



Minutes

MRWCC Board Meeting

April 28, 2016 – 1:30 PM

Town of Milk River Office

Present: Will Lindeman, Lloyd Closson, William King, Suzanne Liebelt, Ed Sloboda, Ron McNeil, Kristen Dykstra, Warren Cunningham, Lorraine Nicol, Ken Miller, John Ross, Roy Audet, Frank Larney, Brian Hills, Ryan Hall, Darcy Wills, Kathryn Romanchuk, Tim Romanow and Mary Lupwayi

Absent: Joan Hughson, Ross Ford, Dennis Spackman, Trevor Murray

Guests: Ernie Hui and Donna Chaw

1. Welcome and introductions

- John Ross welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought the meeting to order at 1:35 pm
- Introductions were conducted
- John thanked Ernie Hui and Donna Chaw for attending the meeting and giving an insight on the roles of WPACs

2. Informal discussion about the roles of WPACs - Ernie Hui, Water Quality

Special - Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Parks

- Ernie thanked everyone for the opportunity to present to the Council and gave an informal presentation as follows:
 - This is not a discussion about funding
 - The request to address WPACs caused discontent among WPACs as it was viewed as WPACs are no longer required
 - This was not the intent
 - The intent was to help clarify the roles of WPACs and bring clarity to watershed management planning
 - The Land Use Framework addresses regional plans
 - How do the Watershed Management plans fit into the Land Use Framework?
 - There was some ambiguity on how Watershed Management plans relate to the Land Use Framework

- There is need to understand various responsibilities
- Government has not done enough to help with WPACs' success
- The discussions are meant to provide a start of opportunity for each WPAC to respond going forward
- Environment Department dealt with everything to do with water
- WPACs are a consequence of Water for Life and were created to work with communities and stakeholders
- At the time the intent was to bring forth 4 foundations:
 - Bring local issues to the Province
 - Help and undertake the development of Watershed Management Plans (WMP)
 - Produce State of the Watershed (SOW)
 - Public engagement outreach
- Each of the 11 WPACs have undertaken the 4 activities
- Different WPACs have indicated unique and different roles
- Each WPAC is expected to give their expectations
- What is the MRWCC's commitment going forward?
- There are 2 expectations that should be addressed:
 - Expecting to hear feedback from the MRWCC including value and benefit for their community to ensure that issues are conveyed
 - AEP to learn from WPACs and help them be more successful in terms of structural not funding predispositions
- Will need feedback from MRWCC by the middle of June
- The intent is to get all feedback from WPACs by the beginning of summer months
- Analyze the feedback by fall of 2016 and bring back response at the end of 2016
- At the moment there is no MOU for funding WPACs
- Collaboration between GOA and WPACs is crucial

Discussion:

➤ John:

- Touched on what is significant to us, value to our community

- Conducting a long term water monitoring program which provides the trend of water quality and is also used for the SOW and IWMP
- Brian:
 - The department funded analytical costs for the monitoring program
 - AEMERA had different program this year and was going to do the work in-house
- Tim:
 - AEMERA made the changes without consultation with MRWCC
 - The MRWCC is currently using private donations to fund the monitoring program
 - The core funds from AEP restricted from being used for monitoring work
- Ernie:
 - MRWCC is a Doer
 - MRWCC has completed the 2 SOWs and the IWMP
 - What are your plans going forward?
- John:
 - The SOW and IWMP are living documents
 - The MRWCC is unique because it's a transboundary basin, sharing boundaries with Montana and Saskatchewan
- Ken:
 - Also conducted a number of studies such as the Aquatic Species at Risk
 - Partnered with DOF and GOA and funded for 4 or 5 studies
- Tim:
 - The amount of in-kind support that we get from the community and other stakeholders has made it affordable to undertake research projects
- Ron:
 - The MRWCC is a unique watershed, transboundary in nature
 - PCF likes the synergy of the MRWCC, especially when it comes to SAR and other wildlife management issues
 - Would like to see a better regional collaboration with other WPACs
- Ernie:
 - This was brought up with other WPACs
 - Need governance perspective to all WPACs

- There is need for facilitation with other WPACs and Government
- John:
 - The other watersheds are localizes and it will be difficult to align us with SSRP
- Ernie:
 - Point of integration: water/land/air
 - Water only media with an advisory council
- John:
 - Amount and quality of water determines what's in the watershed
- Ken:
 - Lack of water is a problem in the watershed
- Darcy:
 - Property rights is a major issue in Milk River since it is mainly farm land
 - Education is an important component of our programs
 - Value of collaboration with other WPACs is crucial
- Ernie:
 - There are broader discussions on whether there should be a standard template for SOWs
 - Looking for the opportunity to convey the message
- Ernie was invited to a WPAC Summit scheduled for October 26 to 28, 2016 in Calgary
- Lorraine:
 - Has been conducting research for over 20 years
 - The feedback on AEP has not been positive at least in her area of work
 - Has dealt with other WPACs and has seen the good investment WPACs have for GOA
- Ernie:
 - GOA lost sight of the hope of WPACs mandate under the WFL strategy and is trying to bring back that sight
- John:
 - MRWCC is a grass root oriented organization consisting of people who care for the cause not because of money
 - Thanked Ernie for the presentation

- Will:
 - Brian Hills is a great addition to the Council
 - Appreciates AEP support
- Ernie Hui and Donna Chaw left the meeting at 2:32pm

3. Minutes from March 24, 2016 meeting

- Last meeting minutes were reviewed

Motion: Will Lindeman moved to accept the minutes as presented. Ed Sloboda seconded.
Carried.

4. Financial Statements

- March Financial Statements
 - March closing balance was \$280,999.66
 - Still waiting to receive core funding for 2016/17 from AEP
 - BRWA has drafted a letter to the minister with funding concerns

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

- Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program Grant update
 - Letters to solicit projects have been mailed out
 - 7 projects have been identified to date
 - 4 projects have been identified for offsite watering systems
 - Planning to plant trees along the Red Creek on May 17th & 18th, 2016 and looking for volunteers for the projects
- Funding for 2016 Water Monitoring Project
 - AEMERA has been dissolved
 - Still waiting to hear if AEP will continue to partner with MRWCC on the program
 - We have been given a green light to use the waybills for sending water samples to Calgary for analysis but the issue of actual analytical funds has not yet been resolved
 - A letter to the Minister of AEP that was previously drafted with funding concerns was reviewed and edited by the Board members

Action: Send a letter to the Minister of AEP with funding concerns before official signing of dissolution

- ACA Funding Application approved

- Had submitted a grant application for \$15,000 towards the Education Outreach program
- Received a \$10,000 grant approval
- We were one of the few applications that got funding out of hundreds of requests

5. Milk River Approved Water Management Plan Meeting Update

- The open house was held on April 7, 2016
- About 30 participants attended the meeting
- It was a good meeting
- Deadline to send feedback is May 27, 2016
- A follow-up meeting will be scheduled depending on the feedback received

6. 11th AGM

- Agenda
 - An agenda has been finalized and sent out
 - Will need to invite politicians as well
 - Looking for items for silent items

7. Transboundary Weeds and Watershed Stewardship Tour Update

- Taking names of Board members interested in participating
- The Deputy Governor of Montana and executive Director of Agriculture will be attending the tour
- The Ministers of AEP and AF have been invited
- Expecting 150 participants
- There is a great opportunity to showcase watershed stewardship
- There are 10 spots reserved for MRWCC
- So far the following have registered:
 - Roy Audet
 - Suzanne Liebelt
 - Ron McNeil
 - Ed Sloboda
 - Will Lindeman
 - John Ross
 - Tim Romanow
 - Mary Lupwayi

- Kathryn Romanchuk

8. WPAC Managers' Meeting Report (April 26, 2016)

- Discussed Education program funding strategy
- AWC is interested in bringing a statement of opportunity regarding:
 - Aggregate mining and alluvial aquifers vulnerability
 - Drought and emergency preparedness
 - WPAC summit – October 26 to 28, 2016

9. Team Updates

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

- Youth Engagement Program Report
 - Poster Contest – judging will be conducted Tuesday next week
 - Repackaging online course so that it can be delivered in PowerPoint for broader use and adding other chapters such as SAR, land management and grazing management
 - Working with Devil's Coulee Dinosaur Heritage Museum to come up with youth programs for the centennial celebrations
- Youth Range Days Update
 - Agenda is completed
 - In the process of updating the workbook
- Environmental Stewardship Awards Nominations
 - Received 2 nominations:
 - Nelson and Paula Doenz
 - Ken and Nora Balog
 - Both great nominations
 - Looking for a motion to decide whether the CAIT team or a newly formed subcommittee should be responsible for judging the nominations

Motion: Suzanne Liebelt moved to designate the CAIT team to judge the Environmental Stewardship Award nominations. Ed Sloboda seconded. **Carried.**

- Spring Hike Tour Report
 - Well planned
 - Great feedback from the participants
 - Ron and Ed were thanked for giving presentations during the tour

- The Board thanked Dennis for providing transportation

Motion: Ron McNeil moved to send a thank you letter to Dennis Spackman for the use of the WOSPP bus and van. Roy Audet seconded. **Carried.**

- Canoe Trip

- Scheduled for June 18
- Looking at visiting the eastern reach

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

- 2015 Surface Water Monitoring Report

- Sandi has submitted the report
- It will be circulated to the Board and team members subsequently

- Ground Water Monitoring Project - AHS

- Planning to sample the 40 wells previously samples in 2007 and 2011
- Project planning will be done this spring and monitoring to start in fall 2016
- Also planning to look into hosting a Working Well Workshop this fall

Motion: Ed Sloboda moved to contract out monitoring of wells on the eastern side of the watershed. Ron McNeil seconded. **Carried.**

c. Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)

- Computer modeling is done
- Process continuing
- Recommendations 1 and 2 to be done in June
- MT in the process of hiring a coordinator for the MRWA from the Conservation districts

d. Transboundary Watershed Team

- Prairies Initiative Conference Call Update – Ron McNeil and Tim Romanow
 - Need a follow-up conference from one held in Elkwater
 - Established subcommittees to bring forward communication and messaging of information within the organization
 - Looking at September for the follow-up conference call
 - Establish a SOW team
 - PCF is a catalyst organization for the program but need help from the SOD organizations with promotion

- PCF will not be able to fund the program every year, but word like to see it rotated within participating organizations
- The PCF spent about \$7,000 for the last workshop
- Can MRWCC be a catalyst to help with setting up the conference?
 1. Tim will act as a Alberta rep on future TG discussions.

10. Upcoming events

- MRWCC AGM - Milk River - May 31, 2015
- Transboundary Weeds and Watershed Stewardship Tour - August 8, 9 and 10
- 9th Annual Southern Alberta Youth Range Days – Elkwater - July 5th-7th, 2016

11. Round table discussion

12. Other items

- Canadian Badlands Tourism
 - A presentation was made at the MRCBA
 - Copies of the handbook called “Private and Public Opportunities to Enhance and Develop River-Based Tourism on the Milk River” prepared by the Canadian Badlands Tourism were distributed
 - It was noted that the report was disappointing that it was done with no input from the community and MRWCC in terms of economic evaluation

13. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Roy Audet moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:04pm. **Carried.**

14. Next Meeting

- September 22, 2016 in Milk River at 1:30pm

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____