



**Minutes**  
**MRWCC Board Meeting**  
**November 24, 2022 – 1:30 PM**  
**Town of Milk River**

**Present:**

*In Person:* Ed Sloboda, Peggy Losey, Will Lindeman, Scott MacCumber, Ron McNeil, Ross Ford, Warren Cunningham, Roger Houghton, Jollin Charest, Ken Miller, Joan Hughson, Tim Romanow, Allison Choquette, and Mary Lupwayi

*Virtually:* Aaron Domes, Richard Oster, Jon Boyle, Kristen Dykstra, Ben Ellert

**Absent:** John Ross, Ken Brown, William King

**1. Welcome and introductions**

- Ron McNeil welcomed everyone to the meeting
- He brought the meeting to order at 1:37pm
- Introductions were conducted

**2. Approve Agenda**

**Motion:** Ross Ford moved to approve the agenda as presented. Warren Cunningham seconded. **Carried**

**3. Minutes from September 22, 2022, meeting**

- Past minutes were reviewed

**Motion:** Peggy Losey moved to accept the minutes as presented. Scott MacCumber seconded. **Carried**

**4. Financial update**

- September and October 2022 Financial Statements
  - Financials were discussed

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

**5. Grants**

- Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk
  - Submitted an application to extend some of the Bat stewardship project work for two more fiscal years
    - 1. Year 2022/23 - \$75,000 for continuation of some of the bat project work and in addition, wetlands and northern leopard frogs
    - 2. Year 2023/24 - \$85,000 for habitat enhancement projects
  - Pending approval before March 2023

- AEP core grant update
  - Still waiting for approval of the 4-year grant application that was submitted
  - At the WPAC Forum, Cam Lane, Executive Director Intergovernmental Relations and Engagement Branch confirmed that the grant funding is in place for the first year (2023/24) of the 4-multi-year grant, but no dollar amounts have been confirmed
  - Have not yet received the grant agreement
- Producers Leading Way (PLW) phase 2
  - Have a grant agreement for \$20,000 for 2022/23 that will be used for following 3 workshops this winter:
    1. Ranching for Profit series

**Action:** Tim to get a quote from the organization that delivers these series and book the workshop

2. Farm Succession Planning

**Action:** Tim to present quotes from recommended facilitators whose past work has been well received by commodity groups

- A subcommittee to be formed to assist Tim in the review of the quotes and selection process of the facilitator
  - The committee consists of: **Tim, Ron, and Warren**
  - Some names of facilitators such as Elaine Froese were discussed
3. Conservation tools
    - Will be done in house with key partners that were involved in the initial survey of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the PLW project
  - The second part will be for \$40,000 for 2023/24 for extension work with rural municipalities to work with producers in the grasslands of all 4 rural counties. If this does not work, plan b is to use the funds on additional workshops like grazing schools and demonstrations

**Action:** Tim to meet with the 4 Ag Service Boards to plan on the extension work project

- Alberta Ecotrust – Up to \$50,000
  - Just received a Call for Proposals (CFP)
  - Planning to submit a proposal for Water Supply and Management Team on Drought Resilience and Adaptation. Looking at finding a cost-effective way of metering component which will fit to improve near real time data
  - Expression of Interest deadline is December 12, 2022
  - Full proposal due in January

**Action:** Board members to send feedback to Tim if they have other project ideas

## 6. Strategic Planning Session report

- Sandi is working on the summary plan from the planning session, which she is expected to submit to the staff by the end of the week to review and will be circulated to the Executive for review and will be brought back to next Board meeting in the new year for discussion and adoption
- The Board was thanked for the feedback
- Tim apologized for the noise on the first day that made it difficult for some to follow the discussions

## 7. WPAC Forum report

- Core funding agreement commitment from the GOA
- Good discussions between GOA staff and WPACs and commitment for better dialogue going forward
- Discussed WPACs mandate and roles document
- Discussed an opportunity to work together on common projects such as Board Governance training

**Action:** Contact SEAWA and OWC to discuss opportunities of holding a joint Governance training

## 8. IJC St Mary – Milk River community open house report

- Well attended, between 70 and 80 participants
- Good support from the community
- Several MRWCC Board members attended
- There was a discussion to put the infrastructure back to 850cfs of the design capacity that will have challenges for erosion
- There will be administrative and structural changes
- The MRWCC water quality monitoring data and the work that was done on erosion and sedimentation is being made available to the aquatic resources and the modeling team
- 27-page draft workplan deadline for feedback was August 29 but still open to receiving feedback
- Next open house will be in spring
- Some Board members attended the Montana public meeting in Shelby. Attendance was low. Had some good discussions

**Action:** Tim to print a copy of the workplan for the Board members interested

## 9. 2022 Transboundary Grasslands Partnership Workshop report

- Good attendance from the 3 jurisdictions (about 60 in person and 30 to 40 virtually)
- There was a virtual component
- Tim and Allison helped with virtual technical work
- First day there was a bigger picture approach on prairie ventures and wildlife projects across the region
- Second day, there was focus on local producers' experiences on their operations and presentations on indigenous perspectives
- Presentations will be available on You-Tube on the PCF website
- Next year the conference will be held in Saskatchewan

**Action: Tim to share the link of the presentation to the Board members**

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

- Shared that we secured a location for the condo at the Weir Bridge, several board members agreed this may be a better site than the original plan at Goldsprings
- Ed and Tim have made plans to work on the structure in the next few days, so hopefully we are able to get the condo up in the next week
- People are interested to hear about the results from the Pd fungus testing conducted with Alberta Community Bat Program. Should hopefully have updates within the next couple weeks
- Will be exploring the cave on the Audet property for potential bat hibernaculum in early December
- Submitting an abstract to give a presentation at the Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species conference in February 2023

#### **11. 2023 SOW project update**

- Had a project team meeting on November 10
- Sandi is soliciting chapters from specialists and coming together well
- Production might be approximately 2 months late
- Still on track with the budget
- Still anticipating getting \$20,000 from MRWA which is still in the grant ask phase

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

- NSWA had a funder interested in providing funds for education outreach work across the province, to provide manpower for a provincial education outreach coordinator. Still working on logistics
- Training and mentoring sessions for the new Executive Directors across the province
- Compiled a welcome letter to Minister Savage on behalf of all WPACs to introduce WPACs and their role and work

**Action: Tim to forward a copy of the letter to the Board when available**

#### **13. Municipal Appointments on the MRWCC Board**

- Thanked the municipalities for the appointment as follows:
  - Cardston County - Roger Houghton
  - County of Warner – Ross Ford
  - County of Forty Mile - Joan Hughson
  - Cypress County - Richard Oster
  - Town of Milk River – Peggy Losey
  - Village of Coutts – Scott MacCumber

#### **14. Science Forum – December 1, 2022, County of Warner ASB Meeting Room**

- From 10am to 2:30pm
- Have a finalized agenda that will be mailed out early next week
- Those planning to attend to let Mary know
- Will have a hybrid meeting setup (in person and virtually) and will record the presentations

- The list of presentations was presented

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

**Action:** Tim to send a link of the conference to the Board once available

- Have money in the budget for 3 board members interested in attending. Those attending let Tim know. Reservations and registrations will be done by the Council to ensure all MRWCC members are in the same hotel
  - Ross and Jon are attending
- Ron and Allison are submitting an abstract related to Haffner Coulee monitoring work done this past summer and relating it to the environmental significant criteria in the province

## **16. Board Appreciation/Christmas dinner**

- Scheduled for December 6 at 6pm at Tony Roma's in Lethbridge
- Spouses and partners are invited
- Invite Sandi and Lorraine Nicol
- Those attending to let Mary know

**Action:** Mary to send the Christmas dinner reminder to the Board

## **17. 2023 Board Meeting and other important dates**

**Action:** Mary to send a save the date email to the Board with revised list of dates

- Board meeting dates:
  - February 2
  - March 23
  - May 30 (after the AGM)
  - September 21
  - November 23
- All Board meetings start at 1:30pm in the Milk River Town Office Council Chambers
- The meetings are scheduled for the 4th Thursday of the stated month (unless stated otherwise).
- Other Meeting Dates:
  - March 27, 2023 - Community Appreciation Forum
  - May 30, 2023 – 18th Annual General Meeting
  - October 26, 2023 – Strategic Action Plan review or Board Governance Training (To be confirmed)

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

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

- Tim's time as co-Chair on the TGP is done

## 19. Round table discussions

- Richard:
  - Municipal Conservation Tax Credit:
    - Was contacted by Brian with Land Stewardship Centre on municipal conservation tax credit and most producers that Richard contacted are not in favour of it
  - Tourist Information Building:
    - Cypress County signed a 2-year lease on the information building at a \$1 a year and look after the expenses
    - Government has asked the County to have an appraisal done on the building and report back to the government
- Peggy:
  - Tourism conducting business online and is getting rid of information physical structures and have handed all buildings to infrastructure who has advised the Town of Milk River to lease the building at \$150,000 a year plus expenses and wages
  - Liaising with other municipalities to see how this can be resolved going forward
- Tim:
  - Municipal Tax Credit on Ecological Services and Goods:
    - Tim, Ross, Joan met with Brian in Foremost on Tuesday
    - The tax credit is not enough incentive to entice producers to participate
    - More work needs to be done to iron out the problems with the project
- Jon:
  - Grassland Restoration Forum:
    - Ron and Jon attended
    - Very informative
    - First Nations involvement within the Council – Do we need a representative on the board to report on cultural awareness? Would be a wonderful initiative for the MRWCC
      - Was discussed at the strategic planning session and there are actions that will be followed
- Ben:
  - Will be taking a course on data governance when working with First Nations through AAFC as one of the Feds prerequisites to ensure things are done the right way
- Tim:
  - The Strategic plan has strong action items on First Nation involvement that will be followed
- Ron:
  - Grassland Restoration Forum:
    - Three presentation that were within the Milk River watershed
      - Silver Sage 10-year research
        - Inviting people to visit the site
      - Grassland restoration work being done north of Writing on Stone for the past 15 years

- Would like to invite the Council to visit the site
- Mandate to restore and reclaim the well sites east of Mayberries
  - Have started the reclamation work to save all the sagebrush plants which will end up with ditches full of sagebrush on the access roads. Research shows that predators follow those corridors, making it difficult for the sage grouse to have a chance on the landscape
  - The Council need to be concerned and figure out a way to proceed
- Jon:
  - Needs to be done properly to protect all species

**Action:** Ron to invite a small group of interested individuals in spring to visit the field sites with the aim of reporting and recommending to the association on the problems

- Jon:
  - Produce Leading Way (PLW) Project:
    - Wonderful work with great initiative stewardship in the watershed to promote range management and grazing strategies to maintain and improve riparian health and ultimately water quality in the watershed. Are there grant opportunities in the future to bring in a range ecologist to work with producers and do range health assessments, etc.?
      - Similar to the objectives of phase 2 PLW
      - Work with other organizations who are doing similar work

**20. Other items**

**21. Meeting adjournment**

**Motion:** Ed Sloboda moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:18pm.

**22. Next meeting date**

- February 2, 2023

**Signatures:**

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

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