



Minutes
MRWCC Board Meeting
September 27, 2018 – 1:30 PM
Town of Milk River Office

Present: Ken Miller, William King, Lorraine Nicol, Ross Ford, Joan Hughson, Will Lindeman, Ben Ellert, John Ross, Brian Hills, Kristen Dykstra, Scott McGarty, Ron McNeil, Darcy Wills, Kandra Forbes, Tim Romanow, and Mary Lupwayi

Absent: Dennis Spackman, Warren Cunningham, Ed Sloboda, Suzanne Liebelt, Roy Audet, and Jim Willett,

Conference Call: Sandi Riemersma (present for Twin River Heritage Rangeland presentation and part of the Water Supply Investigation TOR and RFP quote)

Guests: Jennell Rempel, Senior Parks Planner, AEP
Linda Cerney, Integrated Resource Planner - Grasslands Land and Environmental Planning (South)
Travis Sjovold, Manager, Land and Resource Management, AEP
Scott MacCumber, representing Village of Coutts

1. Welcome and introductions

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

2. Approve Agenda

- An addition to the agenda:
 - Discussion on how Council award contracts and cost of the contracts

Motion: Ross Ford moved to approve the agenda with the addition. Will Lindeman seconded. **Carried**

3. Minutes from May 24, 2018 meeting

- Page 3 - Change Chairman nomination seconded by Ron McNeil to Ross Ford
- Page 6, "Translocation of sage grouse that was supposed to be approved this spring has been cancelled" should read "Translocation of sage grouse that was approved by Montana was cancelled due to weather."

Motion: William King moved to accept the minutes as amended. Lorraine Nicol seconded. **Carried**

4. Twin River Heritage Rangeland Reclassification and Expansion. Ms. Jennell Rempel, AEP
- Jennell:

- thanked everyone for the invitation to present on behalf of the proposal on Twin River Heritage Rangeland Natural Area
- On August 14, Jennell and Linda presented to John Ross, Ross Ford, and Tim Romanow to respond on the initial opening of the public consultation window on the Twin River project as a follow up to 2015 information sessions
- The goal of the presentation is to give an update on the August 14th meeting and respond to the letter provided by the MRWCC which listed a number of concerns related to the proposal
- The public consultation window will be closed this Sunday but will not be the end of the engagement but the beginning of the deeper conversation on the operation and management of Twin River
- The update will explore what a Heritage Rangeland is, and what it isn't
- Explore how Twin River is currently protected
- What a Natural Area is, and what it isn't
- Issues & concerns expressed by the MRWCC, the consultation and next steps
- Jennell went on to present the letter from the MRWCC and explain that the department has taken serious measures to respond to the issues and concerns in the letter:
 - 30-day consultation not appropriate
 1. The Government responded by providing a 60-day consultation period
 - Four key concerns:
 1. Development of on/off stream Storage within the redesignated Twin River Heritage Rangeland
 - What type of Consultative Notation (CNTs) and Protective Notation (PNTs) are currently active within the Natural Area
 - CNTs and PNTs are notations that apply to particular areas that if development was to occur, they would have a certain number associated to it which will give information as to why the area has a certain notation
 - The potential reservoir area concerned Consultative Notation was first designated in the mid-80s when it was being explored. No expiry date associated with the Consultative Notation. This exists within the Natural Area hence will not change regardless of the outcome of the proposal to reclassify the area
 - The development of the water storage within a natural area or heritage rangeland is not a compatible use, so for water storage to be done in the area, the area has to be deregulated by taking it out of its protective classification

- The reclassification proposal does not change the ability for water storage potential within Twin River
- The Natural Area and Heritage Rangeland are both housed within the same type of legislation
- CNT would be the right tool for the Twin River
- This documentation needs to be transparent to ensure that the community know that these are CNT lands
- The CNT is managed within government and is accessible by any government department that would be looking to do any development in the area and will be tracked within the data base and if any form of development is to occur, the notation comes up and that process is activated
- Protected areas management is a complex process with many rights that may happen at the same time that will need to be examined as well
- The notations can be requested or can be publicly accessed

Action: Jennell to provide to MRWCC information that lays out the key elements of information that Twin River has a Consultative Notation due to potential reservoir development on the site

- MRWCC received hard copies of the proposal on the Twin River and there were past and present presentations delivered to council as well as the link to the online consultation tool
- The management plan has not been drafted yet
- Within the Twin River, Heritage Rangeland Natural Area was designated as part of the development of the SSRP which was approved in 2014 and set forward a number of targets as well as criteria on how land will be managed within Southern Alberta
- Twin River is currently designated as a Natural Area for the classification of Heritage land to be explored as a more appropriate tool for its management
- Today we are exploring the reclassification of Twin River from its current Natural Area classification into the Heritage Rangeland classification
- Although “Heritage Rangeland” was put in the name it is not the current classification. The current classification is the “Natural Area”
- During the SSRP process, some lease holders came forward and asked to become part of the protective space to become Heritage Rangeland
- Also exploring increasing the protected area status of the Heritage Rangeland to include what is currently held as

Publicland to be included as part of the larger Heritage Rangeland designation

- As part of the special places' nomination, Twin River was established as a Natural Area called the Heritage Rangeland Natural Area as a way of designating the management intent for the Heritage Rangeland classification

Background:

- In 2008 we had the Land Use Framework which set out the direction for looking at land management across the entire province and call for the development of the regional plans leading into the development of the SSRP
- This is a follow-up on commitments made for complex land management decisions that take into account multiple sectors such as economic, ecological, agricultural factors, etc. The SSRP is available online and Twin River is referenced in the plan to explore the expansion and reclassification of the area to better represent grassland conservation through grazing management practices
- The proposed target date was 2015 when the MRWCC was first contacted in the information sessions
- Now, in 2018 - delivering on those initial commitments

2. Ecological and Historical Resource Justification

- Why Twin River?
 - Mixed grassland habitats
 - Ecological integrity of the area
 - Biodiversity of the area
 - Grazing and grassland stewardship
- Heritage Rangeland Management plan, stakeholders are brought to the table and their input is essential to the management area
- If the Twin River becomes a Heritage Rangeland, MRWCC will be at the table and will be able to provide input in the management planning process and vegetation management planning design and can be part of the advisory management committee and have input in the management of the area
- The committee will include 2 or 3 representatives from the stakeholders who will represent all the leaseholders
- Requesting that during the management planning process there are at least 50% of representation from leaseholders
- There are more tools with the Heritage Rangeland classification than the Natural Area

- Currently there is no management plan for Twin River until it becomes a Heritage Rangeland
- 3. Economic impact to Subsurface Rights Holders of the expanded Heritage Rangeland
 - Subsurface rights – industrial development is limited in a Heritage Rangeland but there are provisions in place that existing rights and dispositions will be honoured
 - This does not apply to grazing rights, mines and minerals rights, privately owned or freehold minerals
- 4. Changes to Lease agreements
 - Natural Area Verses Heritage Rangeland
 - Natural Area:
 - Protect the sensitive or scenic land or features on public lands from disturbance and maintain those lands for use in their natural state for nature appreciation
 - Can have recreational development but need to be approved
 - Lower conservation focus
 - Lower focus on grazing and ranching
 - Heritage Rangeland:
 - Designated to ensure preservation and protection using grazing to maintain the grass ecology
 - No recreational development
 - Conservation is directly tied to grazing and ranching
 - Management directives can be obtained online
 - 400 responses on the online survey
 - 270 completed surveys and other correspondences
 - Next Steps:
 - Summary of consultation
 - Develop recommendations
 - Continue with engagement
 - Jennell is willing to come back and present on the feedback
 - The MRWCC will need a summary document of the process
 - John Ross thanked Jennell, Linda and Travis for the presentation

Discussion:

- Ron:
 - Good response from MRWCC
 - How do we respond? What are the needs to be identified for the management plan?
 - Process should be better vetted with the community
- John:

- Most people don't mind the Heritage Rangeland designation with grazing as a principle tool but along that comes the criteria for what is going to be included in the Heritage Rangeland
- Ron:
 - How do we deal with the expansion when there is nonnative vegetation?
- Ross:
 - When met with the ADM, there was a suggestion that one of the expansions be used as an offset for the dam site. Can we build on that?
 - Would like to see the document stating the area has protective notation
 - Will need to request for the documentation
- Tim:
 - Jennell did a good job addressing our concerns
 - Having the 4 points written up was good as we would not have the opportunity to respond in 30 days
 - The 60-day extension was good
 - There is still issues with reclassification, but the expansion part is what I have concern with and we need to take a closer look at it
 - Need a better reclassification criteria and prioritization
 - What is the threat? Why the rush to do this before setting up a management committee?
 - More work must be done on the justification of location of the expansion
 - Council needs to decide what to do next
- Ken:
 - Need to respond to our specific questions in writing
- Ron:
 - We also need to give individual comments
- Tim:
 - Everyone needs to complete the survey
- Scott McGarty:
 - Good presentation but brought more questions
 - Need to ask for more time
- Next steps:
 - Will need to set up a committee to respond
 - Ask for extension of deadline
 - Develop management committee and framework
 - Documentation of notation on the dam site

Motion: Scott McGarty moved to send an email to extend the deadline. Darcy Wills seconded. **Carried**

- Thanked ADM Rick Blackwood for bringing our concerns forward
- Send feedback to Tim as soon as possible

5. Financial update

- a. Financial statements update

- April to August 2018 Financial Statements
 - A motion was made at the May Board meeting to move away from contracting financial records
 - Thanks to Mary for taking on the task
 - Financial statements looked good
- b. 2018/19 AEP Core/Project interim budget report
 - Approved funds \$270,000
 - Initial ask \$411,000
 - Had to adjust the budget to meet available funds and supplement with other funding sources

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

6. Alberta Water Council Projects update

- Will provide an email update

7. AB WPAC Manager's update

- Will provide an email update

8. WPAC Summit report

- Will provide an email update

9. Board Governance Workshop

- Scheduled for October 25, 2018, at the Galt Museum in Lethbridge, from 8:30am to 4:30pm
- A free workshop facilitated by Alberta Culture and Tourism
- Partnering with SEAWA, OWC, and BRBC
- Register with Mary as soon as possible
- Those attending to complete the survey that was sent

10. Strategic Management Planning review

11. Milk River Community Christmas Party

- The Town of Milk River is inviting the MRWCC to attend the Milk River Community Christmas Dinner on December 8 and the cost is \$40 each
- Must be 18 and over to attend
- This will be in leu of our usual Board appreciation/Christmas dinner
- Need to know attendance to make payment for the dinner
- Register with Mary as soon as possible
- A good idea to support the community

Motion: Ron McNeil moved to join the Town of Milk River for the Christmas Dinner in leu of the usual MRWCC Board appreciation/Christmas dinner. Ross Ford Seconded.

Carried

12. Team update – See Attached notes

- a. Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)
 - Team meeting report – September 18, 2018
 - Youth Engagement Program
 - YRDs
 - Xeriscape project update

- Community Award programs
- Fall Hike Tour
- Canoe Tour report
- b. Research and Monitoring Team (R&M Team)
 - Surface Water Monitoring
 - DFO – Overwintering Habitat Stewardship Project report
 - Science Forum – Milk River – November 8, 2018
 - WRRP Phase 2 Project update
- c. Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)
 - August 17 - WSM sub-committee meeting report
 - Water Supply Studies
 - Had a subcommittee meeting with the ADM Rick Blackman in Calgary with Brian Hills and some Transboundary representatives
 - Asked for an extension on the Twin River Heritage Rangeland consultation process
 - Received support for the water storage investigation and there was recommendation at the meeting for the Water Supply Management Team to take a lead role in developing a TOR and bring it forward
 - Going forward will need to develop a RFP and discuss how it will be funded
 - Discussed bringing in a facilitator to help with the development of the TOR
 - Was asked to contact Palliser Environmental to submit a quote for the project
 - Sandi:
 - Put thoughts down based on some preliminary discussions but was not sure if there was a clear objective for the TOR
 - Put logical steps in place to developing the overall goal and objective for the TOR
 - Went through the quote that she submitted
 - Tim:
 - Does this reflect the summary we wish to accomplish?
 - Do we focus on the summary document?
 - Lorraine:
 - Second and third steps in the quote would be the work that would be addressed by the RFP, so this is overlapping with what we would request in an RFP
 - Sandi:
 - Didn't understand the scope of work involved as was not involved in the original discussions and thought it would be up to the Team to decide the scale of the work involved and set clear objectives
 - Lorraine:

- Felt the goals and objectives are clear
- Don't think this is a major project for the cost quoted
- Tim:
 - Felt the miscommunication was his fault
 - If primary outcome is having a full summary, then what is the end game?
- Brian:
 - Agreed with Lorraine's assessment that parts 1, 2, and 3 of the proposed activities would be addressed by the RFP
 - Need to get together as a Team and have facilitated discussions to make sure that goals and objectives are refined
- Lorraine:
 - Didn't see the RFP being more than a page and the \$10,000 budgeted could go towards the project contract itself
- Ken:
 - First step we will need 10 to 20 pages of consolidated studies summarized from 40 past studies
 - This summary would then be reviewed
 - The second step would be the assembly of the summary
- Tim:
 - Does the team need to meet to discuss what to go forward with and ask Sandi if necessary, for a revision?
- Sandi left the meeting

Discussion on how Council award contracts and cost of the contracts:

- There is need to be transparent and be fiscally responsible with public money
- In future there is need to put out RFPs for other interested parties and have open bids when soliciting contract work for projects
- Need a meeting in the next week to discuss the TOR procedure

Action: Tim to request a follow up meeting with the WSM Team ASAP

Action: Develop a clear Project description and Solicit RFP within two weeks to have contract awarded for Summary Storage investigation by beginning of November.

- Ron would like to be included in the discussions
- So far, the following members will attend the meeting: Ken, Ron, John, and Lorraine will ask GOA team participants for assistance
- IJC Officers Review of Options for both countries to receive their share of St. Mary and Milk Rivers
 - Information only
- d. Transboundary Watershed Team
 - Transboundary Grasslands Partnership committee report
 - Milk River Watershed Alliance Film Project/CBC news
- e. Planning and Policy Analysis Team
 - Team TOR review

Motion: Ross Ford moved to approve the Planning and Policy Analysis Team TOR.
Darcy Wills seconded. **Carried**

13. Upcoming Events

- Fall Hike Tour – Tree Coulee - October 5, 2018
- Board Governance Workshop – Lethbridge – October 25, 2018
- Science Forum – Milk River – November 8, 2018
- Transboundary Grassland Workshop – Lethbridge - December 2018

14. Round table discussions

- a. Brian: AEP has a new deputy Minister, Bev Yee

15. Other items

16. Meeting Adjournment

- William King moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:34pm

17. Next Meeting Date

- a. November 22, 2018

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____