



Minutes

MRWCC Board Meeting

November 27, 2014 – 1:30 PM

Town of Milk River Office

Present: John Ross, Lloyd Closson, Ross Ford, William King, Kristen Dykstra, Suzanne Liebelt, Roy Audet, Ron McNeil, Ken Brown, Ken Miller, Frank Larney, Brian Hills, Ed Sloboda, Tim Romanow, Cyd Cunningham, and Mary Lupwayi

Teleconference: Sandi Riemersma

Absent: Will Lindeman, Warren Cunningham, Dennis Spackman, Joan Hughson, Paulette Fox, Trevor Murray, Darcy Wills,

1. Welcome and introductions

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

2. Minutes from last meeting

- October 25, 2014 meeting minutes were reviewed
- Request to amend the spelling of the word “Canon” on page 3

Motion: Lloyd Closson moved to accept the minutes as amended. Roy Audet seconded. **Carried.**

3. Financial Statements Update

- a. October Financial Statements
 - October Financial Statements were reviewed
 - October closing balance was \$303,826.29

Motion: Ross Ford moved to accept the financial statements as presented. Suzanne Liebelt seconded. **Carried.**

- b. Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program – grants update
 - Three projects were submitted
 - 1. Hilmer Bridge Site Riparian Restoration Project Proposal
 - 2. Milk River Cattle Co. Riparian Restoration Project, and
 - 3. Milk River Watershed Riparian Restoration Stewardship Program
 - Tim is representing WPAC’s at the WRRP Program external advisory team level, provincial prioritization mapping is being completed by Stantec

consulting. The mapping is one tool to guide resource allocation and will weigh proposals against three categories: Drought, Food, and water quality risk, resiliency, and impact. In the first call for proposals of shovel ready projects 31 proposals were submitted with a total ask of 28 million, decisions have been made to which proposals will be funded for this fiscal year though no announcements have been made as the minister still needs to sign off on the project list.

- c. County of Warner grant proposals
 - o Ross Ford advised that the County of Warner submitted two grant proposals for the Community Resiliency (structural) program, a storage reservoir on the Milk River as well as mediation work at Goldsprings Park as was proposed in the MRWCC erosion mitigation study.
 - o There is \$330 million available to be disbursed over a 3 year period
- d. Tim advised that he is requesting a review on the MRWCC IWMP funding. The program expenses are substantial compared to the funding received; no further word has been received on the matter from ESRD.

4. Alberta Water Council update – Ken Brown

- AWC project team staff depleted.
- projects are on hold until staff members are hired
- Ken Brown's tenure is up
- Ken advised that it was a good 4 years
- BRWA and OWC will provide the rep and alternate, respectively, to represent WPACs
- Ken was thanked for his dedication and representation on the AWC

5. 2014 WPAC Summit Report – Tim Romanow and Lloyd Closson

- Lloyd, Cyd and Tim attended the summit
- Lloyd Closson gave a brief report on the summit stating that he came away with a deeper understanding about WPACs role. There were many speakers who had a common thread on how to proceed towards common goals of desired outcomes.
- Some Summit highlights included:
 - o Discussed 2015 WPAC Summit – likely to be hosted by Mighty Peace.
 - o Opening Remarks – Minister Kyle Fawcett ESRD
 - Longest mandate letter from the Premier

- Water issues are a priority for GOA
- WFL – ‘we can do more’
- Responsible water management is a commitment from GOA, WAPCs are valuable and important partners because of our ‘stewardship role’ (did not address or mention any advisory capacity)
- Focused on communities, environment, and economy. Regarding irrigation and industry, it was stated that more can be done and further conservation efficiency planning is needed to be implemented into the future.
- They are listening to Albertans still and a water conversation report will be available publicly within weeks
- Lesser Slave Watershed
 - Meghan has been asked to join the municipal planning commission and provide technical support for environmental issues and county planning activities.
 - Really focusing on sector specific engagement tools (working with counties)
- North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA)
 - Completed their IWMP in 2011 and delivered summary documents with recommendations to all stakeholders. When presented to the GOA they responded with a letter saying all recommendations were supported in principle, but no commitment to implement
 - Made the mistake of completing the plan and not having an ‘ask’ for response from stakeholders and/or implementation commitments
 - NSWA works as a bridging organization on implementation of the IWMP. The GOA, municipalities, and industry partners implement with NSWA support
 - New approach to address shortfalls is to develop regional watershed partnerships

- Recommendation: send your IWMP to other like organizations throughout the province; allow others to learn from your experiences
- Develop local capacity for watershed plan implementation
- Local implementation teams to bring the work forward, inter-municipal partnerships of planning staff and subcommittee of politicians are valuable ways of moving forward on municipal recommendations

6. SSRP update – Biodiversity Framework Team involvement of MRWCC

- Christine Sweet is back on her role as the Southern Planning Lead and she has offered to involve the council in the formation of the framework
- Tim will continue to assist where required

7. Red Creek Stewardship Group -Tree planting project update

- Ove 3500 trees planted
- Partnered with County of Warner and Cows and Fish to complete the project
- The work took place over several days mid to end of October
- The project is partly funded by Canon’s Take Root Program who funded \$5,000 for the program and also sponsored a camera
- Planning to plant some additional rooted material in spring

8. Shell FuellingChange Grant “Partnering to improve water quality in the Milk River Watershed” Program execution update – Barry Snows now completed

- Received \$10,000 2 years ago from Shell FuellingChange program to improve water quality in the Milk River Watershed
- 2 off side watering systems were installed on Barry Snows’ property
- The location was chosen due to its accessibility for tours, a great demo site, and also it is a location for one of our long term monitoring sites
- Project expenses donated by Shell are about \$9,500
- In the end there was approximately a 50/50 split in costs with the land owner

Proposed 2015 Board meeting dates

- 2015 Board meetings dated are as follows:
 - January 22
 - March 26

- *April 16 for AGM*
- May 28
- September 24
- October 22 for Strategic business planning
- November 26
- Board meetings are scheduled on the 4th Thursday of each month
- A question was raised as to whether there should be a short meeting in July if there is need
- The consensus was to have a short meeting in July if there is need

9. Office space

- MRWCC rented the office space in the Town office building with the understanding that there will be more room available in the near future
- To date there has been no mention of room availability
- The staff members are crammed in the office and there isn't enough storage room that some equipment and materials are being stored at staff residents.
- Suzanne will take the matter to Town Council meeting. Tim offered to attend a council meeting if necessary and will talk to the new Town CAO about the concerns. If no foreseeable solution is available we will have to look at alternative arrangements within the town again

10. Team Updates

a. Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)

- Youth Engagement Program Report
 - School Field trips and Classroom presentations
 - Had two good field tours
 - i. Ecosystem monitoring in the Milk River watershed Trees, and
 - ii. Cottonwood forests in the Milk River watershed
 - Logistical expenses were shared between MRWCC and WOSPP
- Update on CTS course
 - Has been completed and sent to Alberta Distance Learning Center
 - Is also on the MRWCC website

- Interested schools can import into their curriculum
- Working on an additional 5th module which will include 3 parts: Agricultural use, Oil and Gas, and Recreational use
- The first 4 modules material incorporated the SOW report
- Other partners as well as other WPACs have expressed interest in the program and the possibility of adding courses for additional credits
- AGM Planning – 10th Anniversary of MRWCC
 - This will be the 10 AGM anniversary
 - Looking for input for the event
 - An idea to honour volunteers from over the years was raised
 - The AGM will take place April 16th 2015
 - Some potential presentations included fisheries research conducted on the river this past year, and possibly the Saskatchewan led South of the Divide Project. Also suggested to have a presentation on the future and management of One-four Research Station and Grazing reserve
- b. Research and Monitoring Team (R&M Team)*
 - Meeting was postponed due to team members conflicting schedules.
 - Next meeting will happen in January
 - Surface water monitoring – season done, In the process of compiling data
 - Solicitation for new research or monitoring project ideas
 - Monitoring Agency to take control of funding and project planning
- c. Integrated Watershed Management and Planning Team (IWMP Team)*
 - IWMP Update by Sandi via teleconference
 - Presentations were made to all municipalities within the watershed
 - The most recent meeting was held with Quad Council in the Village of Coutts on November 24th where the Town of Milk River, Village of Coutts, Village of Warner and County of Warner were addressed
 - The presentation was well-received and there was good discussion regarding the plan

- There was also some discussion regarding how the Village of Warner viewed their role in the Milk River IWMP and also, more broadly, in the activity of the MRWCC
 - Generally, the Village of Warner associates best with the Town of Milk River and Village of Coutts and see themselves as part of the Milk River watershed and community
 - An offer was made to address any further questions that the Village of Warner may have, including an additional meeting with Council
 - Motion was passed by County of Forty Mile to support the Milk River IWMP
 - Motion of support forthcoming from the County of Warner
 - Letter from Cardston County indicating Council passed a Motion to file the Milk River IWMP for information
 - A copy of the plan was provided to their development officer who may use it in discussion with future developers
 - The letter cited that, although the plan was well prepared and contained some valuable information, Council had some concerns about committing Cardston County to some of the environment implications
 - In discussion with Cardston County's CAO, the main concern of Council was essentially that they don't see themselves having a large stake in the watershed and did not want to "tie their hands" by supporting the plan
 - Sandi re-iterated that the Milk River IWMP is a guidance document and a planning tool with no regulatory authority and that the plan is more valuable when it has united support for a common approach to address watershed issues among all municipalities, particularly with regard to the recommendations directed to the GOA
- A question was raised as to whether there is need to prepare a letter of response asking Cardston County Council to reconsider their Motion with the understanding that the Milk River IWMP is a guidance document and planning tool with no regulatory authority
- Cypress County will be bringing this forward on December 16th
 - The CAO is prepared to take this response letter forward to Cardston Council at the next Cardston County Council meeting December 8th

- Cypress County has not had further discussion on the plan since our meeting on September 16th and The Milk River IWMP is on their Council Agenda for December 16, 2014 when a decision may be made.
- December 4, 2014 - Meeting with ESRD (Martin Foy, Director South Saskatchewan Region, Calgary; Robert Stokes, Director Integrated Resource Management Planning, Edmonton; Heather Sinton, Director, Southern Region, Calgary; Brian Hills, Sam Wirzba and Monique Dietrich) to be present and discuss the Milk River IWMP
- This meeting will be held in Lethbridge from 10 am to noon (ESRD Office Room 2:96)
- Interested members of the Milk River IWMP Team or MRWCC Board of Directors are encouraged to attend, please let Tim or Sandi know to ensure adequate space available

Discussion:

- Ross to discuss Cardston's motion with Cardston Reeve in support of the plan
 - Letter of response needs to be sent asking Cardston County Council to reconsider their Motion with the understanding that the Milk River IWMP is a guidance document and planning tool with no regulatory authority
 - Ross Ford advised that County of Warner has not yet made a decision on whether they will make a motion to support the plan. Ross would like to attend the December 4 meeting first and see the outcome of that meeting
 - Letter to Cardston to be sent early January
 - The following members will attend the meeting on December 4:
 - Ron McNeil
 - Ken Miller
 - Brian Hills
 - Ross Ford
 - Planning a community meeting to present the final IWMP mid-March
- d. Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)*
- Milk River Water Storage Update
 - County of Warner held a meeting with the province to discuss:
 - Risk of water supply to Warner and Coutts

- Erosion problems
 - Potential for irrigation and power generation
 - Overall it was a positive meeting
 - JIT – There are 3 separate reports being generated
 - No dates have been set so far
 - There has been limited communication with the Milk River Watershed Alliance (MRWA) in Montana
 - Early this year SOW reports were sent to Montana with the understanding that there will be a production contribution for about \$2000 US. To date no funds have been received
 - Need to set up a meeting with MRWA in Montana
- e. Transboundary Watershed Team*
- NCC – Natural Area Conservation Plan for the Milk River Basin workshop
 - Took some SOW reports to present to the meeting
 - Tim, Roy and Ron attended the meeting
 - NCC plans are not Transboundary in nature
 - Extends from the base of the Milk River ridge to Frenchman of Saskatchewan
 - There are a number of initiatives to develop a plan
 - By having the meeting in Swift Current there was more interest with the Saskatchewan folks
 - Solicitation for Team members
 - The following members will be part of the Transboundary Watershed Team:
 - Ron McNeil, John Ross, Ken Miller and Ross Ford
 - A brief team meeting will be held in December

11. Upcoming events

- WPAC Forum December 10th Pigeon Lake AB
 - i. Tim requested that an elected board member also attend the WPAC Forum
 - ii. Focus will be on WPAC performance based outcomes and planning for the coming fiscal year.
- MRWCC Board Appreciation Dinner/MRCBA Party December 13th
 - i. The following have registered to attend:

1. John and Kathy Ross
 2. Ken and Mary Miller
 3. William and Janie King
- Mary will forward a reminder to the board next week to register for the event
 - Will likely book one or two tables for board members and spouses/partners

12. Round table discussion

- William King - Kennedy Coulee Natural Area
 - In 1998 Barry Adams recommended to introduce grazing
 - In 2013 grazing was introduced, the area was fenced and there was improvement in weed control
 - Management committee has asked AB Parks to carry over grazing for at least one more year, though there was pressure from some to exclude
 - Significant numbers of northern leopard frogs
 - Grazing has had a positive impact on controlling invasive species and maintaining biodiversity of wildlife

Motion: Ron McNeil moved that MRWCC send a letter of support to the Management Committee to encourage grazing in the natural area as a tool to manage invasive agronomic species through 2015 at the discretion of the management committee. Ken Brown seconds. **Carried**

- Brian Hills – Changes in organizational structure and personnel
 - New Premier has downsized cabinet, Alberta Parks is now part of ESRD
 - Terry Clayton retired and will be conducting interviews for replacement
 - Terrence Lazarus is leaving ESRD and will take on the role of General Manager for St. Mary River Irrigation District
 - Kim Morton is now the Resource Manager for the Prairies Region
 - Barry Adams is also retiring from Public lands now that a management plan is in place for the One-four and Stavely Research Stations

13. Other items

14. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Ed Sloboda moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:22pm. **Carried.**

15. Next Meeting Date

- January 22, 2015 – Milk River at 1:30pm

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____