



## Minutes

### MRWCC Board Meeting

January 26, 2017 – 1:30 PM

### Town of Milk River Office

**Present:** John Ross, Roy Audet, Lloyd Closson, Darcy Wills, William King, Warren Cunningham, Frank Larney, Suzanne Liebelt, Ken Miller, Ed Sloboda, Brian Hills, Scott McGarty, Ron McNeil, Lorraine Nicol, Tim Romanow and Mary Lupwayi

**Absent:** Kristen Dykstra, Ross Ford, Will Lindeman, Dennis Spackman and Joan Hughson

**Guests:** Travis Sjovold, W-O-S-P-P/LRM Area Manager, Alberta Environment and Parks, represented Dennis Spackman

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

- John Ross welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought the meeting to order at 1:35pm
- Introductions were conducted
- Travis Sjovold introduced himself as the Area Manager at WOSPP with Alberta Environment and Parks and he was representing Dennis Spackman

#### 2. Minutes from November 24, 2016 meeting

- November 24, 2016 Board meeting minutes were reviewed
- William requested that the line on page 14 be amended to read leopard frog population was doing well

**Motion:** Roy Audet moved to accept the minutes as amended. Ron McNeil seconded. **Carried.**

#### 3. Financial update

- a. Financial statements update
  - November Financial Statements
    - November closing balance was \$225,718.05
  - December Financial Statements
    - December closing balance was \$202,516.08

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

- a. *AEP grant program priorities*
  - No big changes happening right now
  - Education outreach becoming a larger priority role – not just youth education
  - No support for SOW reports, asked to 'pause' efforts until a clear objective or direction identified from GOA
  - WPAC Review is still underway and no decisions have been made

- Will take time to work through the review and consider all opportunities
- Financial reports and demonstrating success is prerequisite to receiving any new funds
- Collaborative projects strongly encouraged, WPACs need to work together
- Grant application package for 2017-18 will be sent out end of January or early February, which will include GOA priorities for each WPAC to consider
- GOA Approval for a multiyear (3 year) grant – still will apply annually, but program funding has been secured through 2020
- Grants will be due first week of March
- Initial funds deposited early April
- Interim reports have been reviewed and submissions have been made to finance and should receive deposits next week
- Auditor General was clear that they don't want to see a separation between core and project work because groups are not valuable without both
- Need to show all funds spent within the year
- Capital assets over \$5,000 will require approval
- GOA working on a written document to each WPAC to highlight priorities and alignment
- GOA recognizing need for clarity on WPAC's role within water management system and regional planning. More formal role being worked out, considering all options and implications
- Monitoring may become an eligible activity though need clarity between citizen science versus QA/QC science.
- Review is underway to look at improving efficiency and alignment of work with GOA priorities
- WPACs will be part of those discussions

#### Discussion on State of the Watershed Report:

- Not all the State of the Watershed Reports are equal; some SOW reports cost more money to produce although that might not be indicative of value
- Department internal survey shows that SOW reports may not be needed to be updated every 5 years
- Would like to see the Milk River Transboundary State of the Watershed Report updated due to its value in bridging the transboundary communities
- The Milk River Transboundary State of the Watershed Report is unique due to its transboundary nature

- Have received good feedback from other jurisdiction that the Transboundary SOW is a useful tool
- It also has to be noted that the Milk River Transboundary State of the Watershed Report had a huge in-kind contribution from AEP
- Will need to look for external funding from the other transboundary partners
- Do we need to communicate to the AEP Minister to express the value of the Milk River Transboundary State of the Watershed Report?
- It is premature to send a letter to the Minister until the “Roles of WPACs” report is completed
- Need to find out other WPACs take on this as well
- Does our SOW report have value to the Government or Academia?
- Academia and government feel that the SOW report is a synthesis of data the government already has, best value of our SOW reports is as an outreach tool that bridges the scientific community and general public, builds better understanding of all the work happening within the watershed, beyond GOA including academia, municipal, and helps identify data gaps for future research
- Build a social and numerical value of existing usage
- Will need to table this for discussion at the Strategic Business Management session in October

**Action:** Tim is to work on building a case for value in a new or update SOW report over 2017-2018 fiscal year, we will pause SOW Team preparations and not seek GOA funding at this time.

*b. Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program update*

- The current MRWCC project funding will be completed in March, 2018
- We are submitting another multi-year application for \$250,000 for 3 years for completion in the year 2020
- The application is for an expansion on our success and include the Sand-bed reach of the Milk River and priority sites on other tributaries farther east
- This will work well with the HSP funding for the overwintering project

*c. HSP grant – Milk River Over-Wintering Habitat Stewardship Project update*

- Have chosen 12 sites
- Will use most of the monitoring sites so that we can compare data
- There are some budget constraints and will need volunteers to help with field work and will need to move funds arounds to allow completion of the project
- Contractor will provide own cameras
- Field work will start next week and the week after

**4. Community Appreciation Forum - March 9**

a. *Draft Agenda and Speakers were discussed as follows:*

- Will start at 2pm
- Welcome and Brief Activity Report - John Ross, MRWCC Chairman
- Chronic Wasting Disease – Darrel Rowledge, CEO, Preventive Safety Research Inc.
- Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program – Tim Romanow, Executive Director
- Species at Risk and Ranchers - Randy Stokke, Sustainable Canada
- Mussels and Mutts: The Alberta Conservation K-9 Program - Cindy Sawchuk, Invasive Species Conservation Lead, Alberta Environment and Parks and Hilo, Conservation K-9
- Ferruginous Hawks Research and Diversity - Janet Ug, FEHA Researcher
- Community Award Presentations
- Mark Oswald - 2016 Top Hand Award Winner
- Poster Contest, Branch Manager, Milk River ATB Financial
- Heritage Tree(s) Award
- Environmental Stewardship Award
- Dinner by Laura Balog Catering Services
- Displays and end of Silent Auction
- 6-8pm Social time
- Meeting will end at 8pm

b. *Fundraising*

- Silent Auction. Soliciting for items
- 50/50 draw
- Watershed raffle
  - Spring and fall Hike Tour registrations (2)
  - Canoe the Milk – will give a free registration (2) for the canoe tour in June
  - Fly the Milk – John Ross confirmed that he will provide the flight

c. *Registration fee?*

- There should be a prerequisite for registration

**Motion:** Darcy Wills moved to accept the Community Appreciation Forum agenda with free registration for this year and reevaluate the situation next year depending on this year's meeting success. Ron McNeil seconded. **Carried.**

## **5. WPAC Managers Meeting report**

- There was a presentation on Sand and Gravel Pit Policy Review by Don Watson and Natasha Page
  - Regulated under EPEA and PLA activity and land brought together two and a half years ago, was very chaotic, working on streamlining process from application to reclamation certification
  - There is need for clarity on responsibilities
  - Review came because of Auditor General Report, municipalities and industry feedback
  - Municipalities need guidance and guidelines
  - Some are developing Land Use Policies
  - When meetings are held AEP does not often attend
  - It is common to apply for a small pit when plan is to grow it over time into large pit to escape class II pit status
  - Pits located on or near drinking water sources are problematic
  - Pits that are grandfathered in are poorly managed and require attention
  - Risk assessment must be rigorous enough that nearby landowners and public can trust the decision
- WPAC Summit:
  - 2016:
    - Directors really liked networking opportunities mainly
    - AEP did not provide clear direction or new info from Ernie's presentation so it was impossible to write a concrete communique
    - Everyone really liked the WPAC projects summary booklet
  - 2017:
    - Suggested to skip a year since October 2017 will be municipal elections
    - Next summit will be fall 2018 hosted by the Peace Region watersheds

## **6. Milk River Watershed Alliance (Montana) cooperative projects**

- Transboundary Grasslands Workshop brought forth a proposal to produce a video project among the transboundary partners, highlighting the transboundary watershed
- The proposal is for \$40,000 US taken over six different filming locations, interviews, and topics
- There is no money in the budget this fiscal period
- Our Montana partners are requesting \$10,000 dollars to support the project
- There is need to recognize that if anything happens to the system in Montana e.g. rupture of the pipes, it will affect Alberta as well
- Two possibilities were raised:

1. Make an application with the AEP funding application
  2. Solicit contributions from other partners
- Lorraine will find out if there is a student at U of L available to help with the project
  - Good project to feature at a future Community Appreciation Forum

**Motion:** Darcy Wills moved to support the project. Suzanne Liebelt seconded. **Carried.**

#### **7. EO Coordinator update**

- Shortlisted 8 candidates
- Interview panel – Tim, Warren, Ed and Mary
- Darcy and Will requested not to be part of the interview panel citing conflict of interest due to their relationship with the candidates
- Strong resumes

#### **8. MRWCC draft donation/funding policy**

- Due to time constraints at the meeting, it was decided that Tim would circulate the draft policy to Board members and table the discussion for the next Board meeting

#### **9. Team Updates**

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

- Youth Range Days update
  - Scheduled for July 18, 19, and 20, 2017 at Gold Springs in the County of Warner
  - Good location for the planned activities
  - This will be the 10th Anniversary so planning to invite alumni for a BBQ on the evening of July 17th and possibly give a presentation on the morning of the 18th to the group
  - Working on the agenda
  - Soliciting sponsorship
- Spring Hike Tour
  - Planning for April 21, 2017
  - McIntyre and Sandstone Ranch area
  - Contact Mike Uchikura of ACA, who manages access for entry permission
  - Dennis Spackman has indicated that he would provide the bus but need to confirm
  - Need to talk to Leta with NCC to see if she can give a presentation on the Grazing association and partnership.
  - Good site for access

- Could also contact Keston Prince who now manages the McIntyre Ranch and see if we could visit the north slope of the Milk River Ridge
- Winter Meander Newsletter
  - Has been distributed
- Environmental Stewardship Awards nominations
  - Have received a nomination for the Red Creek Watershed Stewardship Group
  - Deadline to submit nominations is February 3, 2017
- Heritage Tree nominations
  - Two potential sites, one within the WOSPP and a second within the Kennedy Coulee Ecological Reserve
- Canoe Trip
  - Looking at a 2 day trip, June 10 and 11, 2017 tentatively
  - From John Ross' place to Pinhorn site and an overnight camp at Old Kanna place
  - Tim will coordinate a BBQ for dinner on the night of June 10th
  - Will not need a bus but will use trucks due to limited access
  - Contact Laurie to provide lunches for both days
  - Need to be a prepaid trip for registrants to avoid no show issues
  - John Ross has given permission to access his land
- b. *Research and Monitoring Team (R&M Team)*
  - Planning a meeting February 15, 2017 in Lethbridge
  - Surface water monitoring
    - Sandi is working on the 2016 report to be presented at the meeting
    - No details as of yet from Wendell on the status of project partnerships with AEP for the 2017 program.
  - Source Water Protection Workshop
    - Looking at stress tests of scenarios that would impact groundwater and surface water in the watershed
    - Need to hire a facilitator to run the workshop and come up with a report after the workshop that will inform a TOR for a Source Water Protection Plan under the SSRP
    - Put together a committee by invitation comprised of source water service groups and stakeholders reps such as:
      - Water users
      - Government

- Industry
- Municipalities
- Community
- Health Services
- Stress tests that could be incorporated in the emergency preparedness scenario:
  - Fire – situation similar to 2012, what if it occurs during natural flow after Oct 1st
  - Drought –year 3 of a projected 5 year drought, low river flows, 40% of normal
  - Spill – Plains Midstream site – impact on whiskey valley aquifer and water coop wells
  - Pipeline break – contamination potential if located West of Milk River
  - Syphon failure (mid-season) – In MT, impact and rationing of source water required with less than three days’ notice
  - Aquatic invasive species – Quagga Mussel infestation in the Upper St Mary’s, and impact on infrastructure and water users
  - Water contamination – AG source impact, cumulative effects from management practices? E-Coil 157 outbreak and sustained challenges
- Can tie in with the Milk River video project
- c. Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)
  - The JIC has finalized 2 of the 3 reports
  - The 3rd report is in the final stage
- d. Transboundary Watershed Team
  - Transboundary Grasslands Workshop report was circulated
  - 65 participants
  - Great reviews from the agencies
  - There is going to be a facilitated report submitted
  - Provided a constructive solution on the SAR Act
  - A better ground work for partnerships
  - Montana has made a strong commitment to work with the committee
  - Good recognition of land owners rights
  - Tim stated that he was having difficulty coming up with a response on the 7 draft SARA policies that are seeking feedback until March 31<sup>st</sup>

## 10. Upcoming event

- a. Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop - February 8 to 9, 2017, Regina Saskatchewan
- b. Working Well Workshop – February 9, 2017, Heritage Hall, Milk River
- c. Community Appreciation Forum - March 9, 2017, Milk River Civic Center
- d. Septic Sense Workshop – March 15, 2017, Heritage Hall, Milk River

**11. Round table discussions**

- Suzanne Liebelt:
  - Tourism vision session for the community
    - Badlands to give tourism tools
    - Coming back Tuesday morning
    - Anyone is welcome to attend
- William King:
  - The Canoe trip should be scheduled after June 15 due to branding
- Suzanne Liebelt:
  - There is room on the Milk River main entrance sign and was wondering if the MRWCC would like to place a sign
  - Need to inquire on the pricing

**Motion:** Ed Sloboda moved to place a MRWCC sign on the entrance sign. Lorraine Nicol seconded. **Carried.**

- Warren Cunningham:
  - Needed to find out what the update of the E.coli project
  - Lisa is working on the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the project
  - Have not been updated on the findings of this project
- Darcy Wills:
  - Need to keep an eye on the Frank’s Lake presentation
  - Darcy to research and report back

**12. Other items**

**13. Meeting Adjournment**

**Motion:** Ed Sloboda moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:24pm. **Carried.**

**14. Next Meeting Date**

- March 23, 2017 – Milk River at 1:30pm

**Signatures:**

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

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