



Minutes

MRWCC Board Meeting

November 22, 2012 – 1:30 PM

Town of Milk River Office

Present: Will Lindeman, Darcy Wills, Don Welsh, Ed Sloboda, Brian Hills, Lloyd Closson, Clark Selk, Sandi Riemersma, Tim Romanow and Mary Lupwayi

Absent: Darlene Sakires, Ken Brown, Warren Cunningham, Ken Miller, John Ross, Joan Hughson, Lorraine Nicol, Aaron Domes, Paulette Fox, Mike Gervais

1. Welcome and introductions

- Chairman John Ross was absent
- Don Welsh chaired the meeting
- Don brought the meeting to order at 1:44pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- There was no quorum for this meeting (bylaws state 50% plus 1 board member is required) any outstanding business will be discussed and approved at the following board meeting.

2. Introducing the Urban Municipality representatives

- Introductions were conducted.
- Two new members were introduced:
 - From the Village of Coutts, Lloyd Closson
 - From the Town of Milk River, Clark Selk

3. Minutes from last meeting

- October 25 minutes were reviewed

Motion: Darcy Wills moved to accept the minutes as presented. Ed Sloboda seconded. **Carried.**

4. Integrated Watershed Management and Planning Progress Report

- Sandi presented the IWMP progress report
- The IWMP background:
 - Initial meeting was in 2008 in Cardston County
 - Identified priorities and issues
 - Prioritized most important issues to be addressed
 - It was noted that all 8 issues were equally important and needed to be addressed:
 - Water Supply
 - Surface Water Quality
 - Milk River Riparian Area Management
 - Groundwater Management
 - Land Use
 - Industrial and Commercial Activity
 - Agricultural Activity
 - Tourism, Recreation and Access Management
 - Biodiversity
 - Since then a number of scientific studies have been conducted
 - Discussion papers have been put together for the following:
 - Surface Water Quality Objectives for the Milk River – Open Water Season
 - Milk River Riparian Area Management Objectives
 - Groundwater Management in the Milk River watershed
 - Industrial and Commercial Activity (Land Use Document)
 - Agricultural Activity in the Milk River Watershed (Land Use Document)
 - Tourism, Recreation and Access Management Recommendations (Land Use Document)
 - Papers related to Biodiversity and Water supply will follow

- The MRWCC is hosting a draft IWMP Stakeholder input meeting, December 6, 2012
- These papers will be discussed at the December 6, 2012 IWMP Stakeholder meeting

Action: Sandi to circulate the discussion papers so that they can be reviewed prior to the meeting

- An IWMP public input meeting will be planned after January 24, 2013 to allow the board opportunity to discuss the plan at their board meeting on Jan 24
- There were some property rights discussions relating to Bill 2 – Responsible Energy Development Act.

Discussion:

- It was recommended that for every activity that occurs in the Milk River watershed, the property rights need to be recognized
 - The cost of managing natural capital for private land in the Milk River Watershed is placed on local communities rather than the province as a whole.
 - The area of private deeded land is decreasing as land is being purchased to support conservation initiatives
 - The best way to protect land is through lease holders
 - There will be recommendations based on discussions if issues are addressed
- Some questions to consider regarding the support papers and plan:
- Do the objectives and outcomes reflect the MRWCC's goal?
 - Are targets and thresholds valid?
 - Do the recommendations reflect the expectations for the watershed management?
 - A question of whether there should be a decision at board level before the stakeholder meeting was raised

Motion: Darcy moved to proceed with the process outlined; as there is no need at this point to have a board decision prior to the meeting since the stakeholder meeting is a preliminary discussion for technical expertise and is not intended for public distribution. Will Lindeman seconded. **Carried**

5. State of the Watershed Report Progress Report

- Going well
- Blair Watke is in the process of completing the maps of the report
- Sandi presented examples of maps that Blair is working on
 - Access
 - Native vegetation
 - Oil and Gas
 - Parks and protected areas
 - Population density
 - Land cover (crops/forest)
 - Fisheries will provide the fisheries map
- There is some fear of time limitation with publishing deadline
- Draft content submission is intended to be wrapped up by December 7th
- The report will be debuted at the AGM April 11, 2013

6. Financial Statements Update

- Will Lindeman presented the financial statements. Closing balance as of October 31, 2012 was \$293,337.
- He requested that an additional monthly financial summary be included at the Board meetings

Motion: Will Lindeman moved to accept the financial statement as presented. Brian Hills seconded. **Carried.**

7. South Saskatchewan Regional Plan input community sessions

- Will Lindeman, Paulette Fox, Darcy Wills and Tim Romanow attended the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan input community session at the Heritage Hall in Milk River on November 21, 2012
- About 15 people attended the session
- The message was at a different scale but messaging from the RAC showed that there is a good fit for the MRWCC plan in the SSRP
- There are RAC representatives from all over the region but none from Milk River area
- A workbook for feedback has been circulated

- There is need to get more land owners from the area to provide feedback in the workbook
- There were discussions on how the recreation development nodes were selected an example was the comments of how the Pinhorn Ranch and Pekowki Lake were selected as potential recreation areas though contradicts conservation value and “common sense”
- There was a discussion that there are existing sub-regional plans in place already and whether it was necessary to review and update on what’s already available ie Calgary Regional.
- Some comments are too general and make it hard for groups like the MRWCC to comment as the RAC committee represented a number of interests that often conflicted recommendations.
- Is there need for the MRWCC to provide feedback to the RAC as a group?
- It was recommended that the board review the RAC Advice document and individually provide feedback on the recommendations through the workbook.
- Tim had a discussion with Dave Borutski, the Senior Policy Manager for the Land Use Secretariat who is interested in the MRWCC IWMP and asked that the secretariat be kept in loop with the progression of the MRWCC plan; and would like to receive a package of the draft plan and information once available following the Stakeholders meeting in December. Mr. Borutski indicated that efforts would be made to best incorporated the MRWCC Plan as much as possible as it is a unique distinct area of the SSRP area with specific challenges.
- Rob Dunn, Agricultural Land Management Specialist with ARD is available to be at the IWMP stakeholder meeting December 6th and would be a great asset to review and provide feedback on the MRWCC plan. Rob also indicated that a voluntary Pilot Ecological Goods and Services Oil and Gas industry/Producer Offset program is currently being planned for the eastern end of our watershed and that it may be of interest to the council.

Action: Tim will get hard copies of the RAC advice workbook to share with board members and interested landowners within the watershed, Workbooks are asked to be submitted by Dec. 21 2012.

8. WPAC Project Proposals and ESRD Priorities meeting

- ESRD is inviting the MRWCC board to a meeting December 4, 2012 in Lethbridge to discuss WPAC project proposal requests and ESRD priorities for the coming 2013/14 fiscal year
- The objectives of the meeting are as follows:
 - Clarify the current situation regarding 2013/14 GoA budget and application process for grants and contracts
 - Discuss GoA priorities from Water for Life and ESRD operational plans, along with plans of other GoA departments
 - Discuss WPAC priorities and how they fit with long range plans
 - Determine how best to move forward, given realistic limitations

Discussion:

- The SOW and IWMP completion timing is awkward for new project planning, and we will have a better indication by the end of December or early January what our 2013-2014 priorities may be and how they fit with GOA priorities.
- Need to have discussion if we want to take a lead role on implementation or continue with research or projects to address identified knowledge gaps
- Requested to ask the chairman (John Ross) to attend the meeting with Tim
- If there is any feedback at this level to let Tim know so that he can take to the meeting

9. Milk River Transboundary Aquifer Project update

- MRWCC was approached to partner with Geological Surveys of Canada and US on further field verification work for the MiRTAP project. This component of the MiRTAP project will address:
 1. Measurement of water levels in select wells to verify the depth of the Milk River Aquifer which will in turn reflect the current state of the groundwater conditions in modeling.
 2. Sampling of naturally occurring groundwater Isotopes which will be analyzed to assess groundwater age, fluxes and discharge.
- Tim and Mary are contacting selected landowners to see if they would like to participate
- The timing of this project is difficult. With the snow on the ground it makes it difficult to locate wells, and landowners have concerns about entering well casing for measurements.
- There has been some miscommunication with regards to CGS expectation of what the MRWCC’s role as a partner in the project.

- There is also a concern on our part for liability issues with potential well damages
- Well measurements will be conducted by two employees from the Canadian Geological Survey and sampling by Agriculture Canada Staff December 2 to 13.

10. MRWCC 8th Annual General Meeting Keynote speaker suggestions

- Board members were requested to start thinking of the keynote speaker for the AGM

11. Team Updates

a. Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)

i. Caring for Our Watersheds program

- Packages have been sent to schools and 4H Clubs within the Milk River Watershed.
- Will Follow-up with phone calls

ii. Shell FuellingChange Program

- Partnering to improve water quality in the Milk River Watershed voting in progress
 - The project was uploaded on the Shell Fueling Change Website and the public can vote (until April 30th 2013)
 - The MRWCC will receive \$10,000 for participating which will be used for implementation projects that monitor and improve surface water quality within the Watershed.

iii. Cenovus Energy Environmental Education Leadership Clinic report

- The CAIT attended the leadership clinic in Caroline, Alberta Nov 5 to 8
- Worked on developing a communication strategy and work plan
- There were groups from different backgrounds
- Some teams comprise of school teachers and we were able to have discussions with them to see how we can successfully incorporate school curriculum in our watershed programs. They had a good insight on how we can improve and develop a Youth Engagement Program.
- We also conducted a SWOT analysis and draft action plan to more strategically communicate and involve our community.

iv. Fall/Winter Meander Newsletter

- The 2012 Fall/Winter newsletter had been mailed out
- Good reviews so far.
- Easy to read

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

- Last meeting was October
- Team planning to meet by early January to discuss water monitoring program and other research projects and new opportunities within the Watershed.

c. State of the Watershed Team

i. SOW report update

- As discussed

d. Integrated Watershed Management and Planning Team (IWMP Team)

i. Draft IWMP update

- As discussed

e. Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)

- There was no report

12. Upcoming events

- Draft IWMP Stakeholder input meeting – December 6, 2012
- Draft IWMP Public input meeting – January 2013
- MRWCC AGM – April 11, 2013

13. Other items

- a. The Milk River Community Business Association Christmas Party
 - i. Will hold a Christmas Party December 8 at the Civic Center
 - ii. Each business is asked to bring a door prize
 - iii. Mary will attend
- b. Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference
 - i. Applicants are being accepted for Young Professional Stewardship Grants between the ages of 18 to 30
 - ii. The grant is for professional ranchers, farmers or aspiring conservationists working in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba
 - iii. Up to three individuals grants awarded totaling \$7500 (\$2500 each)
 - iv. Application form can be accessed at stewardshipgrant@pcesc.ca

Action: Tim to circulate the grant information to the Board

- c. Alberta Health Services
 - i. The Therapeutic Recreation Department of the Milk River Long Term Care Facility are asking Milk River Community to donate an item for the Annual Silent Auction from November 23 to December 15, 2012

Action: The MRWCC to donate some promotional items and coffee

- d. MRWCC Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
 - i. MRWCC is planning to host a volunteer appreciation dinner in December

Action: Circulate possible date and place to the board

14. Meeting Adjournment

- **Motion:** Clark Selk moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:12pm, seconded by Darcy Wills. **Carried.**

15. Next Meeting Date

- January 24, 2013 – ESRD office in Lethbridge at 1:30pm

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____