



Minutes

MRWCC Board Meeting

January 28, 2021 – 1:30 PM

Zoom Meeting

Present:

John Ross, Brian Hills, Suzanne Liebelt, Ken Miller, Darcy Wills, Will Lindeman, Scott MacCumber, Ben Ellert, Ron McNeil, Lorraine Nicol, Aaron Domes, Shawn Rodgers, Kristen Dykstra, Tim Romanow, and Mary Lupwayi

Absent: Ross Ford, Ed Sloboda, William King, Joan Hughson, Warren Cunningham

1. Welcome and introductions

- John Ross welcomed everyone to the zoom meeting
- He brought the meeting to order at 1:34pm

2. Approve Agenda

- Additions to the agenda:
 - Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association Rangeland Sustainability Fund
 - Recreation Management

Motion: Will Lindeman moved to approve the agenda with additions. Suzanne Liebelt seconded. **Carried**

3. Minutes from November 26, 2020 meeting

- The following corrections were noted:
 - Delete “in person” on attendance since it was a virtual meeting
 - Part 7 – correct “snow pack” spelling

Motion: Scott MacCumber moved to accept the minutes as amended. Suzanne Liebelt seconded. **Carried**

4. Financial update

- Financial statements updates
 - November and December, 2020 Financial Statements

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

- Employee benefit update
 - Finalized the switch to pool with the Town of Milk River
 - Thanked the Town of Milk River for the changes

5. Grants

- CAP update

- Application was declined but requested that the application be resubmitted with a more focused proposal
- Joint application between MRWCC, OWC and SEAWA
- OWC is taking the lead with the new application submission for \$50,000 to allow existing programs to be delivered virtually
- Ecotrust Grant update
 - Approved for \$20,000 and have received the first \$10,000 installment
 - To be focused on two aspects:
 - Water shortage contingency plan contract expenses, and
 - Outreach, by telling the 2020 water shortage story and water conservation through best practices experiences and lesson learned
 - Project timeline is April 2021 to March 2022
 - Will look for support from Board members. Requesting WSM Team to lead the project
- ACA Education Grant
 - Have applied for an education and stewardship grant for \$10,000 focusing on the virtual field workshop. A combination of videos from producers and researchers working with producers on issues of SAR wildlife habitat and developing in class teacher resources for grades 8 to 12
- Canada Summer Jobs 2021
 - Had a meeting with WOSPP personnel to discuss the possibility of having a summer student again this year as a parttime employee, for three days a week, to help tell the MRWCC story at the WOSPP one day per week and then work with MRWCC the other two days
 - Mary will coordinate the work plan while adjusting to the Covid19 restrictions
 - An application was submitted this week for 16 weeks for approximately \$5,000
- ECCC Priority Places Grant
 - Were invited to submit a proposal for projects that would fit in the grant guidelines
 - Focusing on range management and SAR
 - \$50,000 has been set aside to develop a program to host a technical advisory panel to identify any SAR goals and also survey producers within the watershed across the four municipalities to see if programs are feasible for future implementation
 - Will need to work with municipalities and producers
 - A contractor will be hired to do the surveying
 - This project will give an idea of what is happening and the producer interests on the ground and the best way to deliver proper management tools
 - Have put together a brief expression of interest and just waiting for some feedback from Environment Canada
 - If the Expression of Interest is successful and a full proposal is requested, we will need to establish a committee to develop the project

- 2021-22 Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) Call for Proposals - March 2 closing
 - There is a call for proposal for the HSP
 - Have accessed some of these funding in the past
 - A good project would be a Bat inventory and stewardship project. A number of bats species in Alberta are SAR. It would be great to adopt this program to do inventory work with producers
 - Sustainable Canada is a good organization to contact and see if they would like to partner on the project
- SSHRC grant application: Project title: “Beyond the last drop” Addressing the climate adaptation gap in water security
 - Dr Jeremy Pittman with the University of Waterloo is inviting the MRWCC to partner on a SSHRC grant application
 - The proposal is being submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada’s (SSHRC) Partnership Grant competition for 5 years at \$500,000 per year for a total of \$2.5 million
 - There are 2 phases: letter of intent (LOI) and full proposal. They are in the LOI phase
 - The focus is on finding ways to address climate change (e.g., drought and flood) in watersheds that simultaneously build water security and resilience to multiple stressors
 - The project is led by Margot Hurlbert at the University of Regina and Collaborators in Canada include Dave Sauchyn (U. of Regina), Jeremy Pittman (U. Waterloo), and Kelsey Leonard (U. Waterloo)
 - Four countries involved: Canada, Uruguay, Chile and Argentina
 - Canada case studies include the South Saskatchewan River Basin and, MRWCC if there is support from Council
 - The proposed work would include the following broad activities:
 - Vulnerability assessments
 - Scenario development and planning
 - Connections to policy and governance
 - The exact project activities in each case study area would be determined by local groups, and the intent is to build synergies within the ongoing or planned activities of potential partners
 - The LOI is due February 10. If successful, the full proposal is due in the fall
 - Looking for a motion to support the project

Action: Tim to forward information on the project to the Board

Discussion:

- This looks like a good project
- The SSHRC is a federal funded program
- They are thinking of applying for funding and the first step is to provide a letter of intent then they would have to develop a full proposal which takes months
- If the grant is successful, they will acquire graduate students to do the work in form of academic studies
- They are looking to partners with MRWCC to secure study areas and staff time

- Would our contribution in the watershed be in form of assisting in advising and directing the graduate students working under this grant?
- There is very limited time to discuss and explore support for this grant
- Lorraine, as a social scientist, has volunteered to participate in the project discussions

Action: Lorraine and Tim to take a lead role in the project to get more details about the project so that the Council is better informed before supporting the project

6. Work Plan review

- Went through the 2020/2021 workplan which was updated February 2020 and adjusted it for 2021/22 fiscal year activities
- A completed 2021/2022 workplan will be circulated with the minutes

7. Industry Representation on the Board

- Attempts to reach out to International Petroleum Corporation (IPC) administration to see if they would like keep representation on the Board was not successful
- Will need to contact other consultants and service companies that can be valuable partners to the Council
- Seat will remain open until AGM election

8. AB WPACs

- Education Outreach Coordinator committee put together a proposal of the Plains Midstream to do some Watershed literacy educational video series. They were success in securing \$75,000 grant to develop 5 video series, storyboard work and filming to occur in the Milk watershed this summer
- Multi-Year Drought Resiliency Project – public partner release
 - Training sessions – Tim will be leading some of the train the trainer sessions

Action: Tim to circulate the media release once available

9. Team updates

- Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)
 - 2021 YRDs program
 - Planning for a one-day camp on July 8 at WOSPP
 - Smaller groups to ensure Covid19 protocols are followed
 - Will have two camps for younger youth and older youth
 - Spring Education programming – WOSPP partnership
 - Had a meeting with WOSPP personnel
 - Discussed submitting an application for Canada Summer Jobs
 - There will be less staff capacity and this opportunity will be welcome at the Park
 - Community Awards programs
 - Still looking for nominations for Heritage tree and Environment Stewardship awards

- Since we will not have the Community Appreciation Forum this year, we plan to conduct online announcements for the winners, like it was done this past year
- Research and Monitoring Team (R&M Team)
 - SOW Report Terms of Reference update
 - Have been soliciting for support from the other jurisdictions
 - There is money in the budget to conduct the project
 - Long-term Water Quality summary
 - Looking to roll up the long-term data
 - Palliser Environmental will produce the long-term water quality report to support the updated SOW

Action: Tim to plan a RandM Team meeting this winter

- Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)
 - A year and half ago Ken and Tom Gilchrist met with the accredited officer in Saskatoon. Noted how Montana can benefit from additional storage
 - Ken discussed past water shortage scenarios over the years and it was agreed that it was time to look into a smaller dam off stream to provide some water security for the existing water users
 - MRWUA meeting update
 - There is keen interest in pursuing the small dam idea
 - Have found old PFRA work done in 1978 that identifies tributaries creeks that drain into the Milk river and they have provided the information that there are about 8 or 9 that provide for a firm annual draft that would provide minimum flow repayment water for existing irrigation purposes to avoid July and August cutoffs.
 - There were about 8 or 9 sites that provided around 1500 acre-feet of water per year. MacDonald creek was bigger at 2200 acre-feet per year. The best site is likely on Red Creek.
 - Have acquired contour maps and in the process of trying to identify alternatives. Tom is a retired engineer and has looked at Ridge Reservoir and figured out that it is an eight-million-dollar project, so storage on the tributary coulees would be under \$10 Million which could be more feasible within the association
 - In the process of drawing maps of footprints related to a couple of the tributaries to pursue the project in the near future
 - Will be approaching the AEP in the near future with alternative plans and hoping to work with the MRWCC as well
 - AEP not aware of the information discussed with Ken Miller by Canada's Accredited Officer to the IJC. The IJC is meeting the second week of February and expect their plans to look at options for improving beneficial use of water will be discussed at that meeting.

Action: Tim to schedule a WSM Team meeting after the IJC meeting

- Transboundary Watershed Team (TWT)
 - No update

10. Mental Health in Agriculture with Jeff Couillard Feb 8, 2021

- There is a workshop coming up Feb 8, 2021 hosted by the Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women and Alberta Range Stewardship Course

11. Round table discussions

- Lorraine:
 - WPAC/Municipal study:
 - Is ready to go. Survey finalized and ready to launch on February 1 and It will be available for a month. Giving a reminder mid-February
 - DataStream:
 - A repository of open-source water quality data
 - Consists of an interactive mapping that shows all the water monitoring stations but Milk River watershed is not included
- Brian:
 - AEP is planning to schedule a webinar on South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management Framework
 - Will take place as a virtual online webinar using Zoom on Tuesday February 23, 2021 from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
 - There is an invitation that will be coming out for the MRWCC membership
- Aaron:
 - A question on the role of WPACs on coal mining and concerns on water quality
 - Since this has not happened in our WPAC, there is no need to comment but as a WPAC, if this happened in our basin, our role would be to bring awareness of the science and implications to all stakeholders to make informed management decisions
- Darcy/Tim:
 - AGLHA have \$43 Million to spend by March 31
 - Looking for potential stewardship, research, or educational projects
 - Would like to apply for a small project like YRDs

Action: Darcy to look into this and report back on the details at next meeting

- Tim:
 - Tim has submitted an abstract on the 2020 Milk River situation to the CWRA conference held virtually (May 31 to June 5) online if accepted, will ask for assistance from Brian Hills to co-present.

12. Other items

- None

13. Meeting adjournment

Motion: Suzanne Liebelt moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:48pm.

14. Next meeting date

➤ March 25, 2021