



## Minutes

### MRWCC Board Meeting

February 4, 2016 – 1:30 PM

Town of Milk River Office

**Present:** Will Lindeman, Lloyd Closson, William King, Suzanne Liebelt, Ed Sloboda, Frank Larney, Ron McNeil, Kristen Dykstra, Warren Cunningham, Ross Ford, Lorraine Nicol, Brian Hills, Aaron Domes, Ryan Hall, Tim Romanow and Mary Lupwayi

**Absent:** Ken Miller, Darcy Wills, John Ross, Joan Hughson, Roy Audet, Dennis Spackman, Trevor Murray

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

- Will Lindeman welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought the meeting to order at 1:35 pm
- Introductions were conducted

#### 2. Minutes from November 26, 2015 meeting

- Last meeting minutes were reviewed
- An amendment was called to correct the year 2015 to read 2016 on two occurrences

**Motion:** William King moved to accept the minutes as amended. Ron McNeil seconded.

**Carried.**

#### 3. Financial Statements

- November Financial Statements
  - November closing balance was \$370,666.56
- December Financial Statements
  - December closing balance was \$354,103.06

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

- Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program Grant update
  - The MRWCC is currently soliciting for projects that provide flood protection, reduce reliance on surface water for livestock, and/or will benefit water quality and riparian function within Reach 1 and 3 of the Milk River
  - Eligible projects include:
    - Riparian and creek restoration

- Riparian corridor fencing and exclusion fencing
- Livestock Wintering Site Management & Winter Water systems
- Remote watering systems & Spring Developments
- Working with Counties to identify projects
- A letter has been drafted that will be sent to targeted land owners and producers
- There was a request to remove the application deadline in the letter for fear that applications might be delayed
- Funding for 2016 water monitoring project
  - A Research and Monitoring Meeting has been scheduled for February 9, 2016 in Lethbridge
  - AEMERA has not confirmed that they will fund the analytical costs for water monitoring project for 2016
  - Need to look at alternative funding sources
- Core and project grant update
  - Applications were due February 1, 2016
  - The MRWCC has applied for \$365,500 for 2016/17 in core and project funding
  - In 2015/16 fiscal year the MRWCC received \$280,000 for both core and project funding
  - Total project funding of \$51,500 has been submitted for the following projects:
    - Groundwater Quality Investigation (*in support of the 2018 SOW*)
    - Source Water Protection Planning Workshop for municipal partners and key watershed stakeholders
    - Milk River Over-Wintering Habitat Stewardship Project
    - State of the Watershed Report 2018 TOR
    - Invasive Weed/Riparian Mapping using near-infrared spectroscopy

#### **4. South Saskatchewan Region Biodiversity Management Framework update**

- Christine Sweet to give a update presentation at a future Board meeting
- Tim, John and Ron attended the meeting in Lethbridge – feedback provided
- Ross and Ron have sent in their feedback which will be circulated to Board Members

- It was a valuable meeting but there was expressed disappointment that some of the recorders lacked the ability to accurately record or understand concerns.
- Deadline to submit feedback is end of March
- There was a question as to whether MRWCC needs to submit a collective response

**Motion:** Suzanne Liebelt moved to establish a Biodiversity Management Framework subcommittee to represent the interests of the MRWCC. Warren Cunningham seconded.

**Carried.**

- The following volunteered to be on the MRWCC Biodiversity Management Framework subcommittee:
  - Tim Romanow
  - Ron McNeil
  - John Ross
  - Ross Ford
- It was also advised that a guest presenter be invited to give a presentation on the topic and discuss future involvement of the MRWCC with the BMF

## **5. Milk River Approved Water Management Plan Update**

- Phil Bohme is putting together the feedback that was received after the public meeting and will be circulated to the Board members
- There has been a delay due to consultation with First Nations

## **6. WPAC Forum update**

- Tim, Mary and Kathryn attended the WPAC Forum in Leduc on Jan 14, 2016
- There was a call for all WPACs to support regional planning in:
  - Education and Outreach
  - Watershed reporting
  - Development of stakeholder led and non-regulatory watershed management plans under Water for Life in alignment with regional planning
  - Support of local watershed stewardship groups
  - Develop BMPs
  - Implementation of management plans
- Tim also stated that more notes about the summit were circulated to the board members

- Overall, the summit was valuable

## **7. 11<sup>th</sup> AGM**

- Agenda
  - Working on putting together the agenda
  - A “save the date” flyer with open seats has been sent out

**Action:** Board members that are planning to let their names stand should let Tim know at the next Board meeting

- Need to invite the Chairman from The MRWA in Montana
- Speakers
  - A presenter at the Transboundary Workshop from the South of the Divide organization could be a good presenter at the AGM
  - Claudia Sheedy, Water Scientist with Agriculture Canada on Water Quality
  - Dr. Hans Schreier University of BC, Canada’s Food Export strategy in view of water constraints
  - Dr. Stefan Kienzle University of Lethbridge, Mapping Climate Trends across Alberta (1950-2010)
  - Brent Paterson, The Economic Value of Irrigation in Alberta
  - Tim will start contacting potential presenters

## **8. WPAC Managers Meeting Report**

- There is need for province wide education programs within schools such as X-Stream Science programing being led by RDRWA and BRWA
- WPACs to source funds of about \$20,000 per WAPC to deliver X-Stream Science across the province.
- SEAWA and Athabasca Water Council are seeking new staff
- There is need for WPAC cohesiveness in response to GOA programming and initiatives
- Planning to have a simplified version of WPAC Summit in winter of 2016 in Calgary and also see if WPACs can come up with resolutions
- There is a CWRA national conference being held in Lethbridge, June 5 to 7, 2017 which will be marking the 70th annual national conference. This could be a great venue for WPACs to present

## **9. Twin River Natural Area Planning Update**

- Brian Laing, the Approvals Manager with Rangeland Management Operations Division, South Saskatchewan Region, Environment and Parks gave a presentation at the County of Warner on the proposal for reclassification and boundary amendment for the Twin River Heritage Rangeland Natural Area
- The County of Warner is looking for feedback from lease holders in the area
- Would like the summary of the outcome presented at the Board meeting and would also like to see a collective response from the MRWCC

## 10. Team Updates

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

- Youth Engagement Program Report
  - YRDs
    - 2016 YRDs program will be held in Cypress Hills, Elkwater on July 5, 6 and 7, 2016
    - In the process of getting registrations and soliciting funding
  - Online Course
    - Kathryn is sick and was not able to attend the meeting
    - Kathryn is currently repackaging the material so that it can be delivered in other forms as well
  - Poster Contest
    - Have received funding from ATB - \$300 and Alberta Emerald Foundation - \$400
    - This funding will be used for winner prizes that will be presented at the AGM
    - All schools in the watershed have been contacted
    - Kathryn is in the process of following up with phone calls
  - Caring for Our Watersheds Program
    - All High schools in the watershed have been contacted
    - Kathryn is in the process of following up with phone calls
  - Field Tours and Classroom Presentations
    - Kathryn is working with WOSPP to come up with dates and presentation material
    - Darcy and Robbie Wills are also working with Kathryn on the field tours and classroom presentations

- Environmental Stewardship Awards Nominations
  - In the process of advertising for nominations
  - Have advertised in the Town of Milk River Newsletter
  - Kerry Hyatt with County of Warner will help with nominations as well
- Spring Hike Tour
  - Planning to visit the Twin River Provincial Grazing Reserve but it will depend on weather
  - Plan to also visit Buffalo Jump and Mazama Ash
- EO Coordinator meeting update
  - A good opportunity to meet other Education Coordinators, brainstorm and share experiences and ideas
- Xeriscaping Program
  - There is need to move ahead with the project
  - Have put together a proposal to see if the Milk River Town Council and MRWCC can collaborate on the project
  - The proposal has been sent to Suzanne Liebelt who will present the idea at the Town Council
  - Planning to have a workshop in Milk River, invite a presenter and have a tour of xeriscape areas to help bring awareness of the importance of the project to the community

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

- A team meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2016
- Invasive Weed Mapping Cooperative Project
  - Mapping was done on North Fork and South Fork in late August, 2015 to identify spotted knapweed
  - The data is being processed but there are challenges
  - The data was collected late in the season making it difficult to identify the knapweed from the other vegetation
  - The data has approximately 50% confidence level
  - Although the confidence level is low with knapweed verification, the data can be valuable and used in other projects such as linear disturbance and identification of other invasive species like Russian olive

- The project cost is just under \$13,000 for the work done on the North and South Fork in 2015
- Cardston County has confirmed payment of \$5,000
- Winter Fish Habitat and Under-Ice Scoping Study
  - Palliser Environmental has started working on the project scoping study
  - 2 sites have been identified at Pinhorn and Upstream Milk River for the study
  - 2 GoPro cameras that have been loaned from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will be used to monitor fish
  - Can also monitor other characteristics such as DO
  - Have applied funding for the project through the HSP program to be carried out next winter if funding is approved
  - Will also work on stewardship projects
  - Working in partnership with Shane Petry, AEP and Doug Watkinson, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
  - The scoping study done by Palliser Environmental will determine the feasibility of this study
- Groundwater Quality Community Report – Industrial Summary Project
  - Not much data was available
  - There are only 3 wells that have been identified with available data
- c. *Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)*
  - Milk River Water Storage Update
    - Mitigation and Resiliency Branch is looking to have a joint tour with MRWCC of the Headwaters/diversion in Montana, meet with the Town and County and view the potential forks dam site this spring
- d. *Transboundary Watershed Team*
  - Prairie Transboundary Workshop Update
    - The workshop was a success
    - Ron represented both the PCF and MRWCC
    - PCF paid for all workshop expenses
    - MRWCC paid for the 3 representatives (Ron, Tim and Darcy)
    - The conference had representatives from all three Transboundary partners (Montana, Saskatchewan and Alberta)

- Three good outcomes of the conference with regards to MRWCC
  - Solicit contacts for the 2018 State of the Watershed Report
  - Strong emphasis among Montana, Saskatchewan and Alberta
  - Keep the dialogue going among the three areas
- Notes for the summation of the meeting are being prepared for distribution and a website link will be provided for all presentations

### **11. Upcoming events**

- Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference February 16 -18, Saskatoon
  - Ross, Tim and Mary will attend the conference
  - Tim will give a presentation on the MRWCC-IWMP and Biodiversity
  - A YRDs poster on lessons learned will also be presented
- Spring Hike Tour – Twin River Heritage Rangeland, April, 2016
- MRWCC AGM - Milk River – May 31, 2015

### **12. Round table discussion**

- William King:
  - Milk River Ecological Reserve has been authorized to have one more graze and reassess the effects afterwards
  - Planning an AGM in March
- Brian Hill:
  - The Premier of Alberta conducted a cabinet shuffle
  - There is a new Climate Change Department within the Ministry of AEP
  - Montana has approved relocation of sage grouse to Canada
  - IJC will be working on water allocation final records February 18 and 19

### **13. Other items**

- Employee Benefits:
  - Experiencing some challenges with the current employee benefit group plan
  - Asking to switch to a better plan with group health system that can carry 3 to 15 employees which we are eligible now with the addition of Kathryn

**Motion:** Warren Cunningham moved to switch the employee benefit plan from Blue Cross Group to Silverberg Group. Ed Sloboda seconded. **Carried.**



**14. Meeting Adjournment**

**Motion:** Ed Sloboda moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:55pm. **Carried.**

**15. Next Meeting**

- March 24 in Milk River at 1:30pm

**Signatures:**

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

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