



Agenda

MRWCC Board Meeting

September 22, 2016 – 1:30 PM

Town of Milk River Office

Present: Will Lindeman, Lloyd Closson, William King, Warren Cunningham, Frank Larney, Kristen Dykstra, Suzanne Liebelt, Ken Miller, Ryan Hall, Darcy Wills, Ed Sloboda, Joan Hughson, Brian Hills, Ron McNeil, Ross Ford, Lorraine Nicol, Tim Romanow, Kathryn Romanchuk and Mary Lupwayi

Absent: Dennis Spackman, John Ross and Roy Audet

1. Welcome and introductions

- Ken Miller welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought the meeting to order at 1:34pm

2. Minutes from April 28, 2016 meeting

- April Board meeting minutes were reviewed
- Approved Water Management Plan has been submitted to AEP legal for review

Motion: William King moved to accept the minutes as presented. Ed Sloboda seconded.

Carried.

3. Member at Large Appointment

- Joan Hughson moved to appoint **William King** as Member at Large representing the Milk River Natural Area and Kennedy Coulee Management Committee to the council. Ryan Hall seconded. **Carried.**

4. Executive Board Election

- **Chairman** – Ross Ford nominated **John Ross** as Chairman. Seconded by Ron McNeil. **Carried.**
- **Vice-Chairman** – Ross Ford nominated **Ken Miller** as Vice chairman. Seconded by Warren Cunningham. **Carried.**
- **Treasurer** – Warren Cunningham nominated **Will Lindeman** as Treasurer. Seconded by Ed Sloboda. **Carried.**
- **Secretary** – Will Lindeman nominated **Warren Cunningham** for Secretary. Seconded by Joan Hughson. **Carried.**

No further nominations were received. The Executive committee was acclaimed for a one year term. Dr. Nicol thanked the executive for their continued service.

5. Team Leaders Appointment

- Team leaders were appointed as follows:
Community Awareness and Involvement Team:

Darcy Wills nominated **Ed Sloboda**. Seconded by Warren Cunningham.

Carried.

Research and Monitoring Team:

Ed Sloboda nominated **Will Lindeman**. Seconded by Lorraine Nicol. **Carried.**

Water Supply and Management Team:

William King nominated **Ken Miller**. Seconded by Will Lindeman. **Carried.**

Transboundary Watershed Team:

Darcy Wills nominated **Ron McNeil**. Seconded by Ross Ford. **Carried.**

6. Financial update

a. Financial statements update

- April Financial Statements
 - April closing balance was \$239,945.91
- May Financial Statements
 - May closing balance was \$218,490.82
- June Financial Statements
 - June closing balance was \$394,607.01
- July Financial Statements
 - July closing balance was \$317,714.78
- August Financial Statements
 - August closing balance was \$298,750.09

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

b. Approved core/project funding 2016/17

- MRWCC was allocated \$284,000
- It was reported that there was \$20,000 carried over from 2015/16 weed mapping project which has been added to this allocated amount
- There was a recommendation not to proceed with the SOW report project as well as the weed mapping project using the AEP funding, so no funding was allocated to the SOW report and weed mapping projects
- At the moment the MRWCC is proceeding with feasibility studies to see if the technology can be used for invasive species such as Russian olive, Dalmatian toadflax, spotted knapweed, and leafy spurge. The data could also be used for linear disturbance mapping, cottonwood regeneration mapping, and WRRP project performance monitoring
- The Research and Monitoring Team will reevaluate the status of the project this winter

c. Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program

- Acquired \$70,000 from AEP for riparian restoration and exclusion fencing and \$130,000 through AF Growing Forward project for Wintering Site Management and Remote watering systems
- 1,840 trees planted on 8 sites for 6 landowners located along the Red Creek
- 5 solar portable watering systems for livestock have been purchased and allocated to landowners
- 2 km of exclusion fencing has been erected
- Have picked up 2 more projects for spring development, watering sites and fencing
- Planning a WRRP Stewardship Showcase October 25, 2016 to showcase work that has already been done with the WRRP funding and promote the project

d. Habitat Stewardship Project (HSP) grant approval – Milk River Over-Wintering Habitat Stewardship Project

- Have been approved a grant of \$60,050 for the Milk River Over-Wintering Habitat Stewardship Project
- \$35,000 will be used for the overwintering project this fiscal year
- Palliser Environmental Project Assessment and Budget
 - Palliser Environmental Services Ltd. has advised that they are not going to continue with the project
- Not sure if MRWCC will be able to find a contractor who will be able to do the job at the budgeted cost

Motion: Darcy Wills moved to send out a Request for Proposals (RFP) immediately to seek tenders subject to funding adequacy and in the event that the MRWCC is unable to secure a contractor or if funding is inadequate a request should be sent to delay or stop the project.

William King Seconded. **Carried.**

- Form a subcommittee for the project
- The following Board members have volunteered to be on this committee:
 - Ron McNeil
 - Will Lindeman
 - Ken Miller

7. Discussion and feedback on roles and functions of WPACs with Ernie Hui

- Received the feedback from Mr. Hui which summarized the values and benefits, foundational roles, future roles and functions of WPACs and required support to run WPACs
- He also noted the differences within the 11 WPACs
- Mr. Hui and the Minister of Environment and Parks will attend the WPAC Summit in October

8. AGM

a. Report

- Meeting

- The meeting went well but it was noted that the attendance was slightly lower this year
- The Board thanked those who contributed to the silent auction and a special mention was given to Ryan Hall who brought more items from other industry groups

- AGM budget

- Total revenue from donations, silent auction and registration was \$4,253.70 and total expenses came up to \$3,367.00. The balance was \$886.70

b. Proposed changes for future meetings

- There was a discussion as to whether it would be beneficial to split the Annual meeting into two sessions in lieu of low attendance this year:
 1. Annual General Business meeting in May:
 - Will give more time to discuss business matters, small event to be held in the Town Council Chambers open to all membership
 2. Community Appreciation Forum in March:
 - Presentations on MRWCC projects, research and monitoring
 - A more fun setting for community discussions, awards, dinner, etc.

Motion: William King moved to split the AGM into 2 separate meetings, a Business Meeting in May and a Community Appreciation Forum in late March. Lorraine Nicol Seconded. **Carried.**

9. By-laws - change of financial reporting period approved

- Proposed changes of financial reporting period from January/December to April/March have been approved

10. Transboundary Weeds and Watershed Stewardship Tour (TWWST) Report

- Partnered with County of Warner, Cardston, Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, Glacier National Park, and Montana Weed Control Association to host the Transboundary Water, Weeds & Stewardship Tour that was held August 8th, 9th and 10th 2016
- A total of 133 registrants for the tour, 30 of those were from Montana and the remaining 103 were from Alberta
- A well-organized tour and received good feedback
- Would like to see another tour in future

- The tour showcased success stories and challenges from both transboundary neighbours and opened lines of communication
- The Executive Director of Montana Department of Agriculture and the Blackfoot Tribal Council gave welcome greetings
- It was disappointing that there were no GOA elected officials despite being invited
- What next/outcomes?
 - There are discussions to have a weed control cooperative day, bring in about 10 crews and equipment from Alberta to Montana to help control spotted knapweed along the St Mary's Diversion and along the border
 - Improved understanding of the St Mary's/Milk rivers and infrastructure and challenges on both sides of the border
 - Montana commitment to work with Alberta on addressing infrastructure and climate change challenges to water supply and water security

11. 2016 WPAC Summit

- Scheduled for October 26 to 28, 2016 at the Grey Eagle Resort and Casino
- Looking for Board representation, simplified shortened summit, with WPAC updates, and focus on future role of WPACs
- The following Board members have registered to attend:
 - John Ross,
 - Ross Ford,
 - Ron McNeil, and
 - Darcy Wills
- Tim, Mary and Kathryn will also attend
- The Minister of Environment and Parks will be present
- Mr. Hui will give a presentation

12. Species at Risk registry and recovery planning – Mountain Sucker 'Critical Habitat'

- Mountain Sucker is being raised to a species at risk (SAR) status in the Milk River Basin, and is currently being published in the Canada Gazette 1 for listing.
- There has been no public consultation and no request for participation on this issue since 2013, and it was noted that different staff members are working on the file with no continuity from any past consultation work, and it was noted at the time more research and monitoring was required to be able to make a determination regarding the species status and threats to the population
- It is important to note that under the Species at Risk Act, critical habitat identified in a species' Recovery Strategy or Action Plan must be legally protected from destruction

- There was lack of information on the St. Mary Basin, and the Milk River is not ideal habitat for Mountain Sucker
- Deadline to submit critical habitat feedback is November 18
- There is need to look at this seriously because there are significant restrictions and regulations that are put in place once a species is deemed at risk
- County of Warner has also submitted a letter that raises questions as to why the Mountain Sucker is being raised to a species at risk in the Milk River and there is need for clarity regarding the listing
- Ken Miller also received a letter as the member of the Recovery Team of the SAR Committee for Western Silvery Minnow. There has been 7 years of consultations on the recovery of the Western Silvery Minnow
- There will be an amended recovery plan on Western Silvery Minnow and a letter was sent to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Action: Invite Shane Petry to give an update at the November Board Meeting

Action: Tim to find more information, and draft a letter(s) and circulate to Board members for feedback if required to address:

1. Recognizing that there are still a lot of questions on Mountain Sucker's critical habitat status, and impact on landowners, irrigators, and potential water storage projects
2. Seek Clarity regarding Policy on delineation of Critical Habitat
3. Western Silvery Minnow Critical Habitat issue
 - Is there need to form a subcommittee to look into this issue? What changes are in the amendment? And why now?

13. Team Updates

- a. Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)
 - Youth Engagement Program Report
 - Getting requests from schools
 - Had a request from WOSPP for a presentation for Grades 7 and 8 on October 6
 - Will be meeting with Erle Rivers teacher regarding Caring for Our Watersheds (CFOW) project implementation
 - Have sent out CFOW materials to schools
 - Will be meeting with elementary school re: classroom programs/field trips
 - About 200 youths visited the Youth Engagement Program display/activities during Milk River Centennial Days
 - Need to target Horizon School District
 - Youth Range Days report

- Was successful again this year
- Went over budget by about \$1,500 which will be covered by the ACA funding
- 2017 program will be hosted within the County of Warner on July 18 to 20
- Looking at Gold Springs Park as a potential venue
- Canoe Tour report
 - Good tour
 - We had some no-shows and late cancellations
 - Next year we are looking at having a 2 day tour on the eastern reach
- Milk River Centennial Celebrations report
 - Well planned event
 - A lot of traffic at the MRWCC booth which was in the Town Hall foyer
 - Also presented a display and activities for Youth Engagement program at the Milk River Interpretive Center which had a lot of traffic as well
- Environmental Stewardship Awards nominations
 - Still soliciting nominations
 - Deadline is February 28, 2017
- Heritage Tree nominations
 - WOSPP is submitting a tree nomination
- Fall Hike Tour update
 - Scheduled October 1, 2016
 - An ad was sent out and beginning to get registrations
 - All logistics in place
 - Due to last minute cancellations and no-shows during past tours which had resulted in paying extra cost for meals and transportation, we have asked that cancellations be made by the deadline and that any cancellations made after the deadline will result in charging a payment
- b. Research and Monitoring Team (R&M Team)
 - Surface water monitoring report
 - Last samples will be taken in October
 - Ground water monitoring project
 - Letters have been sent to landowners
 - Conducted refresher training in sampling protocols the morning of September 22, 2016
 - Need feedback on additional well in the County of Warner
 - Landowners will be invited to the Working Well Workshop this winter

- Warren and Ed will help to locate contacts for additional wells
- Invasive weed mapping cooperative project
 - Looking at mapping Russian olive around WOSPP
 - Have gotten project authorization from the Park
 - Looking at ideal time to map Russian olive
- c. Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)
 - Met in June
 - Two of the reports finalized
 - One report has been sent back for revision
- d. Transboundary Watershed Team
 - Workshop is scheduled in January
 - Hosted by SODCAP in Cypress Hills, north of Maple Creek
 - PCF has been asked for a deposit on the meeting room
 - No request has been made to MRWCC
- 14. Upcoming events
 - Fall Hike Tour – October 1, 2016
 - WRRP Producer Project meeting – October 25, 2016
 - WPAC Summit – October 26 to 28th, 2016 – Grey Eagle Resort and Casino
- 15. Round table discussion
 - Ron McNeil
 - PCF has put out a Request For Proposal for the Prairie Connectivity through to March
 - Renewable energy will have guidelines and be recognized that there are certain things that need to be considered
 - Brian Hills
 - The new Executive Director for the South Saskatchewan Region of Alberta Environment and Parks is Roger Ramcharita. He reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Operations Division, Graham Statt
 - The Transboundary Secretariat of Alberta Environment and Parks participated in a Letter of Intent conference call with the International Joint Commission representatives on September 8, 2016. Based on provisional flow records, the outcome for the 2016 season is that the U.S. incurred a larger deficit to Canada on the St. Mary River than Canada incurred on the Milk River, so U.S. will make up the difference by releasing water into the St. Mary River from Sherburne Reservoir prior to the middle of October

16. Other items

- Medical Marijuana
 - Plan is preliminary
 - Land has not yet been purchased
 - Community concern is on the use of treated water for the project
 - Has been indicated that no additional water than that used by a family of 4 would be required for the operation, and that it would be a fully enclosed facility with water recycling and high efficiencies
- Cecilia Soto has resigned as First Nation’s representative on the Board
- Ed congratulated Lorraine for her daughter, Rachel’s participation in the swim Olympic finals

17. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Ed Sloboda moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:10pm. **Carried.**

18. Next Meeting Date

- November 24, 2016 – Milk River at 1:30pm

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____