



Agenda

MRWCC Board Meeting

March 24, 2016 – 1:30 PM

Town of Milk River Office

Present: Will Lindeman, Lloyd Closson, William King, Suzanne Liebelt, Ed Sloboda, Ron McNeil, Kristen Dykstra, Warren Cunningham, Ross Ford, Dennis Spackman, Trevor Murray, Lorraine Nicol, Ken Miller, John Ross, Kathryn Romanchuk, Tim Romanow and Mary Lupwayi

Absent: Darcy Wills, Joan Hughson, Roy Audet, Frank Larney, Brian Hills, Ryan Hall,

1. Welcome and introductions

- John Ross welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought the meeting to order at 1:36 pm
- Introductions were conducted

2. Minutes from February 4, 2016 meeting

- Last meeting minutes were reviewed

Motion: William King moved to accept the minutes as presented. Ross Ford seconded.

Carried.

3. Financial Statements

- January Financial Statements
 - January closing balance was \$334,496.27
- February Financial Statements
 - February closing balance was \$311,657.55

Motion: Will Lindeman moved to accept the financial statements as presented. Ed Sloboda seconded. **Carried.**

- Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program Grant update
 - The grant amount of \$70,000 that was received has not been spent yet
 - In the process of soliciting projects for implementation
 - Individual letters have been sent out
 - Board members can also submit applications
 - Have received one application to date, expecting a few more over the next couple weeks.

- Funding for 2016 Water Monitoring Project
 - Still uncertain if AEMERA will support and fund this year's program
 - Got an email from Ray Walker, Water Quality Technician with AEMERA stating that they will be sampling 6 sites on Milk River including Hwy 880 Bridge as part of their long term program, Upstream Milk River, North and South Fork are among the selected sites
 - There has been no coordination with the MRWCC to ensure there is no sampling duplication
 - The AEMERA and MRWCC programs don't match as they have different number of sampling days so it might be difficult to consolidate for reporting
 - The MRWCC has already made preparation for the 2016 program
 - Sampling for MRWCC will start on April 6, 2016

Motion: Suzanne Liebelt moved to proceed with the MRWCC Monitoring Program regardless of AEMERA's funding uncertainty. Ross Ford Seconded. **Carried.**

- Funding Opportunity for EO programs
 - X-Stream Science
 - is an inquiry-based learning opportunity lead by local experts to connect students to their watershed through real world science
 - Some WPACs have incorporated X-Stream Science in their Education Outreach program
 - The WPACs are jointly seeking potential funders for the program
 - Proposal to Oil and Gas industry to help fund the Education Outreach program
 - We have put together a proposal to Granite Oil Corp requesting funding for the Education Outreach program

4. South Saskatchewan Region Biodiversity Management Framework update

- Christine Sweet, Land-use Framework Planner with Environment and Parks gave a presentation on Biodiversity Management Framework (BMF)
- The BMF is still in a draft form
- Just completed final phase of engagement with stakeholders of the draft BMF
- BMF is part of a few management frameworks

- BMF will provide the necessary structure and tools needed to achieve biodiversity outcome by enabling a regional approach to cumulative effects management
- The framework is intended to support the management of species and habitats affected by human disturbance through land use activity in the region
- The framework will add to and complement existing federal, provincial and local legislation, regulations and initiatives that support biodiversity
- Has systematic and credible approach to biodiversity management
- Support continued economic and community growth in all Land Use Framework Regions
- Drive improved practice for industry and other land users in the region to minimize the extent and duration of human footprint
- Assist in preventing new species at risk through a proactive system for biodiversity management
- Adapt to, and reflect ecosystem change like forest fires and future climate change adaptation strategies
- Provide guidance for decisions about future and existing land-use activities on private and crown lands
- There are Four Categories of Indicators:
 - Aquatic habitat
 - Terrestrial habitat
 - Aquatic species
 - Terrestrial species
- Triggers:
 - Assess the condition of an indicator
 - Demonstrate the need for a management response
 - Triggers will be numerical values
 - There will be three progressively more stringent trigger values for each indicator
- AEP has already been working on various components of proactive biodiversity management as part of the broad mandate without the BMF completed.
- BMF will build upon that significant work and bring the cumulative effects management piece into one collated body

- The BMF will provide a single mechanism for the GOA to understand when further mitigative actions are required beyond the ongoing proactive management activities. Management actions include a range of measures and tools with varying degrees of rigor. They are meant to be flexible and reflective of the trigger that has been crossed and the related circumstances.
- Some of these measures and tools are:
 - Education and awareness
 - Beneficial management practices
 - Authorization conditions or restrictions
 - Disturbance standards
 - Additional regional monitoring
 - Biodiversity modelling
 - Reclamation requirements
 - Restrictions on further land disturbance
 - Conservation offsets – emerging policy and program
- Once it has been confirmed that a trigger has been crossed and the circumstances have been determined, the need for management actions is identified
- Before determining the need for a management action, AEP will review whether other initiatives are taking steps to address the issue
- Collaboration with key partners will be a part of both identifying and implementing management actions
- The development of regional biodiversity indicators and triggers remain an emerging practice that will be continuously improved over time as science and monitoring technologies are updated, and knowledge increases
- Adaptive Management includes the framework being reviewed as part of the 5 year review of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
- Working with key partners to develop an implementation plan is key

Discussion:

- What is the schedule like?
 - There will be no more public review
 - Continue to engage stakeholders through venues like MRWCC

- Looking at indicators to ensure everything is in place. It should be noted that there are still challenges in the approach that have not been addressed
- March 31 – “Not a finalized version but should be an engaging living document”
- What is the present status of the draft?
 - Still in draft form
 - Incorporating and compiling feedback
- Modeling of reporting – 2 years is aggressive
- ABMI sites need to be addressed - they are not reflective of the entire region and scale is off to be effective
- There are challenges with consultants recording notes at meetings
- An idea to invite a representative for the BMF at the AGM was raised
- There is need for a presentation for a smaller group farmers, should be presented to the Manyberries Group Sustainable Canada
- A letter should be sent to the Minister indicating clearly the concerns over process and a request to have public feedback on the final draft before assent
- Also need to emphasize the need for voluntary stewardship and supporting dollars for EGS on private lands, and partnerships with the WPACs for implementation and review
- Currently too much duplication and grey areas

5. Milk River Approved Water Management Plan Update

- Terms of Reference has been completed and approved within the department
- A public meeting has been scheduled for April 7, 2016 at 3pm in the Heritage Hall in Milk River
- There have been delays in the process due to First Nations consultation

6. 11th AGM

- Open seats
 - A list of open seats is on the agenda
 - All members have shown willingness to retain their seats
- Agenda
 - A draft agenda has been prepared
- Speakers

○ Presentations following the business meeting:

- Water Quality and Pesticides by Claudia Sheedy, Water Scientist, Agriculture Canada
- Alternative Land Use Services: A Mechanism for Society to Pay Agricultural Producers for Ecosystem Services by Ken Lewis, Red Deer County Program Coordinator (To be confirmed)
- South of the Divide Conservation Action Program by Tom Harrison, Executive Director, SODCAP
- Award Presentations
 - Poster Contest, Dusty Stauth, Branch Manager, Milk River ATB Financial
 - Environmental Stewardship Award, TBD
 - Heritage Trees Award, TBD
- Keynote Speakers: Grasslands Project in Milk River (To be confirmed)

➤ Election's Chairman

- Ask Ken Brown to be the Election Chairman

7. Transboundary Weeds and Watershed Stewardship Tour

- Scheduled for August 8 to 10 being organized by the County of Warner
- Tour sites in Montana August 9 and Alberta August 10
- Plan to showcase work done on the Twin River and other stewardship projects completed in the area and our working relationship with the municipalities
- AEP's Resilience and Mitigation Branch's role is to work with municipalities, First Nations, key stakeholders, and other branches of the Alberta Government to improve the flood and drought resiliency of our province. They would also like to tour the area
- Good idea to build and improve relationships
- 10 seats are reserved for MRWCC
- Day one will focus on the headwaters in Montana and challenges with both water and invasive species

8. Moosepower Solar Development Lease Partnerships Investigation – Warren Cunningham

- Calling community members adjacent to 3 phase power lines
- Looking to lease land to install solar systems

- A question was raised as to whether they should be invited to give a brief presentation at the AGM
- The consensus was to provide them with a booth at the AGM so that they can have a poster presentation and address questions that community members may have
- There is another company with similar request and it would be good to invite both companies
- Additional information is necessary.

9. Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference Report

- Tim, Ross and Mary attended the conference February 16 to 18 in Saskatoon
- Tim gave a presentation on the MRWCC's approach to IWMP
- Also presented a Youth Range Days (YRDs) poster
- It was a well-organized conference and gave us an opportunity to identify speakers for the AGM and YRDs.

10. Alberta Water Council – Call for project: ‘statement of opportunity’ for consideration

- Have established statement of opportunity
- 2 projects identified:
 - Aggregate Mining, Riparian Areas and Groundwater vulnerability
 - Provincial Drought Management Framework
 - Full abstracts of the potential research projects will be made available after WPAC managers meeting April 26th
- Cheryl Fujikawa, representing OWC on Headwaters Project has advised that the project has been cancelled. Stating that it was not the right time to bring it forward and little agreement between stakeholders in the role or outcome

Action: Tim to circulate the abstracts to Council

11. Team Updates

a. Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)

- Youth Engagement Program Report
 - EO Work Plan
 - Poster Contest
 - Good response from schools
 - About 80 posters were submitted

- Judging to be done subsequently
- Caring for Our Watersheds Program
 - Contacted by a teacher from Erle Rivers High School to give a program presentation to Grade 8 and 11 students
 - She made it mandatory for both grades
 - A group from Erle Rivers High School has been selected as one of the top ten finalists and will compete at the final competition on April 30th, 2016 held at Ralph Klein Park
- Interactive School Programs/WOSPP Field Tours
 - There was a request to give a presentation on Weather Watch in the Milk River Watershed for a group of Grade 5 students on June 3rd
- Bonanza Day Youth program
 - Developing a wetland critters program that will be delivered at the river near the Visitor Centre
- YRDs
 - Scheduled for July 5th to 7th, 2016, in Cypress County near Elkwater
 - Beginning to receive sponsorship
 - The latest brochure has been produced and is available
- Environmental Stewardship Awards Nominations
 - We have received 2 nominations:
 - Nelson and Paula Doenz
 - Ken and Nora Balog
- Spring Hike Tour
 - Scheduled to take place April 22, 2016 at the Twin River Provincial Grazing Reserve
 - Working on obtaining a Temporary Field Authorization (TFA) for the tour
 - The Kinsmen bus is no longer available so Dennis Spackman has graciously agreed to lend us the WOSPP bus and van for the tour
- Xeriscaping Program
 - Working in conjunction with Town of Milk River

- The plan for this year is to host a workshop and tour on June 11
- Host a workshop in the morning, provide lunch and host a tour of the Xeriscape areas within Milk River in the afternoon
- Steve MacRae with Prairie Xeriscape Designs in Lethbridge is available to present at the workshop. His fee is \$1,000 for the day
- Ryan Leuzinger, the CAO for Town of Milk River has advised that the Town will share the cost and will contribute \$500 towards the presenter's fee
- The Town Council is looking at incorporating the project partially on the front yard of the office starting in 2017

Motion: Ron McNeil moved that MRWCC host the Xeriscaping workshop and tour and invite Steve MacRae to present at the workshop and MRWCC will pay \$500 towards the cost of the presenter. Ed Sloboda seconded. **Carried.**

b. Research and Monitoring Team (R&M Team)

- Meeting report, Feb 9, 2016
- 2016 Surface Water Monitoring update
 - Planning for the 2016 program with ALS
 - The sampling supplies should be in next week
 - Sampling for MRWCC will start on April 6, 2016
- 2015 Surface Water Monitoring Report
 - Sandi has compiled the report and Tim will circulate it to the Board
- Winter Fish Habitat and Under-Ice Scoping Study
 - Completed the study in February in a pond near Mossleigh due to poor ice conditions at Milk River
 - Deployed two different cameras – Hero4 Session and Hero4 Black
 - Found the utility of GoPro Cameras limited
 - Recommend using an Aqua Vu camera with recording unit built in and uses infrared lighting
 - Explore use of minnow traps to confirm footage if needed
 - Full report is available
- Ground Water Monitoring Project – AHS
 - AHS would like to know more information on the following:
 - Who is sampling

- What is the timeline
- Areas to be sampled
- Will use the 40 wells previously sampled
- What would be the sampling frequency

Action: Tim to provide the required information to AHS

- Downy and Japanese Brome monitoring/research project
 - Brad Downey advised that they are conducting research on control of Japanese Brome and Downy Brome using Simplicity herbicide
 - They are finding that the spring application works better than the fall application
 - Ask Brad to have a booth at the AGM with a progress report on this research

c. Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)

- Milk River Water Storage Update
- AEP's Resilience and Mitigation Branch would like to organize a tour of areas within the Milk River in Montana and Alberta

d. Transboundary Watershed Team

- Prairie Transboundary Working Group
 - Meeting postponed to late April
 - A progress report will be given to Board members

12. Upcoming events

- Water Management Plan Phase1 TOR meeting, Heritage Hall Milk River - April 7, 2016
- Spring Hike Tour – Twin River Provincial Grazing Reserve - April 22, 2016
- MRWCC AGM - Milk River - May 31, 2016

13. Round table discussion

- Ron McNeil
 - Has been invited to a meeting in Calgary
 - It is convened by Operations Grasslands and the ALCES Group and the focus is on livestock grazing, natural grasslands and sustainability
 - Will provide feedback to the board
- William King
 - There will be another graze this year in the Milk River Natural Area

- Dennis Spackman
 - Peter Swain is now the Regional Director of Alberta Parks
 - Bill Dolan, the Resource Management Coordinator with AEP has retired
 - Need to invite Peter Swain for a briefing
 - Heritage Rangeland is going through public consultation likely June/July
- Tim Romanow
 - South of the Divide Conservation Action Program reps will give a presentation at the AGM
 - While in Milk River they are interested in seeing part of the Milk River watershed on June 1
 - The tour will be between Milk River and Manyberries
 - Anyone interested in joining the tour to let Tim know

14. Other items

15. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: William King moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:14pm. **Carried.**

16. Next Meeting

- April 28, 2016 in Milk River at 1:30pm

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____