



## Minutes

### MRWCC Board Meeting

November 23, 2017 – 1:30 PM

#### Town of Milk River Office

**Present:** William King, Warren Cunningham, Ed Sloboda, Ron McNeil, Lorraine Nicol, Ross Ford, Will Lindeman, Joan Hughson, Ben Ellert, Ken Miller, Scott McGarty, Shawn Rodgers, Jim Willett, Brian Hills, Roy Audet, Kristen Dykstra, Kandra Forbes, Tim Romanow, and Mary Lupwayi

**Absent:** Dennis Spackman, Darcy Wills, John Ross, Suzanne Liebelt

**Guest:** Pam Hodgkinson, Director, Environmental Public Health, South Zone and Dr. Lizette Elumir-Tanner, Medical Officer of Health South Zone

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

##### a. Newly appointed alternate Municipal Reps

- Ken Miller welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought the meeting to order at 1:38pm
- Introductions were conducted
- Two newly appointed reps were introduced:
  - a. Jim Willet representing Village of Coutts as the Alternate Urban Municipality rep
  - b. Shawn Rodgers representing County of Warner as the Alternate Municipal rep

#### 2. Minutes from September 28, 2017 meeting

- Past minutes were reviewed

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

**Carried.**

#### 3. Update on WOSPP beach water monitoring by Alberta Health Services

- Kristen Dykstra introduced Pam Hodgkinson, the Director of Environmental Public Health, South Zone and Dr. Lizette Elumir-Tanner, Medical Officer of Health South Zone to the meeting
- Pam Hodgkinson presented on the Natural Recreational Water Monitoring Program. The presentation was on:
  - Alberta Health Recreational Water Management Protocol
  - Overview of Alberta monitoring program
  - Enterococcus/Source Tracking
  - Site Specific Data (Writing on Stone)
  - Human Health Risk Assessment
  - The purpose of the presentation was to:

- Introduce an approach to improving rec water quality through interagency and multi-jurisdictional collaboration through Recreational Water Safety Plans
  - Set clear and meaningful water quality indicators and standards
  - Apply a risk assessment approach and management strategy, and
  - Develop collaborative partnerships for risk assessment and management
- The scope of the Natural Recreational Water Monitoring Program includes:
  - Alberta lakes and beaches
  - Natural or man-made
  - Public beaches
  - Immersion and ingestion likely
  - High degree of bodily contact with water
- Protocol Components:
  - Monitoring:
    - Conduct monitoring at high priority lakes with high bather use
  - Site assessment:
    - Operator gets to 'know their lake' and influences through site assessment
    - Look at more than microbiological risks but also physical and chemical risks
  - Recreational Water Safety Plan:
    - Look at risks; consider and implement strategies to reduce the risks to water quality
    - Utilize laboratory methods like source tracking to refine assessment of risk
- She went on to explain the involvement in building a Recreational Water Safety Plan (RWSP) and how monitoring is done:
  - Samples are collected by AHS staff or beach operators
  - Beaches may be monitored for fecal coliforms and/or cyanobacteria
- It was noted that a RWSP would be developed in 2018 for WOSPP Beach site, the plans are generally written by summer students from Calgary.

Comment: Strongly encourage a plan recognize the value of work happening around the park both regarding monitoring and stewardship. Both AEP and MRWCC has worked extensively on monitoring and improvements to water quality. Many contributing factors such as Cliff Swallows are outside of anyone's control.

- Cyanobacteria (ACMPPH)
  - Cell counts (< 100,000 cells/mL)
  - Speciation (Cyanobacteria)
  - Microcystin (< 20ug/L)
- Fecal Coliforms
  - Exceedances are assessed:
    - > 400 cfu/100mL (either single sample exceedances or specific arithmetic mean calculation)
    - Geomean > 200 cfu/100mL for last 2 sampling events
- Advisories may be issued when:

- Water surface contains distinct green accumulation or blue-green scum formation
    - Low clarity of the water due to intense green colour
    - High cell counts
    - High toxin levels
    - Advisories tend to remain in place for the remainder of the season
  - For water bodies with at least two (2) consecutive years of AHS issued blue-green algae public health advisories, public blue-green algae (BGA) information signs will be posted permanently (year-round) at beach locations and other public locations
- Natural Rec Water Study in Alberta:
  - Compare and contrast bacteriological water quality from beach water samples in Alberta
  - Assess spatiotemporal variability in water quality associated with molecular and culture-based algorithms
  - Apply source-tracking methods to identify sources of fecal pollution in Alberta beaches
  - Improve health risks assessment and risk mitigation measures aimed at protecting public health while encouraging safe recreational water activities
- Microbial Source Tracking (MST)
  - Identify sources of fecal pollution based on certain microbial 'signatures' (DNA-based) seen in a water sample
  - Based on the premise that certain microbes that live in our gut display some degree of 'host-specificity, i.e., the E. coli that colonizes humans may be different genetically than those that colonize ruminants
- She advised that there were fecal coliform advisories at Writing on Stone Provincial Park in 2017
  - In 2017, Group A River Access, the following markers were detected:
    - Ruminant marker detected mostly throughout the sampling season
    - Human marker detected once towards the end of the sampling season
  - In 2017, North Shore Beach the following markers were detected:
    - Ruminant marker detected mostly throughout the sampling season
    - Human marker detected once in July
- Moving forward, there are propositions to change Enterococcus CCE Guideline to (1280 CCE/100mL) If you look at the rolling average for WOSPP Beach site historical data, this new measure would result in significantly fewer water advisories being posted (likely only one in the past 10 years of data).
- She concluded that numbers should not be the only factor to consider but should be interpreted in a context with other factors
- There is need to use a risk based approach and consider other factors such as:
  - Site Hazards

- Mitigate Risks
- Effectively Communicate
- Partnership

Q: Brian Hills – Who is developing the RWSP and where have they been developed?

A: AHS, 10 sites were developed in 2017 with more scheduled for the South Zone in 2018, including WOSPP. Students from the UofC have done most of the work.

Q: IS there a history of human health concerns from WOS water or swimming?

A: NO, zero reported from WOSPP but there has been a few from recreational water contact on the Milk River. These incidents are low and expected, in the last two years ~6400 people Alberta wide confirmed and reported sick from intestinal illness including: campylobacter, cryptosporidium, giardia, and salmonella.

- Ken thanked Pam for the presentation

#### 4. Financial update

##### a. Financial statements update

- September closing balance was \$374,874.33
- October closing balance was \$342,302.43

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

##### b. Granite Oil Corp. donation

- Granite Oil Corp donated \$3,000 to the MRWCC
- Tyler Klatt, VP of Granite called to inquire about submitting posters at the Science Forum and indicated that he would like to donate to the Forum
- Ken thanked Granite Oil Corp for their continued support

#### 5. Fall MRWCC Strategic Business Planning Session report

##### a. Revised Vision and Mission

- There is a lot of work that goes into revising the Vision and Mission as this will require all amendments to the Bylaws to be adopted by Service Alberta as per the Societies Act of Alberta
  - A society may, by special resolution, alter its objects to include some object or objects that may conveniently or advantageously be combined with the existing objects of the society (Societies Act, Section 16.1.a)

##### b. Teams Terms of Reference (ToR)

- As directed at the Strategic Planning Session, Team's Terms of Reference have been drafted for all existing Teams and will be brought back for Board approval once reviewed and approved at the Team level

##### c. Restructuring of WSM and R&M Teams

- The WSM committee met this morning
- Discussed Priority 1 (Secure Sustainable Water Supply) and Action items identified at Strategic Planning session:
  - ACTION 1: Re-establish the Water Supply and Management Team and revitalizing the team by bringing in new Team members including community water users and government reps
  - ACTION 2: Hire a consultant to compile background information regarding storage/alternative water supply/economy into a summary document to be circulated to residents in the watershed

- Timeline and Meeting schedules were discussed as follows:
  - ToR activities
  - Community meeting – December?
  - Team meeting – Before January Board Meeting
  - RFP for study investigations – End of January
  - Public report
- d. New team – Planning and Policy Team
  - To address Priority 2 (Source Water Protection) and Action items identified at Strategic Planning session:
    - ACTION: Establish a Planning and Policy Team with diverse membership. The Team may include Ron M. and include members from municipal works, Phil Boehme (AEP), Will L., Water Co-ops (Perry Reese, Paul Blust, Brian Halverson, Ed S.). Develop a Team Terms of Reference.
      - Team roles may address all planning - provincial plans, IWMP implementation, source water protection, approved WMP, responses to federal policies.
    - ACTION: Team to work with consultant to develop a Terms of Reference to guide the Source Water Protection Plan and work with the Team to complete the Plan.
    - ACTION: New Planning and Policy Team should have draft of ideas in place to Tim by mid-February to incorporate into funding application to the Province.

**Motion:** Ross Ford moved to proceed with development of the Planning and Policy Team and bring back the proceedings to the next Board meeting. Roy Audet seconded. **Carried.**

## 6. Draft Policies

- Policies were reviewed and discussed
- Lorraine Nicol presented some amendments that she had proposed
- It was decided that we needed more time to review the policies further and that other Board members had more input on the policies. The draft policies to be tabled and discussed at the January meeting

**Action:** Brian to forward the changes he drafted for the policies to Mary to be incorporated for the January meeting discussion.

## 7. 2018 Board Meeting Dates

- a. Dates for 2018 Board meetings were amended as follows:
  - January 25
  - March 22
  - April 26
  - May 24 (after the AGM)
  - September 27
  - November 22
- b. Other 2018 Important Dates
  - March 27 - Community Appreciation Forum
  - May 24 – AGM
  - October 25 (Strategic Planning Review)
  - November 8 (Tentative) – Science Forum

**Motion:** Ron McNeil moved to accept the 2018 Board meeting and other dates as amended. Ed Sloboda seconded. **Carried.**

#### **8. Christmas/Board Appreciation Dinner – December 8, 2017**

**Motion:** Ken Miller moved to have the Christmas/Board and volunteer Appreciation dinner at Mr. Mikes Restaurant in Lethbridge on December 8 from 5pm. Ross Ford seconded. **Carried.**

**Action:** Mary to circulate an email to the Board members and identified volunteers with dinner details and register those attending.

#### **9. WOSPP Business Management Plan feedback**

- This is an action item for MRWCC to present their feedback to Brad Tucker following his presentation on the WOSPP Strategic Business Plan

**Action:** Tim to compile the feedback and circulate to Board members for further feedback

- The Board requested that Brad report back on what recommendations were not adopted and why

#### **10. Team update – Notes provided**

##### **a. Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)**

##### ***Education Outreach Activity Report:***

- I have started to do follow ups with the schools. Have talked to the science teacher at Warner School about the gardening program they have been doing as well as possible students that would be interested in taking on a Caring For our Watersheds program. I will be doing a presentation for his science class soon. Will follow up with Foremost school next as well as check in with Karen.
- Met with WOSPP to discuss what has been working/not working with the partnership since I have been here. Mostly positive feedback and have identified ways to strengthen the partnership. Borrowed some old programs that were science based but haven't been delivered in awhile. Will continue to develop programs to fit grades not already covered.
  
- Have started writing out a program that will focus on biodiversity and producer stewardship. I found a game to go with the program that will teach about the role of fire in the grasslands. This should be a good way to get kids engaged as well as open up discussion.
- I have been helping Mary with updating the website. Most recently I have been updating the photo albums on the website to cover our major activities from the last 2 or 3 years.
- Hawk nests have been built by the grade 3's and are currently sitting at William Kings house. I was hoping to get them up before the snow came but that ended up being earlier than expected. I have scouted the locations and I am now in the process of figuring out if Milk River Cable would let us use their truck to get the nests up before March.
- Our internet and website hosting provider, Praetor Technologies will not be able to continue providing their services to MRWCC due to changes in their business structure. I have looked into switching our email system over to G Suite by Google. I found out that through our Tech Soup subscription we can apply to use G Suite for free as a non-profit.

As soon as Cary switches the domain settings I can get to work on switching our email system over. There are possibly some other perks to using this system including map making with Google Maps.

- Praetor Technologies will hopefully be able to give us some suggestions on who to use for a web host without having to completely re-build our website. Still waiting for him to call me back.
- Recently was able to audit a Deep Roots presentation given to a school in Lethbridge. Before and after the presentation I was able to talk to the person doing the virtual presentations for Alberta Parks (Sarah Downey) and she appears to be a good resource for program development. She is also going to represent Alberta Parks at a Science Forum in Banff and offered to promote our programs at WOSPP. I did up a summary for her and she will print it off and try to pass it out.

By Kandra Forbes, EO Coordinator

Tim thanked Kandra for her hard work in reaching out to Warner School and other projects

### ***Meander Newsletter:***

The Meander Newsletter articles have been submitted to Taber Press. We are expecting the newsletter to be out for distribution by November 22

### ***Red Creek Tour:***

Hosted the Red Creek Tour in partnership with County of Warner on September 26. About 8 producers visited 2 sites: a portable watering system located at the Hoytos property and a winter watering system located at Barry Snows property.

### ***Fall Hike Tour:***

The Fall Hike tour took place at the Sandstone Ranch on October 6. It was successful tour with 35 participants despite the windy day and snow on the ground.

Participants witnessed amazing landscapes and wildlife. Leta Pezderic with Nature Conservancy of Canada presented the history and NCC's work with species at risk, land management and weed control.

Many thanks to Dennis Spackman for providing transport for the tour, Ed Sloboda and William King for additional transport.

### ***Eastern Watershed Bus Tour:***

The Eastern Watershed Bus Tour was a huge success, with good feed back from participants. We have received a lot of emails and 'thank you' messages. Over 50 people participated the tour on October 20. We stopped at a number of sites: the Pinhorn Grazing Reserve, Lost River Canyon, One-Four Research Range, ACA Silver Sage Restoration Project and the Manyberries badlands. Participants were impressed with the speakers on the tour and mostly the tour guide, Ron McNeil.

Many thanks go to: Ron McNeil for guiding the tour and for his tireless knowledgeable presentations throughout the tour. William King for his historical presentation of the area, Lee Moltzahn (ACA) for his discussion on species at risk and presentation on the Silver Sage project, Gerry Ehlert (AEP), for the insight of the Onefour Ranch, Randy Stokke (Sustainable

Canada), for his passionate presentation on the impact of the Environmental Protection Order on the ranching community, and Ed Sloboda for providing additional transport.

### ***Science Forum – December 5, 2017***

The Milk River Watershed Council Canada is inviting the public to attend the Science Forum which will showcase scientific research that has been conducted in the Milk River Watershed and surrounding areas. This forum intends to provide a stage for researchers to share their findings with engaged community members and stakeholders. The Science Forum will be held on December 5, 2017, at the Milk River Civic Centre, starting at 9am. An agenda will be available end of November.

The deadline for proposal submission was November 13, 2017. Here are the top 8 proposals that we selected:

1. The Effects of Clipping and Compaction of Litter on Microbial Enzyme Activity, Vegetation, Soil Thermal Properties and Soil Health In Alberta's Rangelands. By Sara Barszczewski with University of Alberta.
2. Adoption of Precision Agriculture to Reduce Inputs, Enhance Sustainability and Increase Food Production – A Study of Southern Alberta. By Lorraine Nicol with Department of Economics, University of Lethbridge.
3. Of water quality and pesticides in the Canadian Prairies: Status, challenges and solutions. By Claudia Sheedy with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.
4. Water Quality Trends in Milk River. By Sandi Riemersma with Palliser Environmental Services Ltd.
5. Controlling Japanese Brome and Downy Brome in Native Grasslands using Simplicity Herbicide by Lee Moltzahn, Rangeland Agrologist with MULTISAR Program, Alberta Conservation Association.
6. Fecal Source Tracking & E-coli quick test project. By Lisa Tymensen with AF
7. Insect species on different cover (dry mixed grass; fescue grass; riparian; etc.), how they change over time (among years and by seasons), and their relative value as food for birds and other wildlife. By Dan Johnson, University of Lethbridge
8. The role of grassland insects in the diet of grouse and other birds. By Sejer Meyhoff, University of Lethbridge

### ***Community Appreciation Forum – March 27, 2018***

The MRWCC 2nd Annual Community Appreciation Forum has been scheduled for March 27, 2018. We apologise to the Board members who have stated that this date will not work for them, however, it happens to be a suitable date for most.

This forum was initiated to celebrate the great work of local landowners, leaseholders, and managers for being good environmental guardians of our working landscapes: Water, Land, and



Biodiversity, as well as bring awareness to current activities that promote watershed health. This forum also helps with fundraising efforts.

### ***Policy Manual***

We have been working on the policy manual including 8 draft policies that will be presented for approval at the Board Meeting

Planning to meet to review the drafted Team's TOR

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

Surface Water Monitoring:

We are planning to meet with AEP monitoring team end of November to discuss the joint project and review alignment from 2017 season and work on 2018 objectives.

The substrates that were placed on 5 locations on the main stem Milk River were removed on October 19 and we are happy to report that no mussels were found.

DFO – Overwintering Habitat Stewardship Project

Tim met with Rangeland Conservation Services Ltd. to review the project and come up with project framework and budgeting.

Rangeland Conservation Services Ltd. will be submitting the project framework in a couple of weeks.

Planning to complete the project before the Christmas break.

- December 14 to 18 – complete field data collection (weather dependent)
- We still have stewardship materials available for sites. We will include a site at the WOSPP, Rodeo grounds

The final part of the grant (\$25,000) is still outstanding

WRRP Phase 1 and 2 Projects

We still have funds remaining for phase 1

Phase 1 program will be closed March 31, 2018

In the process of soliciting projects for phase 2 projects

#### c. Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)

➤ Meeting report

- The team Planning Committee met this morning
  - Need to revitalize the team
  - All irrigators and other water users that are directly impacted by water issues will need representation on the team. At least 3 community members:
    - Some names to consider: Andrew Reese, Elise Walker, a rep from the Del Bonita area
    - One member should also represent the east part of the watershed
    - Need to review the 8 studies done so far to make recommendations
    - Will need to demonstrate to AEP the economic and social aspects of the studies that have been completed
    - This process will take time (about 8 months)

- Will need to hire a reputable contractor to compile all the studies and come up with a strong summary document
- Will need to put together RFP for the contractor which will be reviewed by the Team
- Contractor pay to be included in the budget as a funding request

d. Transboundary Watershed Team

- Joint Milk River Film Project update
- Funding has been solicited from all 4 rural and two urban municipalities, no funding has been received, MRWCC has committed 10,000 CAD for the project but was not funded by the GOA grant. MRWA has indicated they will continue either way but have budgeted for that contribution from Alberta. First part of the film has been completed
- Transboundary Grasslands – Montana workshop and work plan
- Planning to host a workshop in Glasgow MT at Cottonwoods Inn, February 13 to 15, 2018
- A draft agenda has been circulated
- Our Montana partners have secured sponsorship to support Farm and Ranch community members interested in participating to get to the workshop
- Tim and Ron continue to participate on the project team and will assist with the facilitated sessions

## 11. Upcoming Events

a. Science Forum

- December 5, 2017, Milk River Civic Center
- Taking registrations
- Board members attending to sign up with Mary
- About 30 people have registered so far

b. Transboundary Grasslands Conservation Workshop

- February 13 to 15, 2018, Cottonwoods Inn, Glasgow, MT
- Draft agenda has been circulated
- Tim will coordinate the Milk River Watershed working group including discussion of joint projects

c. Community Appreciation Forum

- March 27, 2018, Milk River Civic Center

## 12. Round table discussions

- Tim:
  - Andrew Schoepf's PowerPoint presentation on WPAC's Role Review was discussed
  - Staff have worked on the 1<sup>st</sup> draft in addressing the questions presented

**Action:** Tim to circulate the presentation and the draft comments to the Board members for further feedback

- Kandra:
  - PCF will be providing funding for Courtney Taylor for her trip to Nevada to compete at the Society for Range Management
  - Courtney is planning to give 2 presentations; one to the MRWCC and the other to PCF

- Inside Education is inviting MRWCC to participate in their Navigate Youth Water Summit. However, it appears there is a \$5,000 sponsor request
- No action should be taken
- Kandra will follow-up
- Will:
  - Requested to know how the deferred contribution issue is going
    - So far, there has not been a response to the report that was submitted
    - Still waiting to hear from the Province

**13. Other items**

**14. Meeting Adjournment**

**Motion:** Ed Sloboda moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:04pm. **Carried.**

**15. Next Meeting Date**

- January 25, 2018 in Milk River

**Signatures:**

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Secretary:** \_\_\_\_\_