



Minutes

MRWCC Board Meeting

March 28, 2013 – 1:30 PM

ARD Office (Research Centre) Lethbridge - 2nd Floor Room 201

Present: Will Lindeman, Joan Hughson, Ken Brown, Warren Cunningham, Lloyd Closson, Aaron Domes, Brian Hills, John Ross, Lorraine Nicol, Mike Gervais, Ken Miller, Darcy Wills Tim Romanow and Mary Lupwayi

Absent: Darlene Sakires, Don Welsh, Paulette Fox, Ed Sloboda, and Clark Selk

Guests: Lisa Tymensen, Analytical Water and Research Scientist, ARD
Dennis Spackman, District Conversation Officer, Writing-On-Stone-Provincial Park

At 1:30pm Lisa Tymensen gave a tour of the lab for board members to see how the Microbial Source Tracking (MST) project has progressed and to better understand the analytical methods used in the lab. Following the Lab tour Lisa gave a brief update of the MST project as follows:

- Microbial Source Tracking (MST) project Update presentation:
 - Determined host source of E.coli at 4 sites on the Milk River (Upper Milk River, Lower Milk Rive, Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park and at 880 Hwy)
 - Water sampling was done every three weeks from mid-April to August 2012
 - Project is 95% complete
- Key Findings:
 - Overall sources of E. coli in the Milk River for all sites combined:
 - Cow 28%
 - Cliff swallow 7%
 - Deer 5%
 - Goose 4%
 - Miscellaneous 8 %
 - No host source 48%
 - Additional testing required to confirm naturalized E.coli
 - Generally higher E.coli concentrations at WOSPP and Hwy 880 compared to upstream
 - Upstream had more cow E.coli and less neutralized E.coli
 - It was not clear what the influence of Verdigris Coulee would have on these findings
 - Where does E. coli come from under wet versus dry weather conditions?
 - During the 5th sampling, there was a heavy rainfall preceding sampling which coincided with high fecal coliform advisory
 - Generally, during dry conditions, contribution from cattle was low while during wet conditions there was higher contribution from cattle
 - Upper Milk River, higher levels of E. coli was cattle associated
 - Final report should include proactive approach to recreationists at WOSPP that should include public awareness information about sources of E. coli
 - Lisa will help produce messaging for a brochure
 - The findings (mostly focused on WOSPP) will be presented at the AGM
 - The goal of 2013 water quality monitoring is to develop a rapid method to measure fecal versus neutralized E.coli
 - Will have a follow up meeting shortly with the MRWCC to determine next steps and future research needs and opportunities within the watershed.

1. Welcome and introductions

- John Ross brought the meeting to order at 2:31pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were conducted

2. Minutes from last meeting

Motion: Warren Cunningham moved to accept the minutes as presented. Will Lindeman seconded. Carried.

3. Financial Statements Update

- Will Lindeman presented the February financial statements as follows:
- Closing balance as of February 28, 2013 was \$213,921.60

Motion: Milk Gervais moved to accept the Financial Statements as presented. Lloyd Closson seconded. **Carried.**

4. 2012/13 Core and Project funding update

- Invoices for IWMP and SOW report were submitted to ESRD.
- Received \$60,000 for the IWMP but have had no response as of yet for the \$70,000 for the SOW report. Components of the SOW report have been delayed due to incomplete submissions of content; chapters are being formatted and completed as available.
- The Minister of ESRD called a few WPACs to assure them that there is commitment for core funding for the operation of WPACs for 2013/14 post budget announcement.
- The Minister also reiterated the message at the Water and the Environment CWRA and WPAC Conference in Red Deer, March 12 to 15, 2013 that despite budget constraints, the department values the role of WPACs and that there is core funding available for 2013/14, also noted that projects may need to be stretched over longer periods of time to ensure completion.
- ESRD will pay an advance payment of 25% as an amendment to 2012 grants to assist with initial core operational expenses until grants are finalized. For the MRWCC this will total \$50,000 and will be prorated to the 2013-14 fiscal year.
- The amalgamation of the two departments has slowed the budget process, and challenged departmental reorganization.

5. Alberta Water Council update – Ken Brown

- There was a proposal from some environmental groups to receive a fee for service rendered as participants on the AWC. The original request was for \$11,000 but since has been dropped to \$7,500. At least 8 of the WPACs agree that this request is not appropriate and should not be offered to any participant.
- There is need to give a unilateral definition of riparian area that serves all sectors equally. Currently there are some concerns that some industries don't have to pay service fees because the definition doesn't seem to apply to them while others such as farmers and ranchers are required to abide.
- AWC has funding to take on an additional project for this fiscal year and are seeking Statements of opportunities. WPACs interested in submissions of a SOO are requested to do so by June by contacting Ken.
- Currently seven out of Eleven WPACs have shown interest in the statement of opportunity to continue with fecal source tracking and potentially other water quality assessment work within the province. Tim will assist in completing the SOO with the feedback from other WPAC's.

6. Office Space update

- Bob Bogle (Owner of the Office Building) is planning to have a newsletter business in town and need space for the business. He asked if the MRWCC could share space in the office
- He also stated that if this proposal would not work, he would need the building back although he is happy having the MRWCC in this building
- The issue was brought to council in February and at that time a motion was passed that sharing the room was not the best fit for the MRWCC due to shortage of space in the office and would like us to start looking for other options incase Mr. Bogle will need the office room back
- This motion was passed on to Mr. Bogle who stated that he did not want to vacate the MRWCC from the building and that his first step would be to look for another space to rent for his business and allow us to stay in the building. However, in the event that he is unable to find room elsewhere for his business he will need to use the building for his business. He intends to start the business in May and will give us enough notice to vacate if that was the case.
- Currently the MRWCC pays \$175/month for rent for the office
- He further advised that he had investigated for office space in the Town Hall which will cost him \$200/month to rent. He stated that if he were to rent the office space in the Town Hall, he would need to increase our rent by \$200 to offset for this cost and also let us place our programs in his newsletter for free
- If this was possible we could drop our newsletter to once a year
- This could pose problems in future if there are changes with any of the arrangements
- Will need a written agreement of the arrangements
- There is also questions as to what would happen if his business did not survive

Motion: Ken Brown moved that we look into the logistics of office availability and affordability of other rental office spaces in town and report back the findings to the executive. Darcy Wills seconded. **Carried.**

7. Verdigris Coulee Project Meeting Update

- Warren, Ken Miller and Tim attended the meeting facilitated by ESRD
- There was a discussion of the history of the project
- The project has continued to be operated for wildlife enhancement under the agreement between SMRID and Ducks Unlimited
- In 2012 the agreement expired and Ducks Unlimited did not want to renew it and would then handover the operation of the project to ESRD
- ESRD has asked stakeholders to come up with restoration decisions: to main water levels or convert to natural state
- A subcommittee has been setup to come up with options
- Tim will forward more information as it comes

8. MRWCC/Industry Meeting

- There will be a technical subcommittee established to review industry recommendations for the IWMP including MRWCC board members and watershed operators. Darlene Sakires is assisting in arranging this meeting.
- Board members interested in being part of the subcommittee to submit their names
- Next step for the IWMP is the stakeholder endorsement
- It's important to understand that the IWMP is not trying to supersede regulation but merely act as a resource to ensure the community concerns are reflected and that best practices are applied within the watershed to protect groundwater resources and sensitive environments.

9. Land Owners Rights Discussion – Darcy Wills

- Need to know where to direct people when questions arise
- Landowners should be able to easily access investigative information
- Need to put links on the website to direct people where they can get answers
- We will continue to explore options and facilitation opportunities to continue to provide information to watershed residents.

10. Amalgamation of water and oil/gas well data – Darcy Wills

- There is a lot of information available however, it seems the information is disjointed and different departments seem to be duplicating studies for information that is already available
- Need to find out how this information can be amalgamated so that it can be easily accessed, it was noted that this information is starting to be amalgamated and made available where possible.

11. Water, Agriculture and Environment Conference, April 16 to 17, 2013 – Darcy Wills

- Sandi will be giving a presentation
- There was a recommendation to send Tim to the conference and give a report to council
- Tim, Lorraine Nicol and Will Lindeman will attend the conference

12. Prairie Conservation Award winners for Alberta

- Ken and Nora Balog were the Prairie Conservation Award winners for Alberta
- They will be featured in the Spring/Summer edition of the Meander newsletter

13. Water and the Environment: Watershed Planning and Management in Alberta Conference Report

- Tim and Mary attended the conference in Red Deer
- There was a different mix of people, more of the research community and consulting industry was in attendance, really good exposure for the activities of the WPAC's
- The Minister of ESRD gave a presentation and in her speech she talked briefly on the role of WPAC and funding availability and economic cutbacks
- The agenda was very good
- 25% of conference proceeds will go to WPACs to be used for WPAC entry signs
- The AB WPAC's portion of the conference proceeds tallied 17,000.00
- Presentations and video proceedings will be available shortly on the LanduseKN website as well as CWRA, once available links will be shared with the board.

14. MRWCC 8th Annual General Meeting Draft Agenda update

- Don Welsh is stepping down and has nominated Roy Audet to run for the individual member
- Ken Brown will be the election chairman
- Registrations are at 40 for the meeting and 45 for the AGM
- Will need volunteers to help setup at the Civic Center
- Will and Warren advised that they will help
- Still accepting items for donations for silent auction
- The agenda was presented as follows:
 - 1:00 Welcome - John Ross, Chairman
 - 1:10 Minister's Address - Andy Ridge, Director of Water Policy will represent the Minister
 - 1:30 Milk River Watershed Council Canada - Activity Report
 - Tim Romanow, Executive Director
 - Sandi Riemersma, Project Coordinator
 - 2:00 MRWCC Financial Statements Presentation - Will Lindeman, Treasurer

2:15	Elections – Ken Brown, Elections Chairman
2:30	Coffee Break and Silent Auction
3:00	Impact of the Milk River Fire on water quality and grassland recovery - Dr. Kevin Bladon, University of Alberta
3:30	Microbial Source Tracking Project Update - Dr. Lisa Tymensen, ARD
4:00	Aquatic Invasive Species – Bill Dolan, Alberta Tourism, Parks & Recreation
4:30	Poster Contest Award Presentation
4:45	Coffee Break and Silent Auction
5:00	Keynote Speaker - Historical Climate Modeling through Dendroclimatology - Dr. David Sauchyn, University of Regina
6:00	Dinner, Displays and end of Silent Auction

15. Jalen Hulit's presentation

- Attended the digital story telling workshop
- Has been a good ambassador for the Watershed
- Jalen's cost will be co-shared between the County of Warner and the MRWCC
- John Ross also attended the digital story telling workshop

16. Team Updates

a. Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)

- i. Caring for Our Watersheds program
 - No schools have participated as of yet
 - Deadline is April 16
- ii. Poster contest update
 - 60 posters from the 2 schools participating (Milk River Elementary and Erle Rivers)
 - ATB and Alberta Emerald Foundation have donated a total of \$700 for winner's prizes
 - Winners will be awarded prizes at the AGM
- iii. Shell FuellingChange Program: Well Decommissioning Workshop – April 30, 2013
 - Todd Cloverdale's flowing well will be decommissioned
 - Joe Harrington and Jeff Gutsell have been contacted to present at the workshop
 - In the process of identifying a contractor to complete the decommissioning
 - Four quotes have been obtained ranging from \$4,000 to \$7,000
 - A field tour to scout the well site prior to the workshop is being arranged
- iv. Canoe Tour – June 22, 2013
 - Proposed date for the tour is June 22 (weather and river flow permitting)
 - Looking at having the tour on the eastern reach of the Watershed (John Ross's to Pinhorn Ranch). Different reach than past tours
 - It's a slow flowing reach so will need to try and shorten the length of the tour
 - Ken Brown and John Ross to work together to determine a better access point for the tour
- v. Social Media on the Website

- MRWCC currently has live Facebook and Twitter on the MRWCC web page
 - Good for program advertisements
 - Encouraged all board members with social media to follow the MRWCC Facebook and Twitter
- b. *Research and Monitoring Team (R&M Team)*
- i. Water Monitoring Program
 - The plans for the 2013 surface water monitoring program are underway
 - ESRD has indicated they will continue their partnership with MRWCC on the program and have made a budget request of \$10,000, the same as last year; but approval of that budget request is still pending.
 - Sampling will commence April 17, 2013
 - Water monitoring for the fire impact is also underway
 - University of Alberta will fund for the analytical costs
 - Looking at possibly 4 sites and will be analyzing for mercury, heavy metals, and dissolved organic carbon, and other parameters.
 - Lethbridge College has agreed to lend us O₂ data loggers after the college is done using them this April.
 - Waiting for initial rain to collect samples
 - Need to closely monitor DOC as the last analytical results were very high. Normal guidelines should not exceed 5 to 6 mg/l however the results showed 65 mg/l within the South Fork.
 - ii. Microbial Source Tracking Project update
 - As discussed
- c. *State of the Watershed Team*
- i. SOW report update
 - The draft has been submitted to ESRD
 - Final report was supposed to be delivered by end of March
 - Expenses for the report to date were approx. \$50,000 and an additional \$20,000 for printing
 - It has been difficult to get all the data in time from all 3 jurisdictions and meshing it together has also proven quite a challenge in some cases hence the delay
 - Chapters are being formatted for print as available.
 - ii. SOW report Launching event
 - Proposed date for the event is May 31, 2013
 - Use this event to acknowledge those who helped put the report together
 - A volunteer appreciation dinner and camp out will follow the formal release; invites are to be sent out shortly.
- d. *Integrated Watershed Management and Planning Team (IWMP Team)*
- i. Draft IWMP update
 - The public input session had good but limited feedback
 - The feedback will be incorporated in the plan
 - Next step is seeking endorsement of the recommendations by municipalities and other stakeholders and then ESRD
 - A condensed version of the plan is available

- e. *Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)*
 - Rob Harrison visited Montana to come up with answers as to where things are with the JIT
 - Meetings will resume in 5 to 6 months

17. Upcoming events

- MRWCC AGM – April 11, 2013
- Water, Agriculture and Environment Conference, Lethbridge Lodge - April 16 to 17, 2013
- Well decommissioning Workshop – April 30, 2013
- SOW Unveiling event, WOSP Park - May 31, 2013
- Canoe Tour – June 22, 2013

18. Other items

19. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Darcy Wills moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 pm. **Carried.**

20. Next Meeting Date

- April 25, 2013 in Milk River at 1:30pm

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____