



**Minutes**  
**MRWCC Board Meeting**  
**September 22, 2022 – 1:30 PM**  
**Town of Milk River**

**Present:**

*In Person:* John Ross, Kristen Dykstra, Ed Sloboda, Peggy Losey, Darcy Wills, Will Lindeman, Scott MacCumber, Ron McNeil, Ross Ford, William King, Warren Cunningham, Roger Houghton, Ben Ellert, Jollin Charest, Tim Romanow, Allison Choquette, and Mary Lupwayi

*Virtually:* Aaron Domes, Richard Oster (Cypress County)

**Absent:** Ken Miller, Joan Hughson, Ken Brown, Jon Boyle

**1. Welcome and introductions**

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

**2. Approve Agenda**

- Municipal Conservation Tax Credit Program added to the agenda

**Motion:** Ross Ford moved to approve the agenda as amended. Scott MacCumber seconded. **Carried**

**3. Minutes from May 26, 2022, meeting**

- Part 4 - Alberta Outdoorsman should read Southern Alberta Outdoorsmen

**Motion:** Darcy Wills moved to accept the minutes as amended. Warren Cunningham seconded. **Carried**

**4. Financial update**

- April to August 2022 Financial Statements

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

**5. Grants**

- AEP core grant application process and new Mandates and Roles agreement
  - Have applied for a 4-year AEP grant (2023-27) with the recognition that the long-term strategic plan to identify major projects is not completed and will be sent in once completed
  - The spreadsheet with asks for the 4-year application was presented

- The Mandates and Roles document that outlines the purpose of WPACs and how they fit within the Water for Life Strategy and the major roles was discussed
  - It has been amended to fit the reality of WPACs, core funding, and the core values of Water for Life including. This includes State of the Watershed (SOW) Reporting and review of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) incorporating land use issues
  - There is an opportunity for WPACs to write in specific needs to support Councils work
  - Will be reviewed and adjusted annually
  - Appreciate the GOA being proactive with the grant application process
  - The document has been completed and submitted with the grant application
- Producers Leading Way (PLW) phase 2
  - ECCC has approved \$60,000 for the next 2 fiscal year
    - \$20,000 for 2022/23
      - To support some of the follow up work on the initial PLW project by presenting a series of 3 workshops:
        - i. Ranching for Profit
        - ii. Ranching/farming succession planning
        - iii. Conservation tools workshop
      - Will need to form a committee to organize the workshop series
    - \$40,000 for 2023/24
      - Will need to meet with the rural municipalities and present key findings of the PLW project and other major projects that we have been working on
      - Use the \$40,000 as an ear mark for extension program funding such as a pilot project to help municipalities with grassland issues etc.
      - If successful, we can source funding to roll this project into a long-term project
      - To be discussed at the Strategic Planning Session

**Action:** Municipal reps to review the Producer Leading Way (PLW) project findings and discuss at their respective municipalities, Tim to contact municipalities and schedule presentations for Council or ASBs in all municipalities

## 6. Academia Seat open

- Lorraine Nicol has decided to retire, and we will be looking to fill the Academia seat
- Lorraine to be invited to the next Christmas party
- A thank you card for Lorraine was circulated for the Board members to sign

**Motion:** Darcy moved to declare Academia seat open and to be filled when an appropriate candidate is available and to be appointed at the next AGM. Ben Ellert seconded. **Carried**

## 7. Bylaw amendment - appointing alternates

- There is need to discuss appointment of alternate board members
- Currently there is no direction in the bylaws on appointment of alternate board members
- Other WPACs have a policy on how to appoint alternate board members

**Action:** Draft a policy on appointment of alternate board members to be discussed at the Strategic Planning Session

**Action:** There is need to look at the entire board governance as a topic for a larger discussion at the 2022 Strategic planning session

## **8. Strategic Planning**

- Scheduled for October 20 and 21
- Agenda
  - A draft agenda was discussed
  - There was a discussion that some Board members would like to extend their stay but will pay for room and board on their own
  - There are about 15 Board members registered and about 30 in total, including spouses and staff
  - Waterton Biosphere Reserve would be a great organization to give a presentation with synergies to involve the Council and municipal partners
- Board Surveys
  - Any specific questions that the board would like added to the survey, to be forwarded to Tim for inclusion in the board survey

## **9. Little Brown Myotis Bat stewardship project update**

- Picking up the last pieces of equipment as the bats start to move towards hibernation
- Number of bats recorded is decreasing due to less activity because of weather
- 63 bat houses have been given out to landowners
- Worked with 40 landowners throughout the summer. Planned to work with 50 landowners, but due to time limitation were not able to complete all 50
- Still have people interested in the project
- Have submitted a proposal to Gold Springs Park to place the bat condo as it appears to be one of the suitable locations for the condo. They seemed interested but waiting for the board's approval
- Need a backup plan to place the condo if Goldsprings Park doesn't work. Looking for the Boards assistance in convincing landowners
- The condo needs to be placed in a public area for ease exposure
- Have had presentations at Waterton Biosphere Reserve and WOSPP with good participation and interest
- Going through the data to see distribution patterns of species groups
- No detection has been identified of bat mortality due to white nose syndrome
- It should be noted that the identification might not be precise because in some cases the detector was not as accurate because some of the calls are similar in characteristic
- More species have been recorded
- There are 8 bat species known in Alberta
- Starting the final draft of the reporting

## **10. 2023 SOW project update**

- The update that Sandi provided was presented and discussed
- Things are coming together well
- Currently soliciting data for the chapters from subject matter specialists

- Planning a meeting with Sandi to discuss budget needs
- Planning a SOW Team meeting with Transboundary partners for an update this fall

#### **11. 2022 Summer student report**

- Tyler was a great addition to the staff and team
- He helped on several projects
- There is an exit letter for Tyler in the agenda package for the board members
- We did not get funding from Canada Summer Jobs this year, so we used MRWCC funding based on the motion that was passed to advertise the position early and employ a suitable summer student despite the outcome of the Canada Summer Jobs grant. The past 2 years we were successful in getting the funding but had to decline using the funds because we could not find a suitable candidate for the position despite adequate advertising. This could be because we received funding too late or due to Covid related concerns
- The cost of the position this summer was just over \$12,000

#### **12. AB WPACS update**

- Additional work was done on the collaboration/agreement document. Still needs a lot of work
- There are 4 new directors due to WPAC staff turn over
- Next WPAC Manager's meeting will be October 4<sup>th</sup> in Edmonton

#### **13. WPAC Forum – October 6-7 Edmonton**

- To discuss priorities with the roles and responsibilities between WPACs and AEP
- Agenda was discussed
- Tim and Mary will represent the Council from staff perspective at the meeting
- Aaron will attend some of the sessions
- If there is a virtual meeting option for people to attend, Tim will forward the link to the Board for those interested in attending some of the sessions

**Action:** Tim to give a report at the next Board meeting

#### **14. Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference – Calgary Zoo, Feb 2023**

- Tim is on the organizing committee
- There should be a call for proposals and abstracts coming soon. Plan to submit a proposal on the bat stewardship project and Hefner Coulee assessment.
- Working on putting together the agenda and asks for donations
- Tim will be giving updates as more details are available

#### **15. Team updates (see attached)**

There was a brief report. Complete update was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting in the agenda package

- Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)
- Research and Monitoring Team (R&M Team)
- Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)
- Transboundary Watershed Team (TWT)

## 16. IJC St Mary – Milk River Study progress update

- Community open house
  - Tentative date is October 24 at the Milk River Civic Center

**Action:** Tim to send a link to the IJC page to the Board

- There will be regular updates to Council
- Working Teams involvement
  - Tim is on the aquatic resources working group
    - Next aquatic resources working group meeting is scheduled on October 4
  - Ken Miller is on the community outreach working group
- Have not yet received a dewatering schedule from the diversion system. It will be circulated once available

## 17. Municipal Conservation Tax Credit Program

- ECCC contracted the project to Land Stewardship Center (LSC)
- LSC is putting together a committee and inviting Tim as the rep for MRWCC, other municipalities and local groups to be involved in the committee and project as a whole

## 18. Round table discussions

- John:
  - Groundwater study being done by the University of Chicago and University of Switzerland on the Milk River aquifer have found an anomaly of wells being recharged instead of decreasing in the Milk River aquifer and they are conducting more studies to see why this is happening
- Warren:
  - There was a question if agricultural chemicals (pesticides) and pharmaceutical chemicals are being found in the Milk River water quality monitoring program
    - The Council is not conducting tests for these chemicals due to the high cost of these tests
    - The MRWCC data can be found on DataStream at <https://doi.org/10.25976/33tj-bs38>
- Ben:
  - Nitrous oxide reduction project and the problem of community support with regards to GOC projects and activities
- William:
  - Requested that he gets the Hefner Coulee Tour report on invasive plan species

**Action:** A report that was put together on the Hefner Coulee after the tour to be forwarded to William

## 19. Other items

## 20. Meeting adjournment

**Motion:** Ed Sloboda moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:01pm.

**21. Next meeting date**

- November 24, 2022

**Signatures:**

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

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