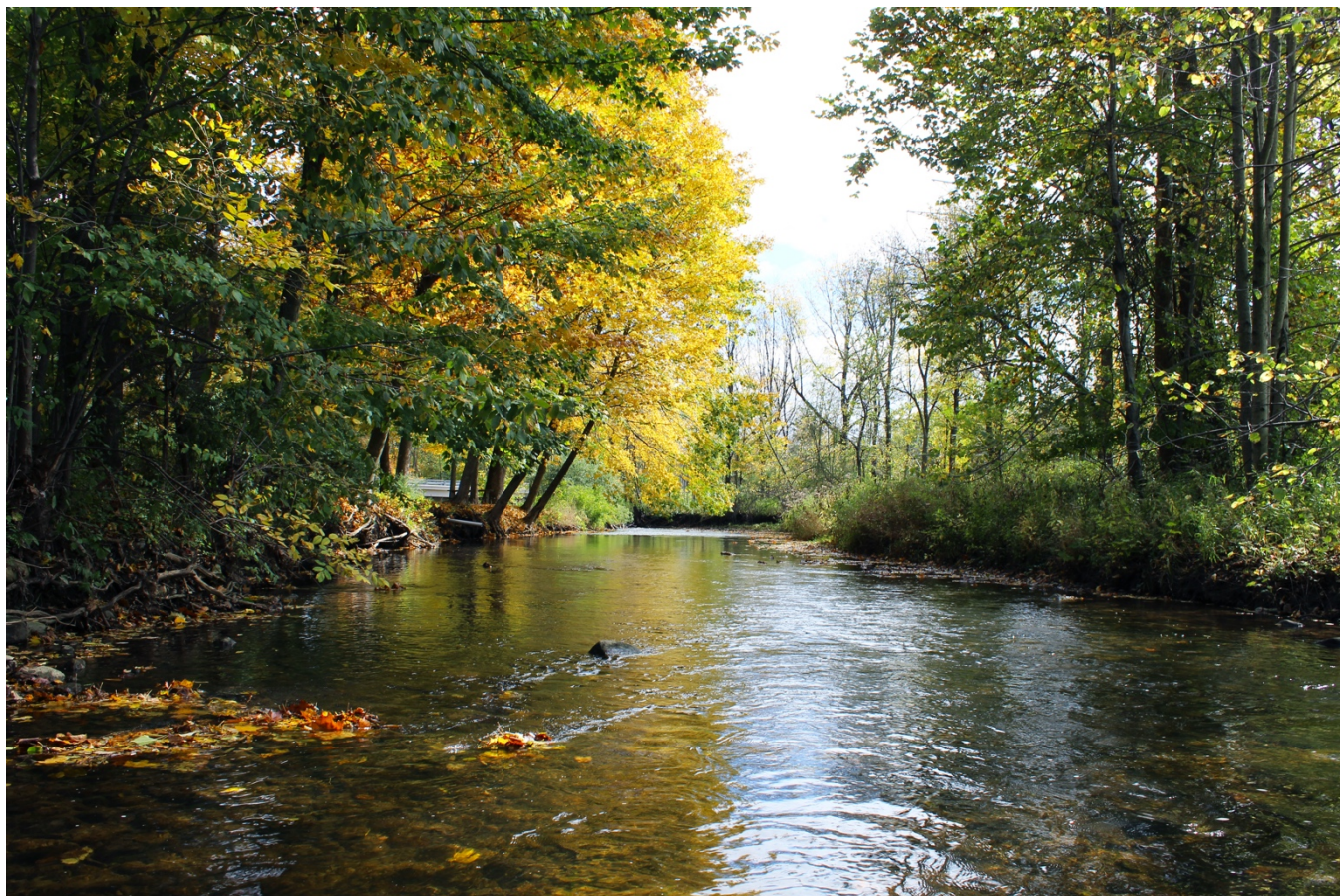


Clinton River PAC Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team
Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,
Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by each producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we synthesized and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups into a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the Clinton River PAC focuses on their selected recommendations: **Community Stewardship and Funding for Life After Delisting** (Appendix, Figure 1). The former will be covered in the first section, titled **Expand Meaningful Community Stewardship**. The latter will be covered in the second section, titled **Solidify Funding for Ongoing Stewardship**. It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for the Clinton River PAC identified, we met again with PAC members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about Clinton River PAC priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Expand Meaningful Community Stewardship

For approximately 30 years, the Clinton River PAC has been making immense progress toward restoring beneficial uses in the Clinton River AOC. Yet, many community members and local institutions still have a negative perception of the Clinton River. Therefore, the Clinton River PAC is interested in continuing to expand its community stewardship efforts to ensure that local citizens, organizations, and businesses cultivate a positive relationship with the river.

PAC members specified interest in five priority objectives for community stewardship. The first objective includes publicizing clean-up and recreational events widely. The Clinton River Watershed Council (CRWC), the fiduciary and umbrella organization of the Clinton River PAC, regularly hosts community stewardship events and has a strong relationship with the surrounding communities. The PAC wants to maximize the number of citizens participating in these events to build a citizen stewardship network that benefits river restoration. The second priority objective includes creating educational and storytelling materials. Educational materials should describe stewardship best practices (stormwater and trash pollution) and be accessible to broad audiences through minimizing scientific jargon. Storytelling materials should also be used to change the negative public perception of the Clinton River AOC by highlighting historical and personal narratives, interesting facts, and photos to depict past Clinton River degradation and the current state of the river. The third objective is to conduct an informational campaign to promote stewardship as a non-partisan issue. The goal of this campaign is to unite the community around restoration, regardless of their political affiliation, and highlight the intersection between water quality and public health. The fourth objective is to create a single hub for scientific knowledge and research about the river. This hub would be a single entity that includes a database of scientific articles, reports, and information accessible to local entities looking to conduct restoration, conservation, or other stewardship projects. Finally, the CRWC discussed their ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training with a consultant. The fifth objective is for CRWC to lead the way in diversifying members and partners of the PAC by sharing the knowledge they gained through their training. CRWC members expressed pride and commitment to this work.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- ❑ Create a recurring agenda item for PAC meetings focused on community stewardship.
- ❑ Form a subcommittee that focuses on community stewardship efforts and events.
 - Identify two to three people that are particularly interested in championing community stewardship efforts to run the subcommittee and report back to the larger PAC.
- ❑ Update the PAC membership list by identifying who is actively engaged, partially engaged, and no longer active.
 - Strategize how to re-engage members who are partially participating in the PAC to reenergize them around community stewardship and AOC restoration efforts.

Action Items to Achieve

Publicize Clean-Up and Stewardship Events

- Continue expanding presence on social media, partner organization websites, and local news outlets to publicize stewardship events (e.g., Keeping-It-Clean, River Rally, Walk on the Wild Side, Crafts on the Clinton, and River Day) hosted by the CRWC.
 - Designate a PAC member to widely publicize CRWC stewardship events; increasing exposure to CRWC and their river restoration work increases exposure to the Clinton River AOC.

Circulate Information about the Clinton River AOC and Stewardship Best Practices

- Create materials that describe how individuals can steward the Clinton River to supplement CRWC's robust resource library on their website.
 - Continue to add to this resource library and brainstorm how these materials can be circulated in a meaningful way.
 - Designate an entity to be responsible for the production of materials; this will ensure that language is consistent across the materials.
 - These materials should outline how individuals can modify their behavior to become better stewards of their home and environment.
- Communicate that watershed stewardship is non-partisan by conducting an informational campaign highlighting the intersection between water resources and public health, community wellness, quality of life, etc.
- Improve scientific translation of AOC-related projects.
 - Designate an entity to facilitate the creation and distribution of educational materials geared towards citizens without a science background; this will ensure that language is consistent across the materials.
- Continue creating and distributing educational materials that inform local businesses, agencies, and citizens about stormwater and trash management best practices.
 - Designate an entity to facilitate the creation of materials that describe how stormwater and trash management practices affect the AOC.

Improve Public Perception of the Clinton River

- Gather historical narratives, personal narratives, interesting facts, and photos to showcase progress made from past Clinton River pollution and degradation (old cars and tires in the river) to the current, much-improved state of the river.
 - Circulate online articles, newspaper articles, radio and podcast stories, mailings, or print materials to highlight the Clinton River's recovery.
- Continue circulating information describing the AOC's successes by posting on social media, online articles, newspaper articles, radio and podcast stories, mailings, or print materials.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate the subcommittee structure created to build community stewardship efforts and events after two years.

- Document lessons learned from the past two years of community stewardship.
 - How can the subcommittee be improved to be more effective?
 - Which stewardship efforts have worked well? Which have not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
 - Who are potential new stewardship champions or partner organizations?
- Evaluate the PAC membership list by ensuring it reflects a group of actively engaged and participating individuals.
- Evaluate the progress made toward completing one- to two-year action items (e.g., widely publicizing stewardship events, circulating Clinton River AOC information, and improving public perception of the Clinton River).
 - Document lessons learned from the past two years of stewardship efforts.

Action Items to Achieve

Create a Hub for Scientific Materials

- Work with key partners (e.g., CRWC, Oakland University, and Public Works) to build and maintain a local clearinghouse of scientific articles, reports, and general guidance accessible to agencies, organizations, or businesses working in the Clinton River watershed.
 - This hub would provide overarching scientific guidance to those interested in pursuing a restoration or stewardship project.
- Encourage scientists, university students, and research institutions to conduct research at Clinton River AOC sites.

Develop a Strategic Plan to Include Underrepresented Communities

- Define and seek out underrepresented communities. A number of communities experience barriers to participation in river enjoyment and stewardship, including language, culture, transportation, limited time, and general knowledge.
- Continue focusing on increasing diversity within the Clinton River PAC by actively recruiting young people, people of color, members of low-income communities, women, LGBTQ residents, and other underrepresented groups.
- Perform community mapping session(s); this formal process is useful for assessing what diverse communities would like to see within their watershed.



Solidify Funding for Ongoing Stewardship

The AOC program is designed to restore beneficial uses of the aquatic ecosystem. Once this is accomplished, AOCs delist from the program, and the PAC structure ceases to exist formally. PAC members must decide if and how to continue stewardship, restoration, and research efforts. The Clinton River PAC has a plan to be assimilated by the CRWC. Yet, there is no clear understanding of how the CRWC will get funding to continue maintenance, additional restoration, and expanded stewardship work for the entire Clinton River system. The key to cultivating a sustainable funding source is to build an extensive network of partner organizations and members who believe in the mission-focused work of CRWC; broadening membership and partnerships will strengthen the funding base. The CRWC already has a network of outside funding sources for current projects and programs. This network needs to be expanded to accommodate additional stewardship and restoration work after delisting.

Clinton River PAC members expressed an interest in strategically expanding membership and partnerships to maximize funding opportunities and connections, and ultimately organizational level network strength. Building more funding sources may include creating and distributing storytelling materials, yearly accomplishments, and infographics to grantmaking organizations and local businesses. The PAC should also develop a “shovel-ready” list of projects to distribute to potential donors or grantmaking organizations. Lastly, CRWC has its 50th anniversary coming up in 2021, warranting a gala event that brings together community members, local agencies, organizations, and businesses. At this anniversary event, CRWC can promote its successes and projects to leverage future funding and partnerships with local institutions.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- ❑ Host a visioning session with the entire PAC to outline PAC interests once the Clinton River AOC has delisted. Explore:
 - How will the post-delisting entity be structured, and what will be its niche once the AOC is delisted?
 - Who is still interested in participating in future stewardship and restoration efforts once the AOC is delisted?
 - Which stewardship, restoration, and research efforts are essential?
 - What type of individuals and professionals need to be recruited?
 - What additional partnerships are needed for future stewardship and restoration?
- ❑ Create a recurring agenda item for PAC meetings focused on life after delisting and specific funding opportunities.
- ❑ Form a subcommittee that focuses on life after delisting and specific funding opportunities.
 - Identify two to three people from the PAC that are particularly interested in championing life after delisting efforts.
 - Strategically identify people outside of the PAC to be recruited for this subcommittee.

- What focus areas or partner networks are lacking representation?
 - Who can fill these gaps from outside of the PAC?
- What new ideas and capabilities can each new partner bring to the subcommittee?
- Create and maintain a funding opportunity spreadsheet with a list of potential grants.
 - Include columns for type of grant, application due dates, grant requirements, needed materials, etc. This spreadsheet will serve as a transparent work plan to promote continued funding efforts.

Action Items to Achieve

Expand Partnerships with Life After Delisting in Mind

- Continue building a community network and funding sources through identifying strategic partnerships (e.g., Advancing Macomb for funding and One Macomb for partnerships).

Expand Membership with Life After Delisting in Mind

- Identify champions within the Clinton River watershed who are actively involved in restoration, research, stewardship, education, and outreach work.
 - Cultivate a relationship with these champions and discuss how the PAC can support their work and gain their membership.
- Leverage CRWC community education, programming, and outreach events to identify motivated citizens that may want to contribute to stewardship and restoration efforts.

Create a Shovel Ready List of Projects

- Create a list of priority projects to show the local community and institutions tangible work they can support.

Host a CRWC 50-Year Anniversary Event

- Celebrate the accomplishments of the CRWC by hosting an event to celebrate their anniversary.
 - This event should communicate the work that CRWC has done to restore the watershed and what more there is to do.
 - Invite local agencies, organizations, and businesses to this event to leverage funding for future stewardship and restoration efforts.
 - Ask community members and local institutions what sorts of projects they want to see going into the future.
 - Display project descriptions on the CRWC website to show the community what is possible with more available funding.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

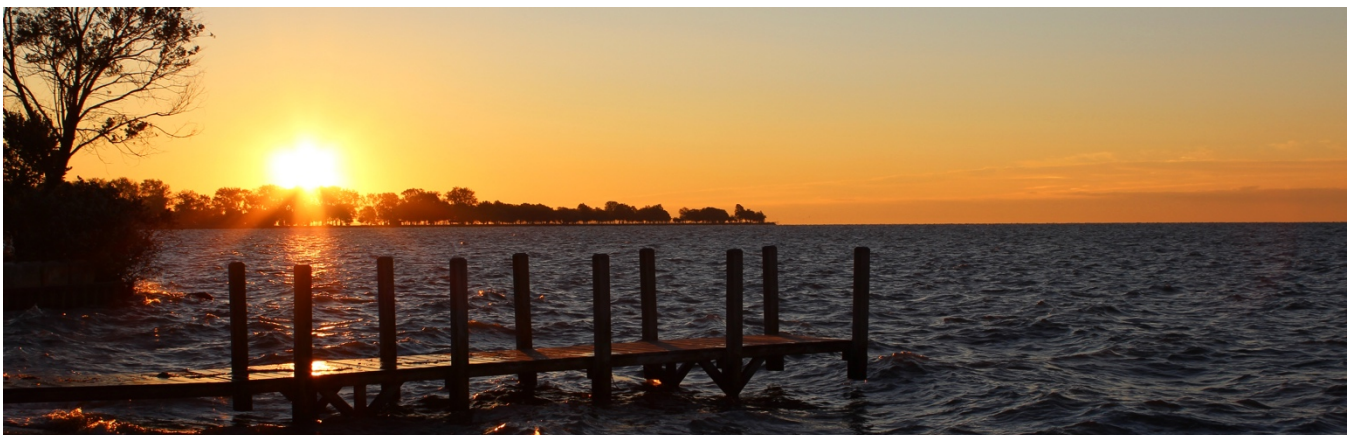
- Evaluate the progress made toward completing one- to two-year action items and organizational structures (e.g., forming subcommittees, identifying funding sources, identifying shovel-ready projects, expanding membership, and expanding partnerships).

- Document lessons learned from the past two years of identifying funding sources for life after delisting.
 - How are subcommittees functioning and how can they be improved?
 - What other champions or individuals need to be included to strengthen subcommittees and make grant writing and fundraising more effective?
 - What partnerships or avenues for funding have not been pursued?
 - What is left to do to get the PAC well-positioned for post-delisting stewardship, restoration, and research?
- Update the funding strategy given the lessons learned.

Action Items to Achieve

Maximize Resource Capacities for Stewardship by Partnering with an Array of Organizations and Businesses

- Identify how the Clinton River AOC restoration efforts have added value to the community.
 - Designate one PAC member to facilitate the creation of an infographic or report that provides a compelling value proposition for why businesses and philanthropic foundations should contribute funding and resources to these efforts.
- Continue creating storytelling materials (print material, video, art, etc.) to show what has already been done in the Clinton River AOC to reach potential donors.
 - Distribute these materials to source funding opportunities from individual citizens.
- Gain funding from local businesses by describing the economic and community value that has been created by restoration efforts.
 - This could be done through creating a membership strategy, having individual conversations, creating a value proposition, or hosting an event.
 - Explore how businesses can get involved or contribute to these efforts.
- Gain new partner organizations, including NGOs, academic institutions, and grantmaking organizations.
 - Provide them with an annual update letter that articulates what has been done, where the Clinton River is now, and future restoration goals.
 - Provide clear information on how these institutions could engage and partner with the CRWC.



Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by Clinton River PAC members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Expand Meaningful Community Stewardship

- Recruit local high school and college students to participate in habitat and species monitoring projects.
 - Identify currently existing habitat and species monitoring projects hosted by the CRWC or partner organizations.
- Develop a speaker series (virtual or in-person) on Clinton River ecology and restoration for high school, local community college, university students, or even individual communities within the watershed.
 - Select speakers representing various voices; these may include scientists, educators, tribal representatives, planners, or water resource activists.

Solidify Funding for Ongoing Stewardship

- Solidify the relationship between the PAC and CRWC now and how this relationship will change once the PAC becomes absorbed by CRWC after delisting.
 - There is currently overlap in the two organizations' work and messaging; it is important to limit crossover so that the PAC and CRWC complement one another.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Host a panel discussion or workshop at the next AOC conference with tips and tools to strengthen community stewardship and funding for life after delisting options.
- Provide regular agenda space in State PAC meetings for PACs to have unstructured collaborative conversations about planning for and strengthening their community outreach and funding for life after delisting efforts.
- Build out an explicit statement which depicts the appropriate uses for PAC support grants.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the Clinton River PAC

- 1. Community Stewardship:** Incorporate community sense of place to change negative public perceptions of the water bodies and encourage community stewardship.
 - a. Host community engagement and recreation events to involve local community members (i.e., beach cleanup, kayaking, citizen science).
- 2. Funding for Life After Delisting:** Build fundraising capacity from external funding sources for continued organizational capacity after delisting.

Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the two objectives that Clinton River PAC members collectively stated they wanted to implement during Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

Detroit River PAC Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team
Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,
Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. Each of the previous project groups laid the groundwork by producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we compiled and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups into a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the Detroit River PAC focuses on their selected recommendations: **Community Stewardship, Community Education, Life After Delisting, and Funding for Life After Delisting** (Appendix, Figure 1). Here we combine the former two into **Broaden Meaningful Community Engagement** and the latter two into **Solidify Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship**. It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for the Detroit River PAC identified, we met again with members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about Detroit River PAC priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Broaden Meaningful Community Engagement

The AOC program has been restoring beneficial uses in the Detroit River AOC for approximately 30 years, and immense progress has been made. However, local communities with little to no interaction with the Detroit River PAC are not aware of the restoration projects or the AOC program at large. To remedy this disconnect, the PAC is interested in broadening its current outreach efforts and establishing new methods for reaching and involving the broader Detroit River AOC community in education and stewardship efforts. The Detroit River PAC has conducted many successful engagement efforts such as drone footage, storybook mapping, and film screening. This plan supplements this work with new ideas suggested by PAC members to reach a more diverse audience.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

Community Stewardship:

- Document the existing shared identity among the Detroit River AOC communities through community-based engagement efforts (e.g., visioning sessions, town hall events, community service activities).
 - Discussion topics might include:
 - What makes our communities similar?
 - How do our communities differ?
 - How can our similarities and differences be leveraged to create a diverse and united team of watershed stewards that tackle important issues in our community?
 - Use this realized identity to create a mission statement to establish a common goal toward river restoration and stewardship.
 - What is the compelling niche/role of the Detroit PAC?

Community Education:

- Establish a community engagement subcommittee that focuses on educational and stewardship opportunities.
 - Set benchmark goals for the next three to five-3-5 years to assess the reach and effectiveness of new community engagement actions.
 - Develop an educational outreach plan to reach out to individuals and communities outside of the environmental sphere to educate and connect with a broader audience.
 - Continue reaching out to those within the environmental sphere to partner in this endeavor.
 - Ask partnering environmental organizations how they are tackling diversity and equity within their ecological work.
 - Use this gained knowledge from partners to improve the educational outreach plan.

Action Items to Achieve

Community Stewardship:

Communicate Directly with Detroit AOC Communities

- Designate a PAC member to be a community ambassador/liaison and reach people living adjacent to the AOC directly where they are.
 - This point-person should utilize the outreach plan developed above for reaching individuals and communities outside of the environmental sphere (e.g., organizations focused on youth education, affordable housing, racial equity, public health, and economic development).
 - Create an interactive map on the PAC website for community members to find their liaison given their location.

Community Education:

Partner with Detroit-Based Institutions

- Expand current educational opportunities by collaborating with partners in the education sector (e.g., Detroit Public Schools and Wyandotte Public Schools) to build AOC protection and stewardship into school programs.
 - Start with K-12 students to build stewardship ideals from a young age.
 - This might include taking students on short field trips to the AOC or having them do in-class labs that discuss water quality.
- Reach out to local businesses, industries, corporations, and nonprofits to collaborate on educational opportunities.
- Partner with college and university student-led groups, clubs, and environmental studies-related departments (e.g., within Wayne State University, Oakland University, and Wayne County Community College).
- Partner with community service-based organizations such as the National Honor Society, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts of America, and Key Club International.
 - Several extracurricular activities could involve the Detroit River PAC to educate young adults on the AOC and encourage river stewardship to recruit young professionals into the field.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

Community Stewardship:

- Reflect on the shared identity and mission statement of the Detroit River PAC by answering the following questions:
 - Does this identity and mission statement still feel relevant?
 - How has the identity of the Detroit River AOC changed over the past three years?
 - Should the framing of restoration work to meet the needs of the community be adjusted?
 - How are environmental quality and degradation directly affecting the Detroit River communities?

- How can this be built into the framing of restoration work?
- Evaluate community efforts toward the common goal of Detroit River AOC restoration.
 - Does the PAC have an established communication chain to organizations within and outside the environmental sphere after three years?
 - Has the PAC continued working on effective engagement efforts (e.g., drone footage, storybook mapping, and film screening) to reach the broader AOC community?

Community Education:

- Evaluate the community engagement subcommittee and the appointed community liaison to assess progress towards reaching the outlined goals during three-year and five-year check-ins.
 - Has the PAC reached its goals established in the one to two-year community engagement committee’s educational outreach plan?
 - Document lessons learned from the past three to five years of community education.
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
- Identify outside funding to achieve stated goals of community education utilizing the community engagement committee’s benchmark goals.
 - Utilize PAC support grants to build and broaden educational capacity in the interim.
 - How will these funding sources be sustained and further developed after delisting?

Action Items to Achieve

Community Stewardship:

Update Community Engagement

- Update the designated community liaison’s role to reach more people living adjacent to the AOC directly where they are.
 - How can the PAC assist in this work?
 - Are there partners not within the environmental sphere (e.g., organizations focused on youth education, affordable housing, racial equity, public health, and economic development) still not involved in this process?
 - Has the community liaison reached a more broad range of AOC community members?
 - Document lessons learned from the past three to five years of community outreach.
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?

Community Education:

Update Partnerships with Detroit-Based Institutions

- Evaluate progress made toward expanding educational opportunities after three-year and five-year check-ins.
 - Has the PAC collaborated with partners in the education sector to build AOC protection and stewardship into school programs?

- Has the PAC reached out to non-profit organizations, such as The Youth Connection, to collaborate on educational opportunities?
- Has the PAC partnered with college and university student-led groups, clubs, and environmental studies-related departments?
 - Document lessons learned from the past three to five years of working in schools and with community service organizations:
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - What activities do students appreciate and feel connected with?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
 - Are there other partners in these areas to gain?
- Assess partnerships with community service-based organizations such as the National Honor Society, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts of America, and Key Club International.
 - Has the PAC expanded its reach to more partners? What have been the successes and roadblocks?
 - Have the previously established partnerships further developed?

Solidify Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

The AOC program is designed to restore beneficial uses of the aquatic ecosystem. Once this is accomplished, AOCs delist from the program, and the PAC structure ceases to exist formally. PAC members must decide if and how to conduct ongoing stewardship. Unfortunately, there are few successful models for continued stewardship by PACs. Yet, substantial restoration and stewardship work will still be needed in the Detroit River, and PAC members want to continue contributing to this work after delisting.

The Detroit River PAC has existing partnerships, designated roles and responsibilities, and PAC champions improving the Detroit River AOC and its communities. The partnership network includes a binational partnership, Friends of the Detroit River (FDR), EPA, and the International Joint Commission (IJC). These aspects of the Detroit River PAC will aid in their success after delisting.

The compiled lists of organizational structures and action items included below outline PAC members' interests and ideas for developing a structure and funding source for ongoing stewardship after delisting. These are steps to guide the PAC toward delisting, regardless of when the official process occurs.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Determine PAC goals that lead toward delisting from the AOC program, such as a timeline for BUI removals, gaining funding sources beyond PAC grants (e.g., dues, donations, membership, endowment, and gifts), or determining the PAC's structure for after delisting.
 - How will the PAC develop its scope of work beyond the AOC program?
 - Which restoration, education, or outreach projects might the PAC want to add once the AOC is delisted?
 - How can the PAC improve projects already completed?
 - For example, how can the Detroit River PAC continue stewardship through the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy (DRFC) Legacy Act Projects)?
 - What personal passions and interests do PAC members have, and how can they be incorporated into ongoing stewardship work?
- Appoint a grant-writing champion responsible for facilitating the writing processes, sending in grants, and acting as the main point of contact for the grant.
 - This champion can be an existing PAC member, a volunteer, or a newly onboarded paid staff member with experience in grant-writing.
 - Develop a database with documented funding resources that can be shared and expanded upon.
- Create a recurring PAC agenda item that focuses on solidifying the post-delisting structure within the organization and the community.
 - Utilize this space to brainstorm future funding sources after delisting.

Action Items to Achieve

Create a Delisting Strategic Plan

- Create a strategic plan for the next five years toward delisting.
 - Draft a goal-driven working document that can be assessed as the organization moves toward delisting using the information cultivated from the bullet above.
 - Communicate with FDR to develop a concrete structure to document within the plan for continued mutual support and work.
 - Answer questions such as:
 - How will the structure of the PAC shift with regards to current partners?
 - How will the structure change in relation to FDR?
 - What does this look like with regard to the Canadian side of the PAC?
 - What aspects of the PAC (e.g., restoration, education, and outreach) are important to maintain as the organization shifts? How does this look within the new organization?
- Communicate biannually with partners (e.g., EPA, NOAA, FWS, MDNR, and the City of Detroit) with regards to delisting and maintaining joint stewardship efforts after exiting the program.

- Determine which partners are currently attending meetings and send invitations to those that are not to expand PAC resources and viewpoints.
- Keep partners up to date and provide them with materials (e.g., progress reports and newsletters) to support the PAC's education and outreach efforts.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Determine how PAC goals have changed over the past two years.
 - Has the PAC completed any of the goals in the five-year strategy within its first three years?
 - What goals can be added to the last two years of the five-year strategy based on what the PAC has already achieved?
- Evaluate the status of the five-year strategy to assess if the PAC is on target for its progress toward delisting.
 - Has the structure been solidified?
 - Have key action items been achieved?
 - What should change to ensure the plan is embodying the mission of the PAC?
 - Update the strategy as needed.
- Develop materials for partners that showcase the previous successes and continued impacts of their partnership on the path to delisting.

Action Items to Achieve

Continue Developing Partnerships

- Reach out to new technical partners who can inform the PAC on ongoing and long-term problems (i.e., coastal wetland issues, climate change, and increasingly hazardous weather conditions).
- Connect with existing and new partners for ongoing stewardship on a biannual basis.
 - Continue reviewing and updating the Report Card that articulates what has been done, where the Detroit River AOC is now, and future restoration goals.

Continue Engaging the AOC community

- Continue engaging with the AOC community to inform them of the work being done to meet these challenges.
- Host town halls to engage with a broad audience about these longer-term issues.
 - Include time for questions and discussion during town halls.

Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by Detroit River PAC members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Broaden Meaningful Community Engagement

- Supplement restoration projects with outreach events and education materials.
 - Utilize education materials at restoration workdays to contextualize the impact of the work being done.
 - Include scheduled time at the beginning of events to teach attendees about the history, ecology, and current restoration projects of the Detroit River AOC.
- Produce an annual factsheet and other printed and online materials highlighting community outreach and involvement successes and further needs.
 - Send these documents to EGLE, EPA, and GLNPO offices to illustrate the necessity of funding outreach and education activities.
 - Send these documents to local businesses and municipalities to encourage further engagement and to recruit funding interest.
- Address equity issues related to outreach toward the broader Detroit and downriver communities.
 - Education - material should meet the community where they are at.
 - This could mean holding focus groups to understand the educational interests and needs of each community.
 - Outreach - members of all communities should feel engaged and understood with the PAC's activities and programming.

Solidify Delisting Structures for Ongoing Stewardship

- Address equity issues related to outreach toward the broader Detroit and downriver communities.
 - PAC Membership - broaden the diversity of membership to underserved communities and working professionals.
 - Partners - work to expand the diversity of partners within and outside the environmental community to diversify reach, impact, and resources.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Use PAC support grants to build up the Detroit River PAC's backbone capacity so they can better invest in community outreach and stewardship after delisting.
- Build out an explicit statement that depicts the appropriate uses for PAC support grants.

- Approach each Detroit River community with their individual challenges in mind; there is no one size fits all method to conducting outreach.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the Detroit River PAC

- 1. Community Stewardship:** Incorporate community sense of place to change negative public perceptions of the water bodies and encourage community stewardship.
 - a. Host community engagement and recreation events to involve local community members (i.e., beach cleanup, kayaking, citizen science).
 - 2. Community Education:** Develop strategies for meaningful community outreach, develop educational and informational materials, create relationships, and engage with storytelling and local knowledge.
 - a. Organize outreach and educational events in tandem with schools, universities, municipalities, and nonprofits to cultivate higher community values of ecological health.
 - b. Cultivate a community understanding of the broader economic and social impacts of restoration.
 - 3. Life After Delisting:** Strategize, prepare, and develop a vision of future organizational structure by planning for life-after delisting when exiting the AOC program.
 - 4. Funding for Life After Delisting:** Build fundraising capacity from external funding sources for continued organizational capacity after delisting.
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Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the four objectives that the Detroit River PAC members collectively stated they wanted to implement during Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

Kalamazoo River Watershed Council Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team

Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,
Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by each producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we synthesized and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups into a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council (KRWC) focuses on their selected recommendations: **PAC Recruitment, Partner Organizations, and Community Education** (Appendix, Figure 1). Here we combine the first two recommendations into one section titled **Broaden KRWCs Capabilities through Recruitment and Partnerships**. We cover Community Education in the second section titled **Expand Meaningful Community Education**. It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for KRWC identified, we met again with members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about KRWC priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Broaden KRWC's Capabilities through Recruitment and Partnerships

KRWC has established itself as a high-functioning organization with hard-working board members and volunteers. Core KRWC members have championed restoration and stewardship efforts to move the Kalamazoo River AOC toward delisting. While these members are devoted to their work and ongoing stewardship of the river, they seek broader and increased assistance to maintain and expand restoration efforts. A larger, dedicated membership and partnership network will improve and expand KRWC's restoration and stewardship work. Therefore, KRWC is interested in continuing to broaden its recruitment efforts and expand its partnership network to create a more effective, capable, and durable organization.

KRWC already exists as a watershed council, allowing it to function well beyond the scope of the AOC program. Members stated that their organization is high functioning, with an involved, passionate Board of Directors and a great network of volunteers and partners (e.g., Kellogg Biological Station, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Committee, and Four Township Water Resources Council (FTWRC)). With this network, KRWC has engaged in various community outreach and stewardship activities (e.g., hosting Kanoë the Kazoo, establishing Riverwalkers, and improving rain gardens).

While KRWC is working toward delisting from the AOC program, its organizational capacity to gain new funding sources is limited. The Watershed Council is unable to provide payment for new staff members who—if hired—could increase KRWC's capacity to gain corporate sponsor support. To remedy these issues, KRWC members indicated their interest in: (1) establishing a system for recruiting a diverse range of individuals to the KRWC board; (2) recruiting members and technical champions to support KRWC organizational capacity; and (3) expanding its network to collaborate with more partners, including sponsors and donors.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Create a recurring agenda item to consider: KRWC's previously developed Strategic Plan for organizational success, partnership networking, and membership plans.
 - Discuss how best to incorporate each of these aspects into KRWC's ongoing activities.
- Recruit and maintain board members of varying technical backgrounds via the KRWC executive committee.
 - Establish a well-rounded Board of Directors to cover all facets of environmental restoration and community engagement.
 - Maintain continuity on the Board of Directors by appointing KRWC members with the capacity to maintain their positions over time.

- Represent all communities neighboring the Kalamazoo River AOC by recruiting individuals from Allegan County and other downriver communities to increase accurate representation.
 - Ensure all board members have the skills and resources to provide institutional and organizational capacity.
 - Recruit individuals who represent the community, have strong personal networks, and ties to organizational networks.
 - Hold annual board meetings jointly with current partners (e.g., MDNR, Kellogg Biological Station, or the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy) to find qualified champions represented by these organizations.
 - Use these networks to seek new partnerships in various sectors (e.g., business, agriculture, or industry).
- Prioritize the incorporation of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into all recruiting and networking activities and events, particularly focusing on socio-economically disadvantaged and ethnically underrepresented communities.
 - Continue providing Spanish translations on social media posts, informational flyers, and signage.
 - Continue recruiting and retaining bilingual Riverwalkers to communicate with recreators.

Action Items to Achieve

Recruiting Members:

Institute Paid Backbone Staff to Provide KRWC Organizational Capacities

- Establish a secure funding source to pay staff who can lighten the load for current board members and volunteers.
 - Produce documentation to showcase the critical benefits and associated costs of obtaining new employees to outside funding organizations.
 - Use these documents to showcase the value of recruiting KRWC staff and members to both funders and the broader community.

Showcase Activities and Programs to Increase Recruitment

- Use the KRWC website and social media profiles (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) to more effectively reach a broader audience.
 - Advertise community engagement events (e.g., Konnect with the Kazoo virtual event and Kanoe the Kazoo) on these platforms.
 - Identify and invite attendees with both passion and technical expertise to these events.
 - Build out active recruitment strategies to secure new KRWC members.
- Expand upon the Eat Safe Fish Program to conduct recruitment with diverse communities.
 - Recruit more staff to walk the river, translate signage into Spanish, and connect with the broader community.
 - Recruit these new staff members directly from majority-minority communities.

Expanding Partnerships:

Maximize KRWC's Capacity by Partnering with Organizations and Businesses

- Identify how Kalamazoo River AOC restoration efforts have added value to the community.
 - Designate one KRWC member to facilitate the creation of an infographic or report.
 - Develop a compelling value proposition for why businesses and philanthropic foundations should contribute funding and resources to these efforts.
- Use this value proposition to gain funding from local businesses.
 - Describe the economic, social, and aesthetic improvements that have resulted from KRWC's watershed restoration through the AOC program.
 - Showcase KRWC's membership strategy, have individual conversations with business owners, or host an event to accomplish this task.
 - Expand partnerships to local businesses that can get involved with or contribute to these efforts.
 - Include clear information on how these businesses directly benefit from increased restoration efforts.

Create Materials to Distribute to Partners

- Provide KRWC's new partners (e.g., NGOs, academic institutions, and grantmaking organizations) with an annual update letter that articulates KRWC's progress, the Kalamazoo River AOC's current condition, and future restoration goals.
 - Include clear information on how these institutions benefit from increased restoration efforts.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate KRWC's Strategic Plan during three-, four-, and five-year check-ins to address topics discussed at KRWC meetings.
 - Discuss the following objectives at each update meeting:
 - Incorporate each of the Strategic Plan's goals into KRWC's activities.
 - Use the Strategic Plan to recruit board members and paid employees.
 - Update the Strategic Plan based on progress made toward plan goals.
- Evaluate both the diversity and continuity of KRWC's Board of Directors.
 - In this evaluation, ask the following questions:
 - Has KRWC incorporated more members from outlying communities into these positions?
 - Does the board accurately represent the communities in the watershed?
 - Has KRWC built institutional and organizational capacity with its board members?
 - Does the board have an array of skill sets (e.g., technical expertise, fundraising and donor cultivation skills, community clout and connectedness)?
 - Has KRWC gained members through interacting with partners at annual meetings?

- Has KRWC maintained board members for at least three years?
- Continue including DEI in all recruiting and networking activities and events.
 - Develop metrics to measure how KRWC includes people of all backgrounds in these activities.
 - Ensure KRWC is considering the impact of its work on all communities.
- Evaluate progress made toward one- to two-year action items.
 - Has KRWC completed any of its specific goals within the initial two years?
 - What goals can be added to this plan based on what KRWC has already achieved?

Action Items to Achieve

Recruiting Members:

Use PAC Champion and Donor Support to Conduct Watershed Monitoring

- Take over the State of Michigan’s monitoring program of the Kalamazoo River over the next three years.
 - Recruit technical champions to conduct annual watershed monitoring and share data via various online platforms (e.g., KRWC website and social media profiles).
 - Use funding from donors gained over the initial two years to assist technical champions in this monitoring.

Continue Improving KRWC’s Organizational Capacities

- Update the KRWC website and social media profiles (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) to more effectively reach a broader audience.
- Improve the Eat Safe Fish Program using new recruits gained over the last two years.
 - Answer the following questions:
 - Has KRWC designated more staff to walk the river, translate signage into Spanish, and connect with the broader community?
 - Has KRWC broadened outreach beyond municipal centers to recruit from downstream communities?

Expanding Partnerships:

Improve Partnerships with Local Organizations and Businesses

- Continue obtaining funds from local organizations and businesses using annual value proposition newsletters.
 - Use these newsletters to continue to gain new partner organizations (e.g., NGOs, academic institutions, and grantmaking organizations).
 - Articulate KRWC’s progress, the Kalamazoo River’s current condition, and future restoration goals in the newsletters.
 - Provide clear information on how these institutions benefit from increased restoration efforts.
- Host annual fundraising events with partners to further develop their relationship with KRWC.

Expand Meaningful Community Education

The AOC program has been restoring beneficial uses for approximately 30 years, and immense progress has been made in the Kalamazoo River AOC. KRWC feels that community members are still largely unaware of its work and how they, as citizens, can support efforts to restore the AOC. Therefore, KRWC is interested in broadening its community education efforts. KRWC is already engaged in advancing community education within the Kalamazoo River watershed communities, including helping facilitate the Canoe the Kazoo event, Krazy for the Kazoo River Clean-Up events, and establishing the Kalamazoo River Watershed Trail.

Broadly, KRWC members indicated they want to: (1) build out current funding sources and activities to reach underrepresented communities within the Kalamazoo River watershed (e.g., utilize online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram); (2) expand the scope of community education to include the watershed as a whole; and (3) use education as a tool for strategic engagement.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- ❑ Create a recurring agenda item for KRWC meetings focused on community education efforts.
- ❑ Develop a community education subcommittee.
 - Identify a small group of individuals from KRWC interested in championing education efforts through this subcommittee.
 - Identify people outside of KRWC to be recruited for this subcommittee.
 - What current and potential future partner organizations can KRWC work with to co-sponsor an educational event or create educational materials?
 - Who can apply for grants to expand education efforts? What new ideas and capabilities can each new partner bring to the subcommittee?
- ❑ Evaluate the current education and outreach goals outlined in the KRWC Strategic Plan as a subcommittee task.
 - Report back to the entire KRWC on the following questions:
 - Does the Strategic Plan's mission statement accurately represent the educational goals of KRWC?
 - Are there step-wise objectives, tasks, and timelines associated with each goal?
- ❑ Continue developing and documenting the goals of the educational aspect of the KRWC Strategic Plan.
 - Outline process by addressing these objectives:
 - Compile a list of KRWC's current educational efforts.
 - Strategize how to continue to develop KRWC's educational efforts within two, three, and five years.
 - Determine how outreach efforts will be financially supported.
 - Determine what obstacles (besides funding) KRWC will need to overcome.

- Define and seek out new partnerships, knowledge, skills, and resources to help with funding efforts.
 - Build out the plan to include tasks, timelines, and designated responsibilities.
- Continue seeking out new ways to create partnerships with industry, municipalities, and local units of government (education and outreach partnership initiative) to determine the best way to collaboratively educate the public about KRWC programs.
 - Consider questions like:
 - What is the most important information for the Kalamazoo River watershed communities to know?
 - Where are the knowledge gaps within the Kalamazoo River watershed communities?
 - Document the progress of this initiative.

Action Items to Achieve

Create a Communication Plan with Kalamazoo River Watershed Communities

- Hold a focus group with watershed community members to determine the best way to provide educational materials and engagement events.
 - During these sessions, ask questions such as:
 - What works best for certain groups of people (e.g., coordinating with the Principal of a local elementary school to distribute event information via tools like Friday Folders)?
 - When are specific social media platforms more effective than others (e.g., live-tweeting events such as the Krazy for the Kazoo River Clean-ups)?

Host an Annual Community Education Event

- Develop and institute an annual community education and river celebration event that showcases the restoration work being done.
 - Invite all partners to this event to ensure a uniform understanding of KRWC, its progress, the greater implications of its work, and its goals as an organization.
 - Use this event to further solidify partnerships and potential funding opportunities.
 - The event should incorporate the following aspects:
 - A platform for community input to determine where information is lacking.
 - A platform for questions to allow citizens to be heard.
 - Details on how the community can be more involved in the Kalamazoo River AOC restoration projects.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate the public education and outreach partnership initiative.
 - Has the collaboration to educate the community been successful?

- If so, in what ways?
 - What efforts have not been successful?
 - Which partners can further benefit from the initiative?
 - How can the initiative further develop its education efforts?
- Evaluate the educational goals of the Strategic Plan after two years, then annually.
 - Document lessons learned from the past two years of strengthening and expanding educational efforts.
 - How have education efforts changed over time?
 - How can the Strategic Plan be adjusted based on the effectiveness of the previous plan?
- Evaluate progress toward the educational goals outlined in the Strategic Plan by annually assessing the status of its initial educational objectives.
 - Compile a list of KRWC's current progress towards education efforts.
 - Strategize how KRWC will expand these efforts within three and five years.
- Create new tasks for each iteration of the Strategic Plan to encourage collaboration.
 - Make a work plan for each task that includes a timeline and designates responsibilities.

Action Items to Achieve

Create Online Educational Materials

- Continue developing, utilizing, and dispersing educational materials through online platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) to reach a broader audience across the watershed.
 - Publish the location and description of AOC projects on the KRWC website.
 - Explain how each project will restore beneficial uses to the watershed.
 - Update the website throughout the project process.
 - Increase traffic to the KRWC website by including its link in various mediums (e.g., tourism sites, parks, local universities, and chambers of commerce).

Build Out Funding Sources for Education

- Identify outside funding sources to execute the educational outreach committee's benchmark goals.
 - Document potential sources of funding to ensure consistent communication.
- Determine how KRWC will sustain and further develop these funding sources after delisting.

Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by KRWC members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Broaden KRWCs Capabilities through Recruitment and Partnerships

- Update and maintain KRWC's membership list by identifying who is actively engaged, partially engaged, and no longer active.
 - Strategize how to re-engage members who partially participate in the KRWC to re-energize them around community stewardship and AOC restoration efforts.
- Update KRWC's social justice statement based on input from all impacted Kalamazoo River watershed communities.
 - Use the updated statement to influence KRWC's recruitment and networking efforts.
 - Showcase the updated statement on all social media platforms, KRWC's strategic plan, and KRWC's website.

Expand Meaningful Community Education

- Celebrate previous and current successes in environmental restoration.
 - Host an event to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Kalamazoo River oil spill and recognize the great work done by KRWC.
 - Use this event as an education and outreach opportunity.
- Continue creating storytelling materials (e.g., print material, video, and art) to communicate what has already been done in the Kalamazoo River AOC to potential donors and local residents.
 - Distribute these materials to partners to showcase the impact of their donations and collaborations.
- Increase awareness of KRWC and the AOC program by facilitating the creation and distribution of educational materials (e.g., online articles, storyboards, newspaper articles, radio and podcast stories, mailings, and print materials).
 - Establish a marketing and communication subcommittee to oversee the development and distribution of educational materials.
 - Create public viewing points with signage designating AOC projects (e.g., Krazy for the Kazoo River Clean-Up events).

Prioritize State Support Role

- Continue targeting PAC supports grants at building capacity for community education efforts.

- Provide regular agenda space at SPAC meetings for PACs to have unstructured collaborative conversations about planning for and strengthening their community outreach, partnership building, and member engagement.
- Build out an explicit statement that depicts the appropriate uses for PAC support grants.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council

- 1. PAC Recruitment:** Conduct strategic recruitment for PAC membership which allows for meaningful community and organizational representation within the PAC.
- 2. Partner Organizations:** Develop a network of partners that will strengthen current stewardship capacity and persist after delisting.
- 3. Community Education:** Develop strategies for meaningful community outreach, develop educational and informational materials, create relationships, and engage with storytelling and local knowledge.
 - a. Organize outreach and educational events in tandem with schools, universities, municipalities, and nonprofits to cultivate higher community values of ecological health.
 - b. Cultivate a community understanding of the broader economic and social impacts of restoration.

Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the three objectives that KRWC members collectively stated they wanted to implement during Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

Lower Menominee River CAC Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team

Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,

Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by each producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we synthesized and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups into a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the Lower Menominee River Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) focuses on their selected recommendations: **Life After Delisting, PAC Structure, and PAC Recruitment** (Appendix, Figure 1). We discuss Life After Delisting and PAC Structure in the first section, **Solidify Structure for Ongoing Stewardship**, and discuss PAC Recruitment in the second section, **Recruit New Partners and Members for Post-Delisting Capacity**. It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for the Lower Menominee River CAC identified, we met again with members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about the Lower Menominee River CAC priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Solidify Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

The AOC program is designed to restore beneficial uses of the aquatic ecosystem. Once this is accomplished, AOCs delist from the program, and the PAC structure ceases to exist formally. PAC members must decide if and how they will conduct ongoing stewardship. The Lower Menominee River AOC was delisted in August 2020, and CAC members are now grappling with if and how to continue maintenance and stewardship efforts. Overall, members expressed a desire to either (1) form a new post-delisting group or (2) nest their CAC under a currently existing environmental organization that will facilitate the upkeep of past-AOC projects and expand on stewardship. We will continue to refer to these members as CAC members in this document, even though the AOC is delisted.

Going forward, the CAC must decide on the structure of this new group and its objectives for stewardship after delisting. For example, the group will need to build its capacity, as some previous CAC members are no longer interested in being involved. To do this, CAC members discussed celebrating the Lower Menominee River AOC delisting to attract local residents who may be interested in ongoing stewardship efforts. Members also expressed interest in building their fundraising capacity to ensure the continuation of projects they care about. Additionally, CAC members are looking to delegate some of their past-AOC project maintenance work to partner organizations.

One-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Determine whether CAC members want to facilitate stewardship after delisting by hosting a meeting to discuss questions such as:
 - Does the CAC want to build a post-delisting group?
 - Which CAC members are willing to continue contributing to stewardship efforts?
 - Which CAC members are no longer interested in participating?
- Create a central group/entity that manages and facilitates continued stewardship work, if the CAC decides this is what they want to do, by addressing questions such as:
 - How should the post-delisting group be structured now that the AOC is delisted?
 - Is there potential for this group to be nested under a partner organization?
 - Identify partner organizations (e.g., the Riverkeeper group) that may be interested in housing this group focused on continued Menominee River stewardship.
 - Reach out to these organizations with a concrete proposal and organizational action plan that outlines:
 - the current status of the Menominee River;
 - the desired path forward for the Menominee River;
 - and specific ideas about how this organization can contribute to future stewardship efforts.

- What geographic scale does this new organization want to focus on (e.g., the previous AOC, the river, or the watershed)?
- What projects do CAC members care about and want to continue (e.g., maintenance of past AOC projects, phragmites and buckthorn maintenance, or additional habitat projects)?
- How can current partnerships aid in the development of ongoing stewardship?
- What new partnerships are needed?
- How would a post-delisting group financially maintain itself (e.g., dues, donations, membership, endowment, gifts, or grants)?
- What type of individuals and professionals need to be strategically recruited to expand skill sets and professional networks for the post-delisting group?
- Develop a post-delisting strategic plan for the new group.
 - The strategic plan should include: (1) the objectives outlined above and (2) a work plan with tasks, timelines, and designated responsibilities.
- Write a proposal and apply for grant funding to hire a central manager for the new group. One potential source could be the M&M Area Community Foundation (MMACF).

Action Items to Achieve

Delegate Lower Menominee River Maintenance and Stewardship to Partner Organizations

- Communicate with partner organizations about the restoration work that needs to be maintained.
 - Ask partner organizations and groups if they are willing to take responsibility for specific maintenance projects.
 - Formally ask the Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition if they can maintain and continue invasive species removal projects.
 - Describe why these maintenance projects are so important and what could happen if they are not kept up.
 - Determine how the CAC can support this transition.

Celebrate the Lower Menominee River AOC Delisting

- Host a celebration for delisting from the AOC program to inform the public about the completed restoration projects and possible future stewardship needs and opportunities.
 - Describe how the local community has benefited from AOC restoration and remediation work.
- Invite key stakeholders around the Menominee River watershed (e.g., state and federal agencies, local municipalities, academics, local tribes, environmental organizations, and professionals) to come and speak about their work in the watershed.
- Invite community members to hear from their local representatives and conservation champions.
- End this celebration with a call to action for continued stewardship.

- Describe how the post-delisting group plans to engage in and champion stewardship efforts.
- Outline how community members and other stakeholders around the Menominee River watershed can support ongoing river stewardship.

Two- to Three-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate the progress made towards completing one-year organizational structures and action items (e.g., creating a central post-delisting group, developing a post-delisting strategic plan, delegating maintenance work to partner organizations, expanding partnerships, and celebrating AOC delisting) during two- and three-year check-ins.
 - Document lessons learned from the past year of life after delisting efforts.
 - Is there a functioning post-delisting group?
 - Are the structure and goals of this group defined?
 - Are maintenance and ongoing stewardship needs being met?
 - Have partner organizations taken on some of these responsibilities?
 - How can the strategic plan be updated and improved?
 - Have strategic stewardship partnerships been established?

Action Items to Achieve

Evaluate Ongoing Stewardship Efforts Desired by the Community

- Host a visioning session with community members within two years to understand what restoration, education, and stewardship activities they want to see in their community.
- Document the desires and goals of the community to inform a priority list of projects.
 - Create shovel-ready project plans to show local community members and institutions what projects could be accomplished if funded.
 - Show grant-making organizations which projects the community would like to see to leverage funding.

Cultivate External Funding Sources for Ongoing Stewardship

- Build external fundraising capacity to support ongoing stewardship efforts.
 - Continue creating materials (e.g., print material, videos, and photos) to tell stories of restoration and rehabilitation.
 - Describe future restoration and remediation projects that would be beneficial for the watershed.
 - Distribute materials to potential donors, community members, and grantmaking organizations to establish funding sources.
 - Write and distribute an annual update letter that describes the AOC delisting and the future vision for the post-delisting entity.
 - Send the update letter to essential stakeholders (e.g., businesses, agencies, partners, funders, and community leaders).

- Describe the compelling economic and community values created by restoration efforts; utilize this letter to promote ongoing stewardship to maintain and further develop these values.
- End the update letter with a call for funding, collaboration, and partnership opportunities.

Recruit New Partners and Members for Post-Delisting Capacity

The AOC program has been restoring beneficial uses for approximately 30 years, and immense progress has been made. In the Lower Menominee River AOC, core CAC members have championed restoration and stewardship efforts to get the AOC delisted. While these members are devoted to their work and ongoing stewardship of the river, they seek broader and increased assistance to maintain and expand restoration efforts. A larger, dedicated team for the potential post-delisting group would improve and grow the restoration and stewardship work possible within the Menominee River watershed.

To gain new members and partners, the Lower Menominee River CAC members want to continue hosting stewardship events to recruit community members interested in stewarding their local river system. CAC members also discussed strategically identifying and reaching out to stewardship, education, and outreach champions in the community to cultivate a mutually beneficial partnership. Lastly, Lower Menominee River CAC members want to expand their partnership network to build off current work done by other environmental agencies, tribal communities, environmental organizations, and educational institutions.

One-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Host a meeting for environmental organizations, agencies, industries, tribes, and other key players and stakeholders in the watershed.
 - Create a shared vision of what the Menominee River watershed should look like.
 - Discuss how different organizations and groups can contribute to this work and fill in river restoration and management gaps.
 - Discuss how environmental organizations and players can interact, coordinate, and support each other using their individual strengths.
- Designate a point of contact within the post-delisting group to manage direct communication with partner organizations.
 - This person should field questions and facilitate involvement with the group.
- Discuss the different tiers of membership within the post-delisting group.
 - Differentiate between new group members, supporters, and volunteers.

- Strategize how to increase all three membership tiers.

Action Items to Achieve

Host Ongoing Stewardship Events to Expand Recruitment

- ❑ Continue hosting clean-up, invasive species maintenance, and recreational events as a group or with partner organizations.
 - Host two events per year.
- ❑ Expand the post-delisting groups' presence on various platforms (e.g., social media profiles, partner organization websites, and local news outlets) to publicize its stewardship events.
- ❑ Include a scheduled time at the beginning of events to discuss the history, ecology, and current restoration projects of the Menominee River.
- ❑ Send a follow-up email to guests after the event to describe the groups' work and possible membership.

Strategically Expand Membership

- ❑ Identify champions and organizational representatives within the Menominee River watershed who are actively involved in stewardship, education, and outreach work and have a strong community network.
 - Discuss how the post-delisting group can support their work and gain their membership.

Two- to Three-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- ❑ Evaluate progress made toward completing one-year organizational structures and action items (e.g., hosting ongoing stewardship events and strategically expanding membership) during two- and three-year check-ins.
 - Document lessons learned from the past year of recruitment.
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
 - What are continued areas for growth in building out recruitment?

Action Items to Achieve

Develop and Strengthen Partnership Network

- ❑ Attend potential partner organizations' meetings to build relationships.
 - Build a mutually beneficial relationship by engaging with other groups and organizations.
 - Ask them how CAC members can contribute to their work and how these organizations can support the post-delisting group objectives.
- ❑ Develop and maintain communication with coalitions formed in response to mining in the Menominee River area or growing concerns about PFAS pollution.

- Reach out to the Menominee Tribe to ask how CAC members can contribute to their environmental restoration and management work and suggest ways the tribe can contribute to the post-delisting group's efforts.
 - Discuss how future group work can relate and contribute to tribal environmental justice.
 - Ask tribal community members what environmental and cultural work they would collaborate on in the Menominee River watershed.
- Develop outreach materials to attract potential partners (e.g., pamphlets, business cards, or letters).
 - Showcase the CAC's previous work and the post-delisting group's future work using a pamphlet.
 - Build a concrete list of future goals and highlight how partners could engage with the post-delisting group to achieve these goals.
 - Develop a mailing list to send an annual outreach letter to connect with organizations in the Menominee River area.
 - This letter should contain the same information as the pamphlet but directly acknowledge how the group sees the partnership progressing, how it will be effective, and how it will benefit the watershed.

Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by the Lower Menominee River CAC members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Solidify Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

- Create and maintain a funding opportunity spreadsheet with a list of potential grants and fundraising events.
 - Include columns for type of grant/event, application due dates, grant requirements, and needed materials.
 - Use this spreadsheet as a work plan to promote continued attention to gaining funding.
 - Review the spreadsheet quarterly at meetings.
- Create a website as a landing page for anyone interested in learning more about the new post-delisting group, stewardship events, and the Menominee River.
 - Provide links to key partner programs and activities.

Recruit New Partners and Members for Post-Delisting Capacity

- Create and promote internship opportunities with the post-delisting group for young environmentalists and professionals to gain experience in watershed stewardship and contribute to the group's efforts and capacity.
 - This effort can also facilitate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) learning and membership.
- Create a listserv in collaboration with partner organizations to publish internships, fellowships, and career opportunities via email for young environmentalists and professionals.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Define the roles of Stephanie Swart (Lower Menominee River-Michigan AOC Coordinator) and Brie Kupsy (Lower Menominee River-Wisconsin AOC Coordinator) with the new post-delisted group.
 - How much support will they provide?
 - What services will they provide?
- Identify agencies that PACs should maintain relationships with after AOC delisting.
- Continue to include the Lower Menominee River CAC in SPAC meetings and AOC conferences.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the Lower Menominee River CAC

- 1. Life After Delisting:** Build fundraising capacity from external funding sources for continued organizational capacity after delisting.
- 2. PAC Structure:** Define and implement a clear division of labor within PACs.
 - a. Define clear roles and responsibilities.
 - b. Document meeting structure.
 - c. Define and address any other structural ambiguity.
- 3. PAC Recruitment:** Conduct strategic recruitment for PAC membership which allows for meaningful community and organizational representation within the PAC.

Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the three objectives that the Lower Menominee River CAC members collectively stated they wanted to focus on in Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team

Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,

Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by each producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we synthesized and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups to a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership (MLWP) focuses on their selected recommendations: **Community Education and Funding for Life After Delisting** (Appendix, Figure 1). The former will be covered in the first section of this plan, titled **Expand Meaningful Community Education**. The latter will be covered in the second section, titled **Solidify Funding for Ongoing Stewardship**. It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for the MLWP identified, we met again with MLWP members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about MLWP priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Expand Meaningful Community Education

The AOC program has been restoring beneficial uses for approximately 30 years, and immense progress has been made. Yet, many community members are not aware of this progress, what it means for the community, and how they can support this work. Therefore, MLWP is interested in continuing to broaden its community education efforts to ensure that community members learn more about the AOC program, the Muskegon Lake ecosystem, and future educational opportunities.

MLWP has made considerable progress toward community education. MLWP's Muskegon Lake Action Plan made recommendations to improve the community's water literacy, and its community stewardship events have been largely successful (e.g., Trash Bash and River Clean Ups). Additionally, MLWP is conducting outreach by establishing an excellent online presence (e.g., posting documentaries and videos on social media and the MLWP website) and developing a robust educational partnership network (e.g., with the West Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN), and the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association). However, members indicated that they wish to improve upon and expand their community education efforts.

Broadly, MLWP members specified interest in strengthening their partnership network by further collaborating with educational institutions, local government figures, and other conservation-minded groups. Members also want to collaborate more closely with local government officials to bridge knowledge gaps between them and their constituents regarding the Muskegon Lake AOC. Additionally, MLWP members discussed targeting young community members through outreach events that include educational programming; this is an avenue to spark a lifelong interest in the environment and encourage K-12 students to relay this valuable knowledge and enthusiasm to the adults in their lives. Finally, MLWP members are interested in expanding educational and stewardship opportunities beyond hands-on events to adult members of the Muskegon Lake community. These outreach efforts would effectively spread information about the Muskegon Lake ecosystem and stimulate multi-generational environmental stewardship.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Form a community education committee to address educational efforts.
 - Develop a plan to educate stakeholders (e.g., landowners, developers, and philanthropists) on the connection between what they do on their property and ecosystem health within the Muskegon Lake AOC.
- Establish a coalition composed of members of MLWP, local government members (e.g., planning commission, city council, or local recreation board), local industry representatives (e.g., manufacturing, agriculture, or tourism), and conservation-minded organizations.

- Build relationships with decision-makers and community influencers to bridge knowledge gaps between them and their constituents on restoration efforts in the Muskegon Lake AOC.
- Develop a coordinated approach to conducting community education with local education systems (e.g., Muskegon Area Intermediate School District and GVSU W.G. Jackson Research Vessel programming), grantmaking organizations (e.g., Community Foundation for Muskegon County and The Grand Rapids Community Foundation), businesses, and other conservation-minded programs (e.g., The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Audubon Society).
 - Partner with the Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute- Water Resources Outreach Education Program to facilitate education programs about Muskegon Lake restoration efforts for K-12 students.
 - Meet biannually with current partners (e.g., West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), Delta Institute, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)) to coordinate these community education efforts.
- Formulate a strategic education plan.
 - Utilize partners identified within the Muskegon Lake Action Plan to establish this strategy.
 - Continue partnering with EGLE and NOAA to prioritize education programs for teachers and educators.
 - Create specific goals for the MLWP's Public Access Community to accomplish in terms of community education.
 - Outline next steps for community education.
 - Strategize how to further develop MLWP's current education actions within two, three, and five-year time horizons.
 - Identify long-term funding sources for educational programs.

Action Items to Achieve

Partner with Educational Organizations

- Expand on current K-12 educational opportunities by incorporating Muskegon Lake AOC restoration and stewardship into school programs.
 - Collaborate on educational opportunities with education and environmental-based organizations and programs, such as the West Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative.
 - Partner with college and university student-led groups, clubs, and environmental studies-related departments (e.g., GVSU, Baker College, and Muskegon Community College).
- Create educational opportunities with partners (e.g., West Michigan Conservation Network and the Muskegon Conservation District) beyond hands-on stewardship events to inform adults about the Muskegon Lake AOC.
 - Broaden the scope of monthly MLWP meetings to encompass best management practices for stewarding the AOC.

- Invite partners to meetings to plan and coordinate collaborative educational opportunities.

Partner with Community Service Organizations

- Work with K-12 organizations (e.g., National Honor Society, Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts of America, or Key Club International) to promote restoration and stewardship of the Muskegon Lake AOC.
 - Utilize these partnerships to educate children and young adults on the AOC and recruit young professionals.
 - Institute an internship program to facilitate the recruitment of interested youth participants and provide them with experiences in stewarding Muskegon Lake while contributing to the efforts of the MLWP.
- Expand partnerships with more adult-focused community service programs (e.g., the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership and Stewardship Network) to help connect the community's adult population more to the Muskegon Lake watershed.
 - Continue appointing Shoreline Stewards to lead stewardship events.
 - Use these opportunities to educate adults on the impact of their stewardship of Muskegon Lake.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate progress made toward completing one- to two-year organizational structures and action items during three-year and five-year check-ins.
 - Document lessons learned from the past three to five years of community education by evaluating questions such as:
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
 - What is left to do to ensure the Muskegon Lake community is sufficiently educated on restoration-related issues?
 - As part of this evaluation, assess progress made by the community education committee.
 - Answer the following questions based on formulated metrics of success:
 - Are individual property owners more aware of the connection between their actions and pollution in Muskegon Lake?
 - Have local decision-makers become more engaged with their constituents?
 - Has the coalition increased the number of educational institutions, grantmaking organizations, and businesses involved in Muskegon Lake restoration?
 - As part of this evaluation, assess progress made toward expanding educational opportunities.
 - Address question such as:

- Has MLWP collaborated with partners in the education sector to build AOC protection and stewardship into school programs?
- Has MLWP reached out to non-profit organizations, such as Western Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, to collaborate on educational opportunities?
- Has MLWP partnered with college and university student-led groups, clubs, and environmental studies-related departments?
- Have more adults become involved in stewarding Muskegon Lake?

Action Items to Achieve

Update Community Education Strategic Plan

- Update the community education strategy after five years to encompass lessons learned from the previous five years, plus future goals.
 - In this updated strategy, address objectives such as:
 - Target underrepresented communities within and around the Muskegon Lake AOC through MLWP education efforts.
 - Host public forums in various neighborhoods and communities to engage with diverse communities adjacent to the Muskegon Lake AOC.
 - Continue incorporating community outreach strategies that have worked well.
 - Continue evaluating which strategies have not worked well.
 - Has the MLWP's Public Access Committee realized its responsibilities laid out in the Action Plan?

Solidify Funding for Ongoing Stewardship

The AOC program is designed to restore beneficial uses of the aquatic ecosystem. Once this is accomplished, AOCs delist from the program, and the PAC structure ceases to formally exist. MLWP has a comprehensive plan and structure to continue to exist after delisting with support from its fiduciary, WMSRDC. However, there is still a critical need to develop a sustainable funding source to continue maintaining restoration projects, conducting additional restoration projects, and expanding stewardship work for Muskegon Lake AOC. The key to cultivating a sustainable funding source is to build an extensive, strategic network of partners and members who believe in the mission-focused work of MLWP; broadening membership and partnerships will strengthen MLWP's funding base. The MLWP already has a network of partners for current projects and programs, yet it should be expanded to accommodate continued stewardship work and funding after delisting.

MLWP members expressed an interest in reinstating their previously-formed fundraising committee, expanding their membership and partnership network to maximize funding opportunities, and continuing to advocate for long-term funding sources through state legislation. The re-established fundraising committee will increase MLWP's fundraising efforts and develop a long-term strategic plan to establish goals, targets, and strategies for fundraising and grant writing. Next, MLWP can actively

market itself as a successful watershed organization by creating and distributing storytelling materials, yearly accomplishment letters, and infographics to potential funding partners. These materials can spark the interest of local organizations and citizens to donate to or volunteer with MLWP. Lastly, members indicated they want to continue advocating for funding through legislation. Developing materials with partner organizations to share with state legislators through lobbying and briefings can encourage them to take action.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Re-establish the fundraising committee to focus on funding opportunities after delisting.
 - Identify three to five MLWP members interested in championing fundraising efforts.
 - Identify funding champions from outside organizations to recruit to MLWP and join the fundraising committee by addressing questions such as:
 - What current and future partner organizations can fill the need for fundraising and grant writing capacity for MLWP?
 - What new ideas and capabilities can each new partner bring to the committee beyond financial assistance?
 - Develop a long-term strategic funding plan.
 - Outline next steps for post-delisting funding by referring to the following objectives:
 - Establish MLWP's value proposition to solidify funding after delisting.
 - What is the potential and proven value to the community?
 - What is the potential and proven value to each donor?
 - Why should they invest?
 - Compile a list of MLWP's current fundraising and grant writing efforts.
 - Strategize how MLWP will financially maintain itself after delisting (e.g., dues, donations, membership, endowment, gifts, and grants).
 - Identify new funding sources that MLWP wants to pursue within two, three, and five years.
 - Determine the challenges and barriers MLWP will need to overcome to gain funding.
 - Define and seek out new partnerships, knowledge, skills, or resources to help with funding efforts.
 - Explore creative ways a partner organization or supporters can supply capacity beyond financial support (e.g., writing articles, removing invasive species, and developing social media posts).
 - Develop new fundraising and granting writing goals.
- Create a recurring agenda item for MLWP monthly meetings to provide space for the fundraising committee to discuss funding for stewardship work after delisting.
 - Receive feedback and input from MLWP members outside of the committee.
- Continue hosting monthly public meetings after the Muskegon Lake AOC is delisted.

Action Items to Achieve

Build Funding Capacities for Stewardship by Describing the Value of Restoration to Potential Donors

- ❑ Continue creating storytelling materials (e.g., Muskegon Habitat Video and Back from the Brink: A Muskegon Lake Film) to show what has already been done in the Muskegon Lake AOC to potential donors.
 - Include references to donation methods in storytelling material.
- ❑ Write and distribute an annual update letter that outlines MLWP's progress, delisting trajectory, and future vision. Send this letter to EGLE, EPA, current partners, local businesses, grantmaking organizations, and community leaders.
 - Describe the compelling economic, community, and donor values created by restoration efforts.
 - End this update with a call for further collaboration and partnership opportunities.
 - Utilize this letter to promote ongoing stewardship to maintain and further develop these values.
 - Post this update letter on MLWP's website and social media profiles.
- ❑ Identify how Muskegon Lake AOC restoration efforts have added value to the community.
 - Create an infographic that provides a compelling rationale for why grantmaking organizations, community organizations, and local businesses should contribute funding and resources to these efforts.
- ❑ Raise funds from local businesses outside of MLWP's partner network by describing the economic and community value created by restoration efforts.
 - Create a membership strategy, contact individual business owners, or host a community outreach event to accomplish this.

Continue Advocating for Long-Term Funding Sources through State Legislation

- ❑ Develop a list of state legislators to lobby for stewardship funding opportunities across the state and around the Muskegon Lake AOC (e.g., license plates and tax bill contributions).
 - Establish a yearly goal to lobby at least two state legislators to include these provisions in state legislation.
- ❑ Collaborate with current partner organizations (e.g., WMSRDC and Annis Water Resource Institute) to obtain long-term stewardship funding by creating a report or presentation on the benefits of increased funding for watershed stewardship projects and programs.
 - Incorporate examples of successful stewardship done by each partner organization to show the importance of this work.
- ❑ Host an annual briefing for state legislators with partner organizations to present the need for long-term funding sources by summarizing the yearly update letter.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- ❑ Evaluate progress made towards completing one- to two-year organizational structures and action items during three-year and five-year check-ins.

- Document lessons learned from the past three to five years.
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
 - What partnerships or avenues for funding have not yet been pursued?

Action Items to Achieve

Update the Long-term Strategic Funding Plan

- Improve the strategic plan by annually assessing the status of the initial objectives.
 - Determine if there is a need to update MLWP's value proposition to solidify funding after delisting.
 - Update the list of MLWP's current progress towards fundraising and grant writing efforts.
 - Strategize how MLWP will expand these efforts within two, three, and five years.
 - Identify the challenges and barriers that were encountered and how they were addressed. Continue identifying new challenges and barriers when they show up.
 - Continue seeking out new partnerships, knowledge, skills, or resources to help with funding efforts.
 - Create new funding tasks for each iteration of the plan to establish new goals that will encourage committee collaboration and build morale.

Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by MLWP members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Expand Meaningful Community Education

- Create a community ambassador/liaison role for a member of MLWP's Public Access Committee to inform local community members how to engage with the Muskegon Lake ecosystem.
 - Utilize the Action Plan's educational recommendations to reach individuals and communities both within and outside the environmental sphere.
 - Reach out to underrepresented communities to underscore diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of these efforts.
- Supplement community outreach events with educational materials.
 - Utilize educational materials (e.g., signage, pamphlets, and activities) at restoration work-days (e.g., Muskegon Lake Watershed Spring Cleanup and annual Muskegon River cleanups) to contextualize the impact of the work being done.
 - Ensure the public understands that AOC remediation is not the end game, but there will still be work to do once the Muskegon Lake AOC is delisted.
- Hire a consultant (or students) through PAC support grants to create a Muskegon Lake AOC ESRI story map based on MLWP's Action Plan.
 - Highlight AOC projects, restoration activities, and project funding amounts to educate the community on the amount of work done to restore beneficial uses to the Muskegon Lake AOC.
 - House this map on MLWP's website and include references in newsletters and on EGLE's website.

Solidify Funding for Ongoing Stewardship

- Create and maintain a funding opportunity spreadsheet with a list of potential grants and a list of fundraising events.
 - Include columns for type of grant/event, application due dates, grant requirements, needed materials, etc. This spreadsheet will serve as a transparent work plan to promote continued fundraising efforts.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Meet with PACs annually to discuss strategies for the continued support of stewardship capacity after delisting.
- Continue targeting PAC supports grants at building capacity for community education and outreach efforts.

- Create an explicit statement that depicts the appropriate uses for PAC support grants.
- Provide regular agenda space in State PAC meetings for the PACs to have unstructured collaborative conversations about planning for and strengthening their community education and outreach, life after delisting, and funding for life after delisting efforts.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership

- 1. Community Education:** Develop strategies for meaningful community outreach, develop educational and informational materials, create relationships, and engage with storytelling and local knowledge.
 - a. Organize outreach and educational events in tandem with schools, universities, municipalities, and nonprofits to cultivate higher community values of ecological health.
 - b. Cultivate a community understanding of the broader economic and social impacts of restoration.
- 2. Funding for Life After Delisting:** Build fundraising capacity from external funding sources for continued organizational capacity after delisting.

Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the two objectives that the MLWP members collectively stated they wanted to implement during Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team
Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,
Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by each producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we compiled and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups into a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC Coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed (PSBW) focuses on their selected recommendations: **PAC Structure, PAC Recruitment, and Community Education** (Appendix, Figure 1). We combine PAC Structure and PAC Recruitment into one section, titled **Strengthen PSBW Structure and Recruitment** and include Community Education in the second section, titled **Broaden Meaningful Community Education**. It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for the PSBW identified, we met again with PSBW members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about the PSBW priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Strengthen PSBW Structure and Recruitment

Michigan's AOC program serves to restore beneficial uses provided by our valuable aquatic ecosystems. However, these efforts are complicated without a solidified local organizational structure and an enthusiastic community. PSBW members expressed a desire to establish an operational PAC structure by documenting clear roles and responsibilities and developing a unique identity among other environmental organizations. Additionally, members discussed the importance of recruiting passionate individuals into the PSBW. While the PSBW has recruited well in years prior, members expressed an interest in working toward maintaining and expanding upon this recruitment network to build a durable organization.

With a solidified structure and a consistent recruiting base, the PSBW agreed that they would be able to (1) effectively document roles and responsibilities of champions, (2) form subcommittees on various topics of interest, (3) represent the diverse interests within the Saginaw River and Bay AOC, and (4) build and maintain a base of energetic recruits to the PSBW.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

PSBW Structure:

- Establish a temporary committee to evaluate the current PSBW structure and designate tasks.
 - This administrative body will perform the following functions:
 - Form subcommittees (e.g., education, outreach, and recruitment);
 - Designate individual roles and responsibilities;
 - Handle and distribute PAC support funds;
 - Use funds to hire backbone staff to support PSBW capacity; and
 - Prioritize specific PAC projects.
- Discover and document a unique PAC identity.
 - Discuss the role and unique identity of PSBW.
 - Establish a concerted messaging scheme based on this identity.
- Involve all champions in as many PSBW meetings as possible.
 - PSBW has many important champions, and each of these stakeholders should be involved where they are most needed throughout the process.
 - Having a diverse group of voices in the room at all meetings will improve PSBW functions.

PSBW Recruitment:

- Institute a recurring PSBW agenda item to discuss recruitment strategies and status.
 - Talk within PSBW membership about:
 - Recruiting and retaining new members and volunteers;
 - Updated recruitment strategies; and
 - Where PSBW has found success in retaining recruited members.

Action Items to Achieve

PSBW Structure:

Delegate Tasks and Duties

- ❑ Maintain a record of all PSBW member responsibilities.
 - This will entrust each PSBW member with specific tasks and hold them accountable for performing them.
- ❑ Develop an election system for key roles (e.g., biennial elections).
- ❑ Update the record with new roles and responsibilities as they are delegated.

PSBW Recruitment:

Discuss Recruitment Strategies

- ❑ Invite outside organizations to PSBW meetings to spread awareness of PSBW activities (e.g., Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge and Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU)).
 - Promote PSBW's community involvement to increase partnerships.
 - Recruit new members from outside groups that attend PSBW meetings.
 - Expand the reach of PSBW by adding new champions from various economic sectors (e.g., industry, government, or agriculture).
- ❑ Discuss the different tiers of membership within the PSBW.
 - Differentiate between new PSBW members, supporters, and volunteers.
 - Strategize how to increase the participation of all three groups.
 - Showcase PSBW's newly documented roles and responsibilities to recruits and partners.

Inform Members and Partners about PSBW Activities

- ❑ Develop an extensive list of volunteers, collaborators, and partners based on their previous participation with the PSBW.
 - Send an annual newsletter to this list to increase and maintain recruitment.
 - Update these stakeholders on the PSBW's progress made toward BUI removal, the values/services these provide to the community, and restoration objectives for the coming years.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

PSBW Structure:

- ❑ Conduct a PSBW-wide evaluation on the temporary committee tasked with administrative duties.
 - Consider whether or not the established body has:
 - Formed subcommittees;
 - Designated individual roles and responsibilities;
 - Handled and distributed PAC support funds effectively; and
 - Prioritized beneficial PSBW projects.
- ❑ Revisit the previously developed PSBW-wide identity.
 - Has PSBW found its unique identity?

- Has PSBW used this identity for messaging purposes?
- Does PSBW fill a specific niche that it previously did not?
- Evaluate the diversity of voices at PSBW meetings. This can be done every six months or annually.
 - Have all stakeholders been substantially involved?
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the updated PSBW structure through a survey sent to PSBW members, supporters, and volunteers. Sample survey questions could include:
 - Do members feel heard?
 - Is there a difference in input between different membership tiers (member, supporter, volunteer)?
 - Is there an opportunity for creative input at all levels of functioning?

PSBW Recruitment:

- Continue to hold a recurring agenda item to discuss recruitment strategies.
 - Talk with PSBW members about:
 - How many new members and volunteers have been recruited and retained;
 - Updated recruitment strategies; and
 - Where PSBW has found success in retaining recruited members.
- Assess the involvement of outside organizations.
 - Has PSBW added entities from varying sectors to its membership?
 - Have these new members contributed meaningfully to PSBW functions?
- Utilize findings from the subcommittee on youth engagement.
 - Has PSBW reached out to more young people?
 - Has PSBW held outreach and engagement events to expand reach?
 - Has PSBW retained recruits once adding them as members?

Action Items to Achieve

PSBW Structure:

Revamp Tasks and Duties

- Continue updating the record of all PSBW member's responsibilities.
 - Has this method increased PSBW member's accountability and productivity?
 - Do all PSBW members feel good about the solidified structure of PSBW?

PSBW Recruitment:

Update Participation List

- Update the extensive list of volunteers, collaborators, and partners based on their previous participation with the PSBW.
 - Has PSBW continued to send an annual newsletter to this list?
 - Are key stakeholders more familiar with PSBW's progress made toward BUI removal, the values/services they provide to the community, and restoration objectives for the coming years?

Broaden Meaningful Community Education

PSBW has made great strides toward restoring beneficial uses. Progress has been made toward increased water testing, promoting phosphorus-free fertilizers, and mitigating beach closure issues. PSBW is interested in furthering community education efforts to educate the public on restoration activities and the broader implications of remediation work. Educating the public is the first step toward gaining new volunteers, partners, and supporters for Saginaw River and Bay stewardship.

During conversations with PSBW members, we discussed avenues to expand current efforts and explore new educational opportunities. These expanded efforts include developing a shared vision among PSBW members for community engagement, disseminating that vision, and acting on the PSBW's strategic objectives.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Institute a recurring agenda item for PSBW meetings focused on community education.
 - This is an excellent opportunity for PSBW member updates and presentations by partner guests involving community education.
- Describe PSBW's achievements and goals to advertise and share with the community.
 - Develop a set of clear and concrete community messages through a PSBW-wide visioning session. Discuss questions such as:
 - Who is the target audience?
 - What knowledge should be shared with the audience?
 - Which communication mediums and events should be created to share knowledge with this audience?
 - Which existing communication avenues (e.g., Facebook, website, social media, and email) should be used to share knowledge with this audience?
 - How can current partnerships aid in the development of community engagement efforts?
 - What partnerships are needed to aid in the development of community outreach efforts?
- Establish a media outreach committee to further develop an online media presence.
 - Update the PSBW website monthly to reflect current progress toward Saginaw River and Bay AOC projects.
 - Increase traffic to the PSBW website by coordinating with and posting the website link to tourism sites, parks, the chamber of commerce, partner organizations, and city websites.
 - Utilize online platforms such as the PSBW Facebook page to showcase the restoration projects and their value.
 - Advertise stewardship events to engage with volunteers.

- Document community engagement with PSBW's online platforms to use when writing grants.
 - Documenting this engagement showcases the benefits of the PSBW's work and can help gain new grants.
- Create an annually updated list of "community best management practices."
 - Relate these management practices to the PSBW's community education target areas (e.g., properly disposing of automotive oil, maintenance and care of septic tanks, eliminating laundry microplastics, and phosphates).

Action Items to Achieve

Engage with Youth Through a Presence in Schools

- Expand on current educational opportunities by collaborating with partners in the education sector (e.g., Bay City Public Schools and Saginaw Public Schools) to build AOC protection and stewardship into school programs.
- Start with K-12 students to build stewardship ideals from a young age.
 - This might include taking students on short field trips to the AOC or having them do in-class labs that discuss water quality.
- Reach out to non-profit organizations (e.g., The Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, the NOAA Sea Grant Bay City office, and the Green Point Environmental Learning Center) to collaborate on educational opportunities.
- Partner with college and university student-led groups, clubs, and environmental studies-related departments (e.g., within Saginaw Valley State University, Northwood University, and the University of Michigan-Flint).
- Partner with community service-based organizations (e.g., the National Honor Society, Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts of America, and Key Club International).
 - Several extracurricular activities could involve the Saginaw River and Bay to educate young adults on the AOC and encourage river stewardship to recruit young professionals into the field.

Create a Platform for Dialog with the Local Community

- Update the PSBW website with a new tab that enables community members to submit questions about the AOC. Provide answers to questions through email with additional information about the PSBW to spark interest in becoming involved.
 - Utilize the content from community members' questions to inform PSBW members on which topics they should address in educational materials.
 - Identify someone responsible for making sure questions are answered in a timely fashion.
- Include references to this tab on educational pamphlets, news articles, etc., to inform the community about this platform.

Circulate Information about Saginaw River and Bay AOC Clean-up and Restoration

- Create and distribute educational materials that describe how individuals and small businesses can become stewards for the Saginaw River and Bay Watershed.

- Outline how individuals can modify their behavior and take responsibility for stewardship efforts.
- Improve scientific translation by ensuring educational materials are geared towards citizens without a background in science.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Revisit the shared vision for community education after two years.
 - How has the identity of the PSBW changed?
 - How can the framing of restoration work be adjusted to meet the informational needs of the community?
 - Has the target audience changed? How does this inform the way that PSBW produces educational materials?
 - What knowledge should the PSBW share with this new audience?
 - Which communication mediums and events should the PSBW create to share knowledge with this audience?
 - How can current partnerships aid the development of community outreach efforts?
 - What partnerships are needed to aid the development of community outreach efforts?
- Assess the work done by the media outreach subcommittee.
 - Has publicizing educational materials, events, and projects been effective at engaging the community?
 - Has this material been used to support the grant writing process?
 - Are there any media outlets that should be pursued?
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the community best management practices list.
 - Has the list been updated annually to align with the PSBW's community education and engagement target areas?
 - Is there any evidence that the community is using the best management practices list to guide their behavior?
 - Did the PSBW complete the annual strategic actions? Which actions need to be revisited?
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the annual newsletter.
 - Is there an increase in website activity following the release of the newsletter?
 - Is the newsletter reaching new audiences?
 - Does the newsletter have instructions on how to get involved with PSBW?

Action Items to Achieve

Engage with the Public through Storytelling

- Host an annual event that celebrates the Saginaw River and Bay watershed.
 - Allow storytellers, poets, and/or musicians to share their love for the water and the region.

- Include a published anthology, open-mic show, or similar community event where community members feel their voices are heard.
- Promote creative conversation (e.g., via workshops) about how community members can be better stewards for the watershed.

Continue Developing Educational Materials to Strengthen Stewardship Efforts

- Evaluate the effectiveness of educational materials that outline how individuals can modify their behavior and take responsibility for the stewardship of their community within the Saginaw River and Bay.
 - Work with behavior change specialists or consultants to assess if the materials were successful.
- Host a visioning session with partners and community members to gain insight into how they would like to learn about new opportunities for stewardship.

Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by the PSBW members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Strengthen PSBW Structure and Recruitment

- Debrief the PSBW's involvement with University of Michigan research projects over the last three years.
 - What has been effective or ineffective?
 - Which recommendations have worked or can be improved upon?
 - How will PSBW work toward implementing noted recommendations?
- Create and promote internship opportunities through the PSBW.
 - This will allow young environmentalists and professionals to gain experience in stewarding the Saginaw Bay and River while also contributing to the efforts of PSBW.
- Host a training session or workshop that describes how existing PSBW members can be champions for recruitment.
 - There is an art to recruitment, and all PSBW members should have a baseline understanding of this skill.
 - Establish a set of "go-to" materials that clearly and simply describe the AOC program, the Saginaw River and Bay AOC, the PSBW's role in forwarding AOC-related restoration, and how AOC restoration drives opportunities for community revitalization.
 - Convey how citizens can get involved and support AOC work.

Broaden Meaningful Community Education

- Communicate that watershed stewardship is non-partisan by conducting an informational campaign highlighting the intersection between water resources and public health, community wellness, quality of life, etc.
- Develop a speaker series on Saginaw River and Bay ecology and restoration.
 - Select speakers who represent various voices (e.g., scientists, educators, tribal representatives, planners, and water resource activists).
- Define and seek out marginalized and hard-to-reach communities.
 - These communities are often not included in community outreach efforts because they experience barriers to participation, including language, transportation, limited time, and general knowledge barriers.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Assign an EGLE staff member as an advisor for the temporary administrative committee tasked with developing subcommittees and roles/responsibilities.

- The PSBW sees EGLE as having a significant role in establishing roles for the PAC.
- Continue targeting PAC supports grants at building capacity to facilitate community education efforts and recruitment efforts.
- Build out an explicit statement that depicts the appropriate uses for PAC support grants.
- Provide regular agenda space in State PAC meetings for the PACs to have unstructured collaborative conversations about planning for and strengthening their community outreach, education, and recruitment efforts.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the Partnership for Saginaw River and Bay Watershed

1. **PAC Structure:** Define and implement a clear division of labor within PACs.
 - a. Define clear roles and responsibilities.
 - b. Document meeting structure.
 - c. Define and address any other structural ambiguity.
2. **PAC Recruitment:** Conduct strategic recruitment for PAC membership which allows for meaningful community and organizational representation within the PAC.
3. **Community Education:** Develop strategies for meaningful community outreach, develop educational and informational materials, create relationships, and engage with storytelling and local knowledge.
 - a. Organize outreach and educational events in tandem with schools, universities, municipalities, and nonprofits to cultivate higher community values of ecological health.
 - b. Cultivate a community understanding of the broader economic and social impacts of restoration.

Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the three objectives that PSBW members collectively stated their interest in implementing during Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

River Raisin PAC Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team
Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,
Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by each producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we synthesized and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups to a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the River Raisin PAC focuses on their selected recommendations: **Community Education, Life After Delisting, and Funding for Life After Delisting**. Here, we include Community Education in the first section titled **Expand Meaningful Community Outreach**, and we combine the latter two into one section titled **Solidify Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship**. Aspects of Partner Organizations are incorporated throughout the implementation plan (Appendix, Figure 1). It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

Our plan acknowledges the unique structure of the River Raisin PAC, which is housed within the Commission on Environment and Water Quality (COTE), which makes recommendations directly to the City Council and the City Manager about land and water resources within the City of Monroe. Given this, the PAC is run in accordance with an ordinance, most notably "PAC membership shall be volunteers (residents of the City) and appointed by the Commissioners" (Monroe, Michigan, Municipal Code art. IX, § 6-002 (2006)). The organizational objectives and action items described below, fit within the existing structure and ordinance of the PAC.

With the organizational objectives for the River Raisin PAC identified, we met again with members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about River Raisin PAC priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Expand Meaningful Community Outreach

The AOC program has been restoring beneficial uses for approximately 30 years, and immense progress has been made. Yet, many community members are not aware of this progress, what it means for the community, and how they can support this work. Therefore, the River Raisin PAC is interested in continuing to grow its community outreach efforts to ensure that community members continue to learn about the AOC program, the River Raisin ecosystem, and future stewardship opportunities.

Broadly, PAC members specified interest in coordinating with the Monroe County Intermediate School District (MCISD) and the Lake Erie Environmental Outreach Program (LEEOP) to continue to educate younger generations on the history of environmental degradation and subsequent clean-up work within the River Raisin AOC. Targeting youth with educational programming is a successful avenue to spark interest in the environment and to encourage younger community members to relay this valuable knowledge to adults in their lives. This creates an effective spread of information about the River Raisin ecosystem and stimulates multi-generational environmental stewardship.

The River Raisin PAC is likewise interested in educating adults by continuing to host outreach events and distributing media and information widely. Members discussed hosting an open house, in collaboration with a partner organization, to facilitate knowledge sharing between participating River Raisin affiliated organizations and community members. This would broaden and deepen appreciation for, and understanding of, the AOC work that has taken place. This could become a biennial event and ongoing outreach strategy that celebrates restoration and stewardship. Other outreach ideas include additional river clean-up and habitat maintenance events. Further, a continued social and local media presence is essential for community education. The River Raisin PAC has an informative website and is interested in getting more traffic to their website to expand their online presence.



One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Continue to include a recurring agenda item for PAC meetings focused on community outreach.
- Create a community outreach strategy that spans a five-year period.
 - Document existing projects and strategies.
 - Establish new projects and strategies.
 - Identify and include existing partners, such as the River Raisin Institute (RRI), River Raisin Watershed Council, Detroit & Western Lake Erie CWMA, and/or local municipalities in this process.
- Continue building an outreach network by strengthening developing partnerships, such as with the Downtown Business Network, the Port, or the MCISD.
- Identify River Raisin AOC educational resources that are currently available (e.g., the website and the documentary) as well as new materials that may be developed.
 - Videos or print materials like brochures, pamphlets, or news articles.
- Identify community members to recruit as possible associate members of the PAC to contribute to community outreach. Associate members may be educators, business owners, leaders in marginalized communities, or they may come from organizations like local media agencies, philanthropic organizations, or organizations doing environmental work in the River Raisin.
 - Empower these associate members by providing them with educational material for distribution to their connections.

Action Items to Achieve

Host Biennial Open House Events in Coordination with Partner Organizations

- Co-sponsor an open house event with a partner organization, like the River Raisin Institute (RRI) and/or the River Raisin Watershed Council (RRWC).
- Invite state and federal agencies, local municipalities, academics, the National Park Service, and professionals with a stake in the River Raisin to come and speak about their work in the watershed.
- Invite community members to hear from their local environmental organizations; these may include the PAC, COTE, River Raisin Institute (RRI), River Raisin Watershed Council (RRWC), and local municipalities.

Host Outreach Events

- Continue hosting clean-up, invasive species maintenance, or recreational events in partnership with other organizations or individually. Attempt to host two events per year. One will likely be the established River Clean-Up.

Work with Local News Outlets and Establish Expanded Social Media Presence

- Promote the series of articles by Tom Adamich that highlight the River Raisin.
- Establish a social media presence (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) and regularly post about ongoing successes and outreach events.

- Increase traffic to the River Raisin Legacy Project website by posting the website link to tourism sites, parks, the chamber of commerce, partner organizations, and the City of Monroe.
- Continue spreading information through public network television or local radio stations like the Monroe Public Access Cable Television.
 - This information may include brief updates about the AOC, promoting the existing documentary, or creating a podcast shared on the website and elsewhere

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate the five-year outreach strategy to assess if the PAC is on target during three-year and five-year check-ins.
 - Document lessons learned from the past three to five years of community outreach.
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
- Create a new community outreach strategy after five-years that encompasses what the PAC has been doing for the past five years and future goals.

Action Items to Achieve

Engage with Youth through a Presence in Schools

- Partner with MCISD and LEEOP.
 - Consider inviting a member of the MCISD or LEEOP to be an associate member of the PAC.
- Communicate with the MCISD and LEEOP to understand how the PAC can contribute to their existing work and programming.
- Identify currently existing habitat and species monitoring projects hosted by partner organizations.
 - Recruit high school and college students to participate in these habitat and species monitoring projects.
- Identify any habitat and species monitoring projects that should be developed in collaboration with partner organizations or individually.
- Develop a speaker series in collaboration with MCISD on River Raisin ecology and restoration.
 - Select speakers who represent a variety of voices; these may include scientists, educators, tribal representatives, planners, or water resource activities.



Solidify Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

The AOC program is designed to restore beneficial uses of the aquatic ecosystem. Once this is accomplished, AOCs delist from the program, and the PAC structure ceases to exist formally. PAC members must decide if and how to conduct ongoing stewardship. Unfortunately, there are few successful models for continued stewardship by PACs. Yet, substantial restoration and stewardship work will still be needed in the River Raisin, and PAC members want to continue contributing to this work after delisting.

River Raisin PAC members stated that after delisting, the PAC will become fully absorbed by COTE. This transition will require maintaining a network of partnerships, including existing partner organizations, businesses, and communities across the watershed. Additionally, the new entity may need to recruit associate members to assist with ongoing stewardship efforts. Ultimately, the new organization's goals (within COTE) will include maintaining previous AOC projects and promoting ongoing public engagement with the river. In terms of funding, the PAC wants to expand partnerships to cultivate a variety of funding sources.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Create a recurring agenda item that focuses on solidifying the post-delisting structure within COTE.
- Create an agenda item that focuses on developing future funding opportunities, as allowed by the existing ordinance.
- Continue thinking about PAC goals beyond the AOC program.
 - How to develop the PAC's scope of work beyond the AOC program? Which projects matter to the PAC?
 - Which projects might the PAC want to add once the AOC is delisted?
 - What personal passions and interests do PAC members have, and how can these be incorporated into ongoing stewardship work?

Action Items to Achieve

Expand Partnerships with Life After Delisting in Mind

- Identify partners that will be beneficial to joint stewardship efforts after delisting.
 - Consider how to include existing partners including, EGLE, RRI, RRWC, local municipalities, and Detroit River-Western Lake Erie CWMA in post-delisting stewardship.
 - Build new partnerships that do beneficial stewardship work within the River Raisin watershed that COTE can contribute to and support.

Expand Associate Membership with Life After Delisting in Mind

- Identify possible associate members within the River Raisin watershed who are actively involved in stewardship, education, and outreach work.
 - Discuss how COTE can support their work and possibly gain their associate membership.
- Continue community education, programming, and outreach events to identify motivated citizens that may want to contribute to the COTE's stewardship efforts through volunteering.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Continue prioritizing PAC stewardship goals outside of the AOC program.
- Evaluate the progress made towards completing one to two-year action items (e.g., solidifying delisting structure, identifying funding sources, and expanding partnerships).
 - Document lessons learned from the past three years of life after delisting planning.
 - What remains unclear regarding the post-delisting structure?
 - What are continued areas for growth? Partners? Potential funding sources?
 - What is left to do to get the PAC well-positioned for post-delisting stewardship?

Action Items to Achieve

Formalize a Plan for COTE Post-AOC Delisting

- Continue tackling questions including:
 - What are the work goals of this new group?
 - How will the group work with an expanded partner network?
 - What volunteer capacity is needed?
 - Are there any associate members needed?

Maximize Resource Capacities for Stewardship by Partnering with an Array of Organizations and Businesses

- Identify how the AOC and restoration efforts have added value to the community.
 - Create a report that provides a compelling rationale for why businesses and philanthropic foundations should contribute funding and resources to these efforts, as allowed by the existing ordinance.
- Continue creating storytelling materials (print material, video, art, etc.) to show what has already been done in the AOC.
 - Distribute these materials to try and leverage funding sources, as allowed by the existing ordinance.
- Continue communicating with local businesses and provide an update on restoration activities. Describe the economic and community value that has been created by restoration efforts.
 - Explore how businesses can get involved or contribute to these efforts.
- Continue reaching out to existing and new partners by providing an annual update letter that articulates what has been done, where the River Raisin is now, and future restoration goals.



Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by River Raisin PAC members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Expand Meaningful Community Outreach

- Designate one person to focus on social media platforms.
- Define and seek out marginalized and hard-to-reach communities.
 - These communities are often not included in community outreach efforts because they experience barriers to participation, including language, transportation, limited time, and general knowledge barriers.
- Encourage diversity within COTE by including young people, people of color, members of low-income communities, women, and other underrepresented groups as associate members.
 - Work with MCISD and LEEOP to encourage youth from all backgrounds to take part in River Raisin stewardship.

Solidify Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

- Create and maintain a list of potential funding outlets.
- Continue building a community network by identifying partnerships that the River Raisin wants to strengthen.
- Continue building a community network by identifying partnerships that the River Raisin wants to create.
- Write and distribute an annual update letter that outlines how far the PAC has come and where they are heading after delisting. The letter should be sent to agencies, partnerships, funders, and community leaders. Include the report indicating how the AOC has added value to the community.
 - End this update by asking for further collaboration and partnership opportunities.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Continue targeting PAC supports grants at building capacity for community education efforts and life after delisting strategy efforts.
- Summarize other delisted AOCs' stories regarding their delisting process, new organizational structure, and where they are today. This summary can be updated with newly delisted AOCs.
- Host a panel discussion or workshop at the next AOC conference that has tips and tools to strengthen community outreach, life after delisting planning, and funding for life after delisting options.

- Provide regular agenda space in State PAC meetings for the PACs to have unstructured collaborative conversations about how they are planning for and strengthening their community outreach, life after delisting, and funding for life after delisting efforts.
- Build out an explicit statement which depicts the appropriate uses for PAC Support Grants.

Implementation Checklist

Expanding Meaningful Community Outreach

One to Two Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organization Structures to Institute

- Continue including a recurring agenda item for PAC meetings focused on community outreach.
- Create a community outreach strategy that spans a five-year period.
- Continue building an outreach network by strengthening developing partnerships.
- Identify River Raisin AOC educational resources that are currently available as well as new materials that may need to be developed.
- Identify community members to recruit as possible associate members of the PAC to contribute to community outreach.

Action Items to Achieve

- Host biennial open house events in coordination with partner organizations.
- Continue hosting outreach events.
- Work with local news outlets and establish expanded social media presence.

Three to Five Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organization Structures to Institute

- Evaluate the five-year outreach strategy to assess if the PAC is on target.
- Create a new community outreach strategy after five-years that encompasses what the PAC has been doing for the past five years and future goals.

Action Items to Achieve

- Engage with youth through a presence in schools.

Solidify Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

One to Two Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organization Structures to Institute

- Create a recurring agenda item that focuses on solidifying the post-delisting structure within COTE.
- Create an agenda item that focuses on developing future funding opportunities, as allowed by the existing ordinance.
- Continue thinking about PAC goals beyond the AOC program.

Action Items to Achieve

- Expand partnerships with life after delisting in mind.
- Expand associate membership with life after delisting in mind.

Three to Five Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organization Structures to Institute

- Continue prioritizing PAC stewardship goals outside of the AOC program.
- Evaluate the progress made towards completing one to two-year action items.

Action Items to Achieve

- Formalize a plan for COTE post-AOC delisting.
- Maximize resource capacities for stewardship by partnering with an array of organizations and businesses.

Additional Insights

Expand Meaningful Community Outreach

- Designate one person to focus on social media platforms.
- Define and seek out marginalized and hard-to-reach communities.
- Encourage diversity within COTE by including underrepresented groups as associate members.

Solidify Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

- Create and maintain a list of potential funding outlets.
- Continue building a community network to strengthen and create partnerships.
- Write and distribute an annual update letter to showcase PAC Successes and endeavors after delisting.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the River Raisin PAC

- 1. Partner Organizations:** Develop a network of partners that will strengthen current stewardship capacity and persist after delisting.
- 2. Community Education:** Develop strategies for meaningful community outreach, develop educational and informational materials, create relationships, and engage with storytelling and local knowledge.
 - a. Organize outreach and educational events in tandem with schools, universities, municipalities, and nonprofits to cultivate higher community values of ecological health.
 - b. Cultivate a community understanding of the broader economic and social impacts of restoration.
- 3. Life After Delisting:** Strategize, prepare, and develop a vision of future organizational structure by planning for life-after delisting when exiting the AOC program.
- 4. Funding for Life After Delisting:** Build fundraising capacity from external funding sources for continued organizational capacity after delisting.

Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the four objectives that River Raisin PAC members collectively stated they wanted to implement during Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

Rouge River Advisory Council Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team
Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,
Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we synthesized and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups into a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective state field coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC) focuses on their selected recommendations: **Community Education, PAC Champions, PAC Recruitment, and Funding for Life After Delisting** (Appendix 1). Here we combine **Community Education, PAC Champions, and PAC Recruitment** into one section, titled **Broaden Scope of Community Outreach and Involvement**. Funding for Life After Delisting is in the section titled **Solidify Post-Delisting Structure and Funding Sources for Ongoing Stewardship**. It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for the RRAC identified, we met again with RRAC members and the state field coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. While all four of these recommendations were discussed as a priority, Community Education and Funding for Life After Delisting dominated the Phase II discussion; thus, these two recommendations are emphasized in this plan. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about the RRAC priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Broaden Scope of Community Outreach and Involvement

The AOC Program serves to restore beneficial uses, yet members of the public often do not realize their beneficial uses were impaired in the first place. As a result, community members are unfamiliar with what an AOC entails and may not know that their water body is a part of the broader program. Members of all three organizations represented in our interviews and conversations (Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC), Friends of the Rouge (FOTR), and Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC)) expressed their intent to involve more community members in restoring the AOC. They collectively described that individuals and organizations need more information to better understand the work of the RRAC and to subsequently get involved with restoration efforts.

While community education, PAC champions, and PAC recruitment are all distinct objectives, they each share the connection of providing outreach to, and involving members of, the Rouge River community in AOC related work. The RRAC has several resources at its disposal to help people living within the Rouge River watershed understand the AOC process and become further involved in restoring the river's beneficial uses. With the assistance of FOTR, ARC, Wayne County, and Environmental Consulting and Technology (ECT), RRAC can: (1) expand on current community outreach; (2) improve PAC recruitment to represent the watershed more broadly in their outreach efforts; and (3) improve comprehensive representation of stakeholder interests.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Coordinate information sharing, specifically for the purpose of effective community outreach between FOTR, ARC, and RRAC.
 - FOTR described that ARC does a spectacular job of managing and leading projects in the AOC. However, FOTR often felt that they did not understand the projects well enough to communicate them to the larger community.
 - Establish a communication process between members of FOTR and ARC that is facilitated through RRAC.
 - This communication process may require a single RRAC champion to facilitate information sharing between ARC and FOTR about current projects.
 - FOTR conducts community outreach and wants sufficient information about the restoration projects happening in the AOC to share with its members.
 - Together, these three organizations can provide information about AOC related projects to individuals in the watershed as a means of reaching new members and underrepresented constituents.
- Institute recurring RRAC agenda items to discuss

- (1) broadening community education,
- (2) building PAC recruitment to strategically form a team that represents the community's views and strengthens organizational networking with stakeholders,
- (3) providing a space for updates from PAC champions-or representatives of specific organizational roles/fields (e.g., SPAC meetings, community outreach, state communication, technical advisor) -and
- (4) creating a diverse team to represent and reach out broadly across the Rouge River community.

Action Items to Achieve

Community Education:

Solidify Plan to Educate and Involve the Rouge River Watershed Community More Broadly

- Formulate a plan specific to RRAC for community outreach, complementing and further supporting community education efforts of FOTR.
 - Reach out to underrepresented communities, specifically those within Dearborn and Detroit, to have conversations about increasing their involvement with RRAC.
 - Discuss how RRAC can be more inclusive of these communities and ultimately include them in AOC related projects.
 - Discuss questions such as:
 - Are there roadblocks to participation such as funding, language, transportation, limited time, and/or general knowledge barriers?
 - How can these barriers be addressed?

Improve Outreach to Local Schools and Colleges

- Utilize FOTR's Rouge Education Project to expand programming to local colleges and universities such as the University of Michigan-Dearborn, Lawrence Tech, and Henry Ford College.

Create Educational Materials

- Increase awareness of RRAC and the AOC program by facilitating the creation and distribution of educational materials such as online articles and/or storyboards, newspaper articles, radio and podcast stories, mailings, or print materials.
 - Establish a marketing and communication subcommittee to oversee the development and distribution of educational materials.
 - Partner with FOTR to create and distribute educational materials; FOTR already does this work successfully and can help facilitate this process.
 - Create public viewing points with signage designating AOC projects (e.g., fish passage at the Henry Ford Estate Dam).
- Establish a more prevalent online presence to reach a broader audience across the watershed.
 - Oversee the creation of RRAC social media profiles to increase the visibility of AOC projects.

- Publish the content and location of AOC projects and how they will restore beneficial uses to the watershed on the RRAC website.
 - Update the website throughout the project process.
 - Increase traffic to the RRAC website by posting the website link to tourism sites, parks, local universities, chambers of commerce, and other partner organizations.

PAC Recruitment:

Seek Outside Funding to Pay for a FOTR Staff Member

- Pursue outside funding sources such as dues, donations, membership, endowment, gifts, and/or grants to recruit a FOTR staff member to conduct sufficient outreach.

Plan to Supplement Long-Standing RRAC Members with New Voices

- Conduct recruitment through local student organizations.
 - Partner with community service-based organizations such as the National Honor Society, Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts of America, and Key Club International.
 - While it is difficult to change classroom curricula in K-12 schools, several extracurricular activities could encourage river stewardship to recruit young professionals into the field.
 - Partner with college and university student-led groups, clubs, and environmental studies related departments.

PAC Champions:

Formally Recognize Champions in Differing Organizational Roles

- Define clear roles for champions within the RRAC (e.g., technical advisor, community outreach chair, stormwater manager, grant writer).
 - Appoint an RRAC community outreach champion to spearhead efforts to reach out to underrepresented communities.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate the defined communication chain between FOTR, ARC, and RRAC focused on community outreach by addressing questions such as:
 - Does FOTR feel like they are getting enough information about current projects that the ARC is managing?
 - Is FOTR able to effectively communicate the purpose of these projects to the larger community?
 - Is FOTR able to effectively promote and celebrate this work publicly as a means of attracting new partners and possible recruits who may be interested in the AOC work?
 - Does the ARC feel like they understand the community outreach and education efforts that FOTR is championing?
 - Does the ARC feel like they understand how the larger community sees current projects that are taking place in the AOC?

- Is it clear to the ARC what kind of information FOTR needs and wants about AOC projects?
- Evaluate the coordination between FOTR, ARC, and RRAC around community education, PAC recruitment, and PAC champions by addressing questions such as:
 - Is there a clear understanding of how these three entities should interact, coordinate, and support each other in their specialty areas (e.g., community outreach, managing AOC projects, and BUI removal)?
 - Do RRAC community education, recruitment, and project/ technical champions feel supported by FOTR and ARC?
 - How can coordination be strengthened between FOTR, ARC, and RRAC to produce more effective community outreach and PAC recruitment?
- Evaluate the progress made towards completing one to two-year action items.
 - Document lessons learned from the past two years of broadening the scope of community outreach and involvement.
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
 - What are continued areas for growth? More partners? More potential funding sources?

Action Items to Achieve

Community Education:

Update the Long-Term Strategy to Educate and Include the Watershed Community More Broadly

- Update the community outreach plan after five years that encompasses lessons learned from the previous five years and future goals.
 - In this updated strategy, address questions such as:
 - Are underrepresented communities such as Dearborn and Detroit better included in community outreach programs and AOC projects?
 - Which community outreach strategies have worked well? Which have not?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
 - Which community leaders and champions need to be recruited to fill gaps in representation?

PAC Recruitment:

Establish Watershed-Wide Representation in RRAC Membership

- Identify which groups and communities are not currently represented in the RRAC.
- Discuss why specific groups and communities are not being represented in the RRAC.
- Create a plan to include individuals with varying interests in the RRAC (e.g., stormwater management, endangered species, habitat restoration, equity, public health).
- Create a plan to include underrepresented groups and communities within the RRAC by addressing questions such as:
 - What is the best way to reach out to underrepresented groups?

- What are the interests of specific underrepresented groups and how can their interests be incorporated into AOC-related work?
- What are the barriers to participation in the RRAC? How can these barriers be addressed to create a more inclusive and diverse group?

PAC Champions:

Evaluate the Champion Structure within the RRAC

- Evaluate the roles of the RRAC champions (e.g., technical advisor, stormwater manager, community outreach organizer) by addressing questions such as:
 - Are current champions feeling supported by the RRAC?
 - Are there certain sectors that need a champion?
 - Is there an effective mechanism for champions to report their work to RRAC?
 - Does everyone understand and agree with the roles and responsibilities of each champion?



Solidify Post-Delisting Structure and Funding Sources for Ongoing Stewardship

The AOC program is designed to restore beneficial uses of the aquatic ecosystem. Once this is accomplished, AOCs delist from the program, and the PAC structure ceases to formally exist. RRAC members must decide if and how they will continue their stewardship activities. While the Rouge River AOC is seven to ten years from delisting, the RRAC members expressed an interest in discussing the current structure of the advisory council and the potential structure of the RRAC post-delisting. The two major organizations represented in the RRAC, Alliance of the Rouge Communities (ARC) and Friends of the Rouge (FOTR), expressed confusion about the nature of their current role in the RRAC. To effectively plan for delisting, RRAC members agreed that they need to better define (1) the current structure of the RRAC, (2) the future structure of the post-delisting entity, (3) how the post-delisting entity will be funded, and (4) what the goals of the post-delisting entity will be.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Collectively determine an effective structure for the current RRAC.
 - Which entity is the most appropriate umbrella organization for the RRAC at present (e.g., ARC, FOTR, or other)?
 - What structural elements of the RRAC need to be revisited?
 - Which RRAC dynamics are effective? Which are ineffective?
 - How can the RRAC effectively continue to remove BUIs while facilitating expanded education and stewardship efforts? How will the RRAC balance both technical and social needs?
- Host a visioning session involving the entire RRAC to discuss life after delisting structure and funding sources.
 - How will the post-delisting entity be structured once the AOC is delisted?
 - Will it be housed under ARC?
 - Will it be housed under FOTR?
 - What will this entity's mission be, and how will it complement the work of FOTR and the ARC?
 - Will it exist at all?
 - How will this entity financially maintain itself (e.g., dues, donations, membership, endowment, gifts, and/or grants)?
 - Which RRAC members are still interested in participating in future stewardship efforts once the AOC is delisted?
 - Which stewardship efforts are essential to RRAC members post-delisting (e.g., stormwater, community outreach, monitoring, maintenance)?
 - What kind of individuals and professionals need to be recruited as champions?
 - What additional partnerships are needed to support future stewardship?

- Create a recurring agenda item for RRAC meetings focused on life after delisting structure and funding opportunities.
 - The RRAC should revisit this conversation at sixth-month intervals to check on the trajectory of planning for life after delisting.

Action Items to Achieve

Cultivate External Funding Sources with Life After Delisting in Mind

- Build external fundraising capacity for the post-delisting entity that will eventually house the RRAC (e.g., ARC or FOTR).
 - Continue creating materials (e.g., print material, video, art) to tell the stories of restoration and rehabilitation within the AOC.
 - This task should be facilitated through the RRAC and designated to a willing member or organization (ARC or FOTR) represented in the RRAC.
 - Actively distribute the materials to potential donors, community members, and grantmaking organizations to establish funding sources.
 - Write and distribute an annual update letter that outlines RRAC progress, delisting trajectory, and future vision. The letter should be sent to businesses, agencies, partners, funders, and community leaders.
 - Describe the compelling economic and community values created by restoration efforts; utilize this letter to promote ongoing stewardship to maintain and further develop these values.
 - End this update with a call for further collaboration and partnership opportunities.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate the structure of the RRAC after three years.
 - Did the initial conversation about improving RRAC structure catalyze structural changes?
 - If so, is the current RRAC structure functioning well?
 - If not, are there structural changes that should be made?
 - Do any structural elements of the RRAC need to be revisited?
 - Which dynamics within the RRAC are effective and which are not?
- Agree on and document a post-delisting structure by answering the following:
 - What will be the formal structure of the post-delisting entity?
 - How will FOTR and the ARC engage in restoration and stewardship efforts post-delisting?
 - How will these institutions interact?
 - Is it clear how the post-delisting entity will find funding? Is funding capacity for the post-delisting entity being strengthened?

- What kind of individuals and professionals need to be recruited as ongoing members?
- What additional partnerships are needed for future stewardship?

Action Items to Achieve

Plan and Execute Ongoing Stewardship Projects Desired by the Community

- Host a visioning session with community members within three years to understand what restoration, education, and stewardship activities they want to see in their community.
- Document goals of the community and use these to inform a priority list of projects.
 - Create shovel-ready project plans to show the local community and local institutions the work that will be prioritized post-delisting.

Expand Membership of Underrepresented Communities with Life After Delisting in Mind

- Identify champions within the Rouge River watershed who are actively involved in stewardship, education, and outreach work with underrepresented communities.
 - Cultivate a relationship with these champions to build trust within underrepresented communities.
 - Discuss how the RRAC can support their work and gain their membership.
 - Consider how champions in underrepresented communities can play a leadership role in the post-delisting entity to make it as inclusive and diverse as possible.



Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by RRAC members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Broaden Scope of Community Outreach and Involvement

- Incorporate an educational component to outreach events and activities that covers the breadth of Rouge River AOC work.
- Address equity issues with regards to education, outreach, membership, and partners.
 - Create a priority list of projects by assigning points based on an agreed-upon rubric.
 - This will ensure that the projects are designated based on need.
 - Agree as a group on a list of consultants that are best qualified to assist in these efforts.
- Collaborate with current partners (e.g., Wayne County Environmental Services and Parks Divisions, Washtenaw County Drain Commission) to find funding for outreach efforts.
 - Expand these efforts to gain new sponsors and donors.
- Publish documents highlighting community outreach and involvement successes.
 - Work on a joint newsletter at SPAC meetings that include all the PACs in Michigan.
 - Send these documents to EGLE, EPA, and GLNPO offices to illustrate the necessity of funding outreach and education activities.

Solidify Delisting Structure and Funding Sources for Ongoing Stewardship

- Form a subcommittee that focuses on life after delisting structure and specific funding opportunities.
 - Identify two to three people from the RRAC that are particularly interested in championing stewardship after delisting.
 - Identify people outside of the RRAC to be recruited for the newly formed subcommittee on life after delisting.
 - Which sectors or communities are lacking representation?
 - Who can fill these gaps from outside of the PAC?
 - What new ideas and capabilities can each new partner bring to the subcommittee?
- Create a funding opportunity calendar for the upcoming year.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Revisit and clarify EGLE's role in AOC work (and beyond) and discuss clear roles and responsibilities for both the RRAC and EGLE.

- Target PAC support grants at building the backbone capacity of the RRAC so that they can better invest in community education efforts and life after delisting strategizing.
- Build out an explicit statement which depicts the appropriate uses for PAC Support Grants.
- Have the state field coordinator provide an update and ask for the RRAC needs at each RRAC meeting to continue building a relationship between the state and the RRAC.
- Address who will maintain continuous improvement and enforcement of stormwater and invasive species management post-delisting.
- Discuss how EGLE can support various permitting compliance activities that the RRAC cares about (e.g., NPDES, MS4, and CSO).
 - Develop avenues for two-way communication about both RRAC and EGLE's permitting compliance roles.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the Rouge River Advisory Council

- 1. PAC Champions:** Formally recognize a PAC champion in differing organizational roles/fields (i.e., SPAC meetings, community outreach, state communication, technical advisor).
- 2. PAC Recruitment:** Conduct strategic recruitment for PAC membership which allows for meaningful community and organizational representation within the PAC.
- 3. Community Education:** Develop strategies for meaningful community outreach, develop educational and informational materials, create relationships, and engage with storytelling and local knowledge.
 - i. Organize outreach and educational events in tandem with schools, universities, municipalities, and nonprofits to cultivate higher community values of ecological health.
 - ii. Cultivate a community understanding of the broader economic and social impacts of restoration.
- 4. Funding for Life After Delisting:** Build fundraising capacity from external funding sources for continued organizational capacity after delisting.

Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the four objectives that Rouge River Advisory Council members collectively stated they wanted to implement throughout Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

St. Clair River BPAC Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team
Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,
Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by each producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we synthesized and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups into a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the St. Clair River BPAC focuses on their selected recommendations: **PAC Recruitment, Life After Delisting, and Funding for Life After Delisting** (Appendix, Figure 1). Here, we cover PAC Recruitment in the first section titled **Recruit New Partners and Members for Increased BPAC Capacity**. We combine the latter two into one section titled **Solidify Post-Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship**. It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for the St. Clair River BPAC identified, we met again with BPAC members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about the St. Clair River BPAC priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Recruit New Partners and Members for Increased BPAC Capacity

The AOC program has been restoring beneficial uses for approximately 30 years, and immense progress has been made. In the St. Clair River BPAC, core members champion restoration and stewardship in the bi-national St. Clair River AOC. While these members are highly devoted to their BPAC work, they seek broader and increased membership. BPAC members want diverse and strategic membership representing the different sectors of the St. Clair River watershed communities (e.g., local government, agriculture, industry, students, and the general public). A larger, more diverse team of BPAC members will broaden technical and networking capacity to improve restoration and stewardship work within the AOC.

To expand membership, BPAC members want to build an educational component into BPAC meetings for visiting local residents. This might include a guest speaker to discuss prevalent issues that visiting residents care about (e.g., agriculture and industry best practices, theme-based outreach and curriculum, and highlighting PAC restoration successes). These topics should energize visiting residents and encourage new membership and support. BPAC members also want to market the AOC and the BPAC better; the AOC is a structurally complex program, and BUI removal is technical. Given this, BPAC members expressed a desire to package the BPAC work in an approachable manner to gain new members and supporters. Furthermore, multiple sectors of the St. Clair River watershed communities (e.g., industry, agriculture, and local government) are no longer represented in the BPAC. BPAC members are interested in a targeted effort to gain members representing these sectors to diversify and strengthen the BPAC and Friends of the St. Clair River. Lastly, BPAC members want to include young people and students more intentionally by expanding AOC information and programming presence in school clubs and extracurricular programs, as well as incorporating an internship program into the BPAC.



One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Publicize BPAC meetings widely to encourage guest visitation.
 - Invite community members to sit in on BPAC meetings, especially now that they are being held on Zoom.
 - Use Zoom to bring people into a BPAC meeting who are either pressed for time or uncomfortable attending in person.
 - Once meetings return to in-person, host meetings at varying locations to encourage attendance from diverse partner organizations, new community members, or local government employees.
 - Build an educational element into BPAC meetings quarterly to interest public guests.
 - This targeted education might include:
 - hosting guest speakers at meetings that represent different sectors (e.g., local government, industry, agriculture, students, the general public);
 - incorporating theme-based outreach or curriculum (e.g., public drinking water safety);
 - or having a section of the meetings devoted to discussing BPAC successes.
 - Follow up with visiting residents via email to describe BPAC work and possible membership.
- Create an agenda item to address strategic recruitment for BPAC membership to allow for meaningful community and organizational representation within the BPAC.
 - Discuss the different membership tiers within the BPAC.
 - Differentiate between new BPAC members, supporters, and participants.
 - Strategize how to increase all membership tiers.
 - Review strategic recruitment efforts and strategies on how to keep recruitment at the forefront of the conversation.
 - Discuss whether to reinstate the membership subcommittee.

Action Items to Achieve

Market the BPAC to Recruit New Members

- Create materials (e.g., online/newspaper articles, radio/podcast stories, and print materials) that market the AOC program and the critical role played by the BPAC.
 - Materials should include information on:
 - the purpose and history of the AOC program;
 - structure of the AOC program, including the state and the federal government's roles;
 - the St.Clair River AOC and the BPAC;
 - the specific values to the community that are being restored and gained through the program; and
 - how citizens, organizations, and businesses can get involved and contribute.

- Distribute these materials through the Friends of the St. Clair River’s outreach programs and extensive partnerships.

Recruit New and Diverse Stakeholders into the BPAC

- Strategically recruit new members who represent diverse sectors in the St. Clair River watershed communities (e.g., local government, industry, agriculture, students, and the general public) to broaden BPAC skill sets and professional networks.
 - Strategize the best way to reach specific sectors of the St. Clair community.
 - Ask questions such as:
 - Why is this sector not currently involved in the BPAC?
 - How would this sector gain value by being part of the BPAC?
 - How can this value be conveyed convincingly?
 - Reach out directly to local government officials with a proposal describing how they can feasibly get involved in the BPAC and support AOC-related work.
 - Describe what the local government gains by being involved.
 - Update and maintain the BPAC membership list by identifying who is actively engaged, partially engaged, and no longer active.
 - Strategize how to re-engage members who partially participate in the BPAC to reenergize them around community stewardship and AOC restoration efforts.

Create a Toolkit that Allows All BPAC Members to Recruit

- Host a training session or workshop that describes how existing BPAC members can be champions for recruitment.
 - There is an art to recruitment, and all BPAC members should have a baseline understanding of this skill.
 - Establish a set of “go-to” materials that clearly describe the AOC program, the St. Clair River AOC, the BPAC’s role in forwarding AOC-related restoration, and how AOC restoration drives opportunities for community revitalization.
 - Convey how citizens can get involved and support BPAC work.
- Develop a one- to two-year recruitment strategy for the BPAC.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate progress made towards completing one- to two-year action items and organizational structures (e.g., creating an educational component of BPAC meetings, marketing the BPAC, recruiting diverse stakeholders into the BPAC, and creating a toolkit so all BPAC members can recruit).
 - Document lessons learned from the past two years of recruitment efforts.
- Discuss hiring a consultant to strengthen recruitment and membership within the BPAC.
- Create biannual recruitment events (e.g., field trips to St. Clair River AOC sites where restoration is visible and prominent, programming describing the status of drinking water in the St. Clair River watershed communities, or workshops for farmers on environmentally friendly agricultural practices).
 - Publicize these events widely and market them as informational events.

- Target these events at different sectors (e.g., local government, industry, agriculture, students, and the general public).
- Follow-up with guests after the event to describe possible membership into the BPAC, volunteer opportunities with Friends of the St. Clair River, and where attendees can donate to Friends of the St. Clair River.

Action Items to Achieve

Improve Outreach to Local K-12 Schools and Colleges

- Build support for the St. Clair River AOC through local student organizations.
 - Partner with community service-based organizations (e.g., the National Honor Society, Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts of America, and Key Club International).
 - Partner with community college and university student-led groups, clubs, and environmental studies-related departments.
 - Given that the AOC is part of the southern Lake Huron -Saint Clair River - Lake St. Clair system, there is an incredible opportunity to expose youth to this world-class aquatic ecosystem.
 - Expand on existing experiential education and field trips (e.g., "Classroom" along the Blue Water River Walk or taking kids to see lake sturgeon).
 - Brainstorm aquatic science, restoration, research, or other possible projects that youth could lead to contribute to the AOC.
 - While it is challenging to change classroom curricula, several extracurricular activities could encourage river stewardship that recruits young professionals into the field.
 - Train teachers in local school systems on watershed stewardship.
 - Facilitate professional development for teachers so they can educate and foster future stewards.

Create an Internship Program for Young Riverkeepers

- Create and promote BPAC internship opportunities for young environmentalists and professionals to gain experience in stewarding the St. Clair River while also contributing to BPAC efforts.
 - Ensure that the internship program is inclusive and attracts interns from diverse backgrounds.
 - Friends of the St. Clair River currently hosts a Science Communication Intern and could provide guidance on how to onboard BPAC interns.
- Create a listserv in collaboration with partner organizations and publish internships, fellowships, and career opportunities via email for young environmentalists and professionals.

Solidify Post-Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

The AOC program is designed to restore beneficial uses of the aquatic ecosystem. Once this is accomplished, AOCs delist from the program, and the PAC structure ceases to exist formally. BPAC members must decide if and how to conduct ongoing stewardship. Unfortunately, there are few successful models for continued stewardship by PACs. Yet, St. Clair River BPAC members want to chart a path forward and find a way to continue stewardship after delisting as a new formal entity.

The St. Clair River BPAC has already made strides to prepare for stewardship after delisting, including securing a grant to expand this work. That being said, interviewees mentioned that they want to put more effort into communicating with partners. This communication will build structure and capacity for finding funding for post-delisting stewardship efforts. Overall, BPAC members expressed an interest in outlining what life after delisting will look like structurally through developing a strategic plan. In addition to structure, the strategic plan should depict which partnerships need to be developed to help cultivate funding and increase stewardship capacity for life after delisting. Continuing to build partnerships after delisting will create a durable organization.



One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Create a delisting subcommittee using funding from a recently won grant to solidify a post-delisting structure and build funding sources.
 - Provide time for updates from the delisting subcommittee during BPAC meetings.
- Institute a grant writing subcommittee to pursue funding for current and ongoing stewardship efforts and to develop a set of long-term funding sources for stewardship after delisting.
 - Appoint a grant-writing champion responsible for facilitating the grant writing processes, sending in grant applications, and being the main point of contact.
 - Develop and maintain a database with documented funding resources and schedules that can be shared and expanded upon.
 - Create an agenda item that focuses on tracking and addressing future funding opportunities.
- Continue incorporating BPAC updates into Friends of the St. Clair River meetings and vice versa.
- Communicate with Friends of the St. Clair River to ensure the BPAC is included in the 2022 update of their strategic plan.
 - How can the Friends of the St. Clair River 2022 strategic plan incorporate the BPAC's post-delisting role and funding plan?

Action Items to Achieve

Create a Strategic Plan for Delisting

- Discuss BPAC goals that lead toward delisting from the AOC Program, such as a timeline for BUI removals, gaining funding sources beyond PAC grants (e.g., dues, donations, membership, fee for service, endowments, or gifts), and determining the BPAC's structure after delisting.
 - Address questions including:
 - What organization will house the BPAC after delisting? Will the BPAC remain independent?
 - How will the BPAC's relationship with Friends of the St. Clair River shift?
 - How will the structure of the BPAC shift with regards to current partners?
 - How will the BPAC develop its scope of work beyond the AOC program?
 - How can the BPAC maintain completed St. Clair River AOC projects?
 - What aspects of the BPAC (e.g., restoration, education, and outreach) are essential to maintain as the organization shifts?
 - What personal passions and interests do BPAC members have, and how can they be incorporated into ongoing stewardship work?
- Create a five-year strategic plan for delisting; incorporate the BPAC goals discussed above.
 - Draft a goal-driven working document that can be assessed periodically as the organization moves toward delisting.

Communicate the Importance of Ongoing Stewardship After Delisting

- Communicate the community implications of St. Clair River AOC work to the public.
 - Identify partners within the St. Clair River network who can showcase the broader community benefits of restoring beneficial uses.
 - Strategize how to talk with the public about the status of drinking water quality.
 - Utilize social media to expand public understanding of watershed restoration work.
 - Describe what stewardship work remains to be done after the AOC delists.
- Communicate biannually with partners (e.g., EPA, NOAA, and Friends of the St. Clair River) concerning delisting and maintaining joint stewardship efforts after exiting the AOC program.
 - Determine which partners are currently attending BPAC meetings and send invitations to those who do not attend to expand BPAC resources and viewpoints.
 - Keep partners up to date on BPAC projects, accomplishments, and other activities by providing them with materials (e.g., progress reports or newsletters) to support the BPAC's education and outreach efforts.

Solidify A Post-Delisting Plan with Canadian BPAC Members

- Consider how binational communication with the Canadian BPAC members will continue after delisting (e.g., continue meeting over Zoom for ease of contact).
 - Institute an annual meeting that continues after delisting.
 - Agenda items and topics for discussion should include:
 - Updates on BUI removal and BPAC functioning.
 - Understanding joint priorities and concerns for continued St. Clair River remediation, restoration, and community revitalization post-delisting.
 - What work needs to be completed post-delisting?
 - Understanding both the U.S. and Canadian delisting timelines.
 - How do they differ?
 - How can BPAC members collaborate and continue to support one another even though they will not delist at the same time?
 - Consider how the Friends groups in the U.S. and Canada can collaborate to plan for delisting and continued stewardship.
 - Provide updates on funding opportunities.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate progress made towards completing one- to two-year action items and organizational structures (e.g., creating a delisting subcommittee, creating a grant writing subcommittee, communicating the importance of ongoing stewardship after delisting, and solidifying a post-delisting plan with the Canadian BPAC members).
 - Document lessons learned from the past two years of delisting efforts.
- Work with Michigan AOC Program staff to develop a "Delisting Best Practices" document for other PACs and the AOC Program as a whole.

- Discuss questions such as
 - What has worked throughout the process?
 - What are the Dos and Don'ts of delisting according to the St. Clair River BPAC?
- Bring this to SPAC meetings for discussion and disseminate through the State office.

Action Items to Achieve

Evaluate the Strategic Plan for Delisting

- Evaluate the strategy for delisting.
 - Have the goals of this document been met in a way that builds upon existing St. Clair River AOC stewardship efforts?
 - How has it expanded beyond beneficial use restoration (e.g., improved the community perception of the St. Clair River)?
 - Has a concrete delisting plan been developed collaboratively with Friends of the St. Clair River?
 - Is it clear how the post-delisting entity will fund itself?
 - Is it clear how the post-delisting entity will engage with Canadian BPAC members?



Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by St. Clair River BPAC members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Recruit New Partners and Members for Increased BPAC Capacity

- Define and seek out underrepresented communities that experience barriers to participation in river enjoyment and stewardship (e.g., language, culture, history, transportation, limited time, and general knowledge).
 - Continue focusing on increasing diversity within the St. Clair River BPAC by actively recruiting young people, people of color, low-income communities, LGBTQ residents, and other underrepresented groups to be members, supporters, or participants.
- Develop an annual speaker series (virtual or in-person) on St. Clair River ecology and restoration at high schools, local community colleges and universities, or individual communities within the watershed.
 - Select speakers representing various voices (e.g., scientists, educators, tribal representatives, planners, or water resource activists).

Solidify Post-Delisting Structure for Ongoing Stewardship

- Utilize State PAC meetings to discuss the delisting process.
 - Create a space for open conversation since other PACs likely have similar questions and helpful ideas.
 - Listen with an open perspective for how to better the process, given what other PACs are experiencing.
- Critically evaluate how the BPAC can increase public awareness of water values and reinvigorate pride in the St. Clair River as a delisted AOC.
 - Develop a storyboard on social media and/or on the St. Clair River BPAC website.
 - Collect stories that highlight recreating on and enjoying the St. Clair River.
 - Keep the communities informed on the drinking water situation and provide transparency.
 - Incorporate positive messaging into all educational materials.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Support the St. Clair River AOC's delisting efforts by helping them gain a clearer understanding of the delisting process and what life after delisting can look like.
 - Provide an update on how other AOCs have delisted and what kinds of stewardship or maintenance is happening in those delisted AOCs now.
 - Even if the answer is nothing, other PACs will benefit from learning why other AOCs have not maintained their stewardship efforts.

- Provide the St. Clair River BPAC with a timeline on where they are at in the delisting process, so they can be well-prepared when the time comes.
- Host a panel discussion or workshop at the next AOC conference with tips and tools to strengthen PAC recruitment, planning for life after delisting, and funding options for life after delisting.
- Provide regular agenda space in State PAC meetings for the PACs to have unstructured collaborative conversations about strengthening their recruitment strategies and planning for life after delisting.
- Build out an explicit statement that depicts the appropriate uses for PAC support grants.
- Create a State PAC committee devoted to delisting best practices.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the St. Clair BPAC

- 1. PAC Recruitment:** Conduct strategic recruitment for PAC membership which allows for meaningful community and organizational representation within the PAC.
 - 2. Life After Delisting:** Strategize, prepare, and develop a vision of future organizational structure by planning for life-after delisting when exiting the AOC program.
 - 3. Funding for Life After Delisting:** Build fundraising capacity from external funding sources for continued organizational capacity after delisting.
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Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the three objectives that St. Clair River BPAC members collectively stated they wanted to implement during Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.

Torch Lake Public Action Council Organizational Priorities



April 2021

SEAS 2021 Master's Project Team
Isabella Bledsoe, James Polidori,
Emily Rau, & Paige Schurr

Background

Our team is the fourth master's research project from the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (together with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and individual Michigan Public Advisory Councils (PACs)) working to maximize the effectiveness and impact of Michigan's Areas of Concern (AOC) Program. The previous project groups laid the groundwork by each producing a set of recommendations for the state agency and the PACs, addressing:

- what attributes of PACs make them most effective;
- how PACs should prepare for long-term stewardship after AOC delisting;
- and how the state can support PACs that are a long way from delisting.

While valuable, these recommendations are challenging to turn into action because implementation is an abstract process. Each PAC is unique, with a specific geography, history, organizational structure, and capacity; these attributes create a range of hurdles for taking action on recommendations. To simplify, we synthesized and reduced the 24 recommendations made by previous project groups into a shortlist of eight.

Interviews with PAC members and their respective AOC coordinators helped us determine which recommendations each PAC is interested in addressing. Accordingly, this implementation plan for the Torch Lake Public Action Council (TLPAC) focuses on their selected recommendations: **Community Education** and **Partner Organizations** (Appendix, Figure 1). We discussed Community Education in the first section titled, **Expand Meaningful Community Outreach**, and Partner Organizations in the second section titled, **Solidify Partner Organizations for Ongoing Stewardship**. A third recommendation, **PAC Structure**, is incorporated throughout the implementation plan (Appendix, Figure 1). It is important to note that these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. Each recommendation contributes to an integrated and holistic approach towards active and durable organizations.

With the organizational objectives for the TLPAC identified, we met again with members and the AOC coordinator to collectively identify possible implementation strategies. In this document, we: (1) summarize what we learned about TLPAC priority objectives; and (2) outline concrete implementation strategies to accomplish these objectives.

Expand Meaningful Community Outreach

The AOC program has been restoring beneficial uses for approximately 30 years, and immense progress has been made. Yet, many community members are not aware of this progress, what it means for the community, and how they can support this work. Therefore, the TLPAC is interested in working on outreach efforts to ensure that community members continue to learn about the AOC program, the Torch Lake ecosystem, and future stewardship opportunities.

In 2016, the TLPAC went through a restructuring and leadership change that ultimately renewed their interest in community outreach. The TLPAC wants to expand its community outreach efforts, making it crucial to create a strategic foundation to develop outreach resources with the local community's interests in mind. The one- to two-year organizational structures and action items provided in this plan are the initial foundation. The three- to five-year organizational structures and action items are the added support to improve and expand upon these community outreach efforts.

TLPAC members specified their interest in developing a community outreach strategic plan, creating education materials and outreach events, and providing a platform for community members to ask questions about the Torch Lake AOC. Producing a strategic plan will establish goals and targets for community outreach and help the TLPAC focus its efforts on meeting them. Revisiting this plan every few years will enable the TLPAC to see what they have accomplished, prioritize objectives that still need to be done, and spark new ideas. Next, TLPAC members discussed creating educational materials and outreach events to deepen the local community's appreciation for and understanding of the Torch Lake AOC. Members are also interested in sharing their knowledge with a broader audience by submitting stories about AOC projects to local newspapers and news stations. Finally, TLPAC members discussed establishing a platform for community members to raise questions about the Torch Lake AOC. This platform would be a new tab on the TLPAC website with a dashboard to capture questions and display corresponding answers.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Host a visioning session with the entire TLPAC to outline member's interests for community outreach. This is to ensure all members have a shared view of the outreach goals of the TLPAC.
 - Who is the target audience for community outreach?
 - What knowledge should be shared with the audience?
 - Which communication mediums and events should be created to share knowledge with this audience?
 - Which existing communication avenues (e.g., Facebook, radio stations, newspapers, or news stations) should be used to share knowledge?
 - How can current and new partnerships aid in the development of outreach efforts?

- Develop and document a community outreach strategic plan to accomplish the goals created during the visioning session.
 - Outline this process by addressing these objectives:
 - Compile a list of the TLPAC’s current outreach efforts.
 - Strategize how to continue to develop the TLPAC’s outreach efforts within two, three, and five years.
 - Determine how outreach efforts will be financially supported.
 - Determine what obstacles (besides funding) the TLPAC will need to overcome.
 - Define and seek out new partnerships, knowledge, skills, or resources to help with funding efforts.
 - Include a work plan with tasks, timelines, and designated responsibilities.
- Form a community outreach subcommittee to focus on outreach efforts.
 - Identify two to three people from the TLPAC interested in championing outreach efforts.
 - Identify people outside of the TLPAC to be recruited for this subcommittee.
 - What current and potential future partner organizations (e.g., Michigan Technical University (MTU), Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC), and local school districts) can the TLPAC work with to co-sponsor an outreach event or create educational material?
 - Who can assist the TLPAC with finding funding opportunities?
 - What new ideas and capabilities can each prospective partner bring to the subcommittee?
- Develop a funding strategy through the existing grant subcommittee.
 - Create and maintain a list of potential funding sources.
 - Outline a plan to acquire funding to hire an outreach specialist.
- Create a recurring agenda item for TLPAC meetings focused on outreach efforts.

Action Items to Achieve

Work with Local News Outlets

- Promote information about project progress and outreach events through the local media (e.g., newspapers, news stations, and radio stations).
 - Research and develop a list of local news outlets that cover the Torch Lake AOC.
 - Identify a point-of-contact (e.g., newspaper editor or news station talent team) for submissions.

Create a Platform for Local Community Questions

- Update the TLPAC website with a new tab that enables community members to submit questions about the AOC on the dashboard.
 - Provide answers to questions on the dashboard with additional information about the TLPAC to spark interest in becoming involved.
 - Identify a TLPAC member to be responsible for answering these questions in a timely fashion.

- Utilize community members' questions to inform TLPAC members on what topics should be addressed in educational materials, outreach events, and news articles.
- Publicize the dashboard widely to inform community members that this is an avenue for them to ask questions.
 - Include references to this tab in educational materials (e.g., pamphlets and news articles) to inform the community about this platform.

Circulate Information about Torch Lake AOC Clean-up and Restoration

- Create a tri-fold pamphlet that provides fundamental information about the Torch Lake AOC.
 - Outline the history of degradation, restoration, beach and fish advisories, and lake ecology.
 - Provide information on how community members can get involved with the TLPAC.
 - Distribute pamphlets via mail and online platforms.
 - Display pamphlets at local events and Torch Lake's three municipal parks.
- Establish a social media presence by creating a TLPAC Facebook page.
 - Post about various TLPAC activities and projects (e.g., ongoing restoration successes, fish/beach advisories, and outreach events).
- Improve scientific translation by ensuring all educational materials are geared towards citizens without a background in science.

Host an Annual Outreach Event

- Develop and institute an annual clean-up, invasive species removal, or recreational event.
 - Include scheduled time at the beginning of events to teach attendees about the history, ecology, and restoration of the Torch Lake ecosystem.
 - Strategize on the type of event, budget, location, promotion, and responsibilities.
 - What kinds of events do citizens like?
 - Which locations are most popular or accessible?
 - What avenues of promotion get the greatest response rate?
 - This could be an opportunity to co-sponsor outreach events with partner organizations (e.g., Keweenaw National Historical Park, KBIC, or MTU).

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate progress made towards completing one- to two-year organizational structures and action items during three- and five-year check-ins.
 - Document lessons learned from the past years of community outreach efforts.
 - What has worked well? What has not?
 - Which organizational structures or action items does the TLPAC still need to implement?
 - What additional ideas have surfaced?
 - Who are potential new outreach champions or partner organizations to collaborate with?

Action Items to Achieve

Continue Working with Local News Outlets

- Facilitate the publication of at least two stories annually about progress made in the Torch Lake AOC.
- Write op-ed articles to local newspapers to change the public's understanding of and opinion on Torch Lake AOC restoration.

Update the Community Outreach Strategic Plan

- Assess the status of the community outreach strategic plan's initial objectives after three, four, and five years. Ensure that one community outreach subcommittee meeting during years three, four, and five revisits these objectives.
 - Compile a list of the TLPAC's current progress towards outreach efforts.
 - Strategize how the TLPAC will expand these efforts within two, three, and five years.
 - Determine how these efforts will be financially supported.
 - Determine what obstacles the TLPAC will need to overcome.
 - Define and seek out new partnerships, knowledge, skills, or resources to help with outreach efforts.
- Create new tasks for each iteration of the plan to build a collaborative and enthusiastic atmosphere.
 - Make a work plan for each task that includes a timeline and designates responsibilities.

Continue Circulating Information about Torch Lake AOC Clean-up and Restoration

- Develop new educational materials (e.g., new tri-fold pamphlets, fact sheets, and signage).
- Distribute free promotional items to increase community awareness (e.g., stickers, pencils, and water bottles).
- Create a resource library section on the TLPAC's website to house educational materials.

Host More Varied Outreach Events

- Develop one new outreach event to host annually.
- List goals for potential events and workshops to host in the future.

Solidify Partner Organizations for Ongoing Stewardship

The TLPAC has partnerships with the KBIC, MTU, and the Torch Lake community. These partnerships have been instrumental to the TLPAC's restoration of beneficial uses within the AOC. However, the TLPAC expressed difficulty acquiring and solidifying new relationships with potential partner organizations; the communities' varying viewpoints on environmental issues make it challenging to find common ground, and the rural setting makes it difficult to bring organizations together.

TLPAC members expressed interest in strengthening their network and developing new ways of engaging with potential partners. The one- to two-year organizational structures and action items are the beginning steps into expanding partner development efforts. These organizational structures and action items are then improved upon in the three- to five-year time block to further establish the TLPAC's partnership network.

The following organizational structures and action items will help develop existing partnerships and mitigate difficulties with gaining and retaining partners. TLPAC members expressed interest in creating a partnership subcommittee to focus on acquiring and retaining partners. Additionally, members suggested having partnerships as a recurring agenda for monthly meetings, creating a partnership development strategic plan, and having champions as the point-people for new potential partners.

One- to Two-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Form a subcommittee for creative and active engagement with partner organizations.
 - Identify two to three people with strong ties to the local community who are particularly interested in championing these efforts.
 - Appoint a single individual within the subcommittee as the point of contact for partner organizations.
 - Establish a monthly meeting time for the subcommittee.
- Develop a partnership development strategic plan that outlines a deliberate approach to recruiting potential partners.
 - Create a living document of current and potential partners.
 - Leverage these relationships to pursue agreed-upon community outreach objectives.
 - Brainstorm how potential new partners (e.g., Lake Linden Schools) could assist the TLPAC and improve the Torch Lake AOC.
 - Seek out individuals who represent the community, have strong personal networks, and ties to organizational networks.
- Create a recurring agenda item in TLPAC meetings for the partner-focused subcommittee to discuss partnership development.

Action Items to Achieve

Act on Partnership Development Strategic Plan

- Utilize the documented list of partners to connect with them on common interests.
 - Acknowledge differences in interests and motivations of partner organizations.
 - Leverage various partners' strengths and commonalities with TLPAC interests to develop mutually beneficial engagement strategies for the Torch Lake ecosystem and the community.

- Incorporate elements of thoughtful membership recruitment and partner retention into the strategic plan.
 - Recruit new and enthusiastic individuals who are engaged in the community.
 - Recognize potential social and organizational networks each individual brings to the TLPAC.
- Act on the clear and consistent communication strategies developed for each partner.
 - Check-in periodically on the success of creating a working partnership.

Expand Partnership Network through Outreach Material

- Develop outreach materials to attract potential partners (e.g., pamphlets, business cards, and letters).
 - Showcase previous, current, and future work in a pamphlet. Build a concrete list of future goals and projects and potential opportunities for partners to get engaged.
 - Create TLPAC business cards to provide potential partners with information on the point of contact from the partner engagement subcommittee.
 - Develop a mailing list to connect with organizations in the Torch Lake area. Create letters that contain the same information as the pamphlet but directly acknowledge how the TLPAC sees the partnership progressing, how it will be effective, and how it will benefit the watershed.

Three- to Five-Year Organizational Structures and Action Items

Organizational Structures to Institute

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership development strategic plan after three and five years.
 - Document lessons learned from the past years of strengthening and expanding the partnership network.
 - How has the list of partners changed over time?
 - Are there new partnerships that need to be created?
 - Which partnerships are strategic at this point in time?
 - How can the plan be adjusted based on what the TLPAC learned from the effectiveness of the initial plan?

Action Items to Achieve

Update the Partnership Development Strategic Plan

- Revisit the strategic plan's initial objectives during annual partner engagement subcommittee meetings.
 - Update the living document of partners to match the TLPAC's current engagement.
 - Assess how the goals of the strategic plan align with the goals of community outreach.
 - How can the TLPAC broaden the strategic plan to best support the community outreach objectives?
 - Current and new partners should bring skills and capacities to the table that benefit the Torch Lake AOC and assist the TLPAC.

- Continue broadening potential partnerships and building out the partnership development strategic plan.
 - What new organizations within the community could TLPAC partner with?
 - How can TLPAC build-out and refresh current partnerships?
- Focus on creating new partner engagement goals for each iteration of the plan to expand TLPAC's partnership network.

Continue Developing Outreach Materials to Expand TLPAC's Partnership Network

- Evaluate the success of partner outreach materials by considering these questions:
 - Have the materials been utilized at this point?
 - How can the materials be adjusted to be as effective as possible?
- Coordinate with partners to receive direct feedback on the effectiveness of the partner outreach materials.
- Update the outreach materials (e.g., social network posts, pamphlets, business cards, and letters) to match the TLPAC's current needs.

Additional Insights

Here we provide our team's recommendations and insights for action beyond what was identified by TLPAC members. Our recommendations supplement the outlined actions above. We also highlight how EGLE can further support these efforts.

Expand Meaningful Community Outreach

- Host meetings with the KBIC to understand KBIC's needs from the Torch Lake AOC.
 - Cultivate a partnership that supports knowledge sharing between both groups.
- Collaborate with KBIC on incorporating Indigenous cultural knowledge and stewardship practices into educational materials and outreach events.
 - Continue improving the collaborative relationship between KBIC and the TLPAC by creating a recurring, co-sponsored outreach event.
- Engage with youth by partnering with MTU and K-12 Schools (e.g., Houghton Portage Township Schools, Lake Linden Schools, or Calumet, Laurium, and Keweenaw Public Schools).
 - Recruit local high school and college students to participate in clean-up events and habitat and species monitoring projects implemented by MTU or the TLPAC.
 - Co-sponsor an internship program with MTU to allow young environmentalists to contribute to the TLPAC efforts and gain valuable professional experience.
 - Develop a speaker series (virtual or in-person) on Torch Lake ecology and restoration for high schools, university students, or individual communities within the watershed.
 - Select speakers that represent the various voices involved with the Torch Lake AOC (e.g., scientists, educators, tribal representatives, planners, and water resource activists).
- Host a town hall with local community members to understand their interests and questions regarding the Torch Lake AOC.
 - Incorporate the local communities' thoughts and ideas into the community outreach strategic plan, outreach events, and educational materials.
 - Continue hosting town halls to expand and improve the community outreach strategic plan and educational materials every two years.

Solidify Partner Organizations for Ongoing Stewardship

- Host round-table discussions with potential partner organizations for multi-organization brainstorming and collaboration.
 - Use these discussions to strengthen all TLPAC functions, including Torch Lake AOC restoration and community outreach.
- Develop a plan to maintain a clear line of communication between KBIC and the TLPAC through a champion or appointed ambassador/liaison.
 - Identify and document the role of the KBIC partnership champion.

- Engage with the KBIC champion to accommodate free movement of ideas and knowledge between organizations.
- Reach out monthly to KBIC regarding outreach events to discuss their participation and/or sponsorship of the events.
- Host annual events to thank partners for their contributions to the TLPAC and the Torch Lake AOC.
 - Showcase all the great work that has been done to draw attention to the AOC.
 - Invite the community to engage, educate, and celebrate.

Prioritize State Support Role

- Continue targeting PAC supports grants at building capacity for community education and outreach efforts.
- Create an explicit statement that depicts the appropriate uses for PAC support grants.
- Provide regular agenda space in State PAC meetings for the PACs to have unstructured collaborative conversations about planning for and strengthening their community outreach and partner organization network.

Appendix

Final Set of Objectives for the Torch Lake Public Action Council

- 1. Community Education:** Develop strategies for meaningful community outreach, develop educational and informational materials, create relationships, and engage with storytelling and local knowledge.
 - a. Organize outreach and educational events in tandem with schools, universities, municipalities, and nonprofits to cultivate higher community values of ecological health.
 - b. Cultivate a community understanding of the broader economic and social impacts of restoration.
- 2. Partner Organizations:** Develop a network of partners that will strengthen current stewardship capacity and persist after delisting.
- 3. PAC Structure:** Define and implement a clear division of labor within PACs.
 - a. Define clear roles and responsibilities.
 - b. Document meeting structure.
 - c. Define and address any other structural ambiguity.

Figure 1: Definitions and examples of the three objectives that TLPAC members collectively stated they wanted to implement during Phase I interviews and Phase II conversations.