
ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

MEETING #8

November 17, 2005
McDougall Centre, Calgary, Alberta

Summary Report

The Water Council's business meeting was preceded by a strategic planning session, which, with the exception of the discussion of a transition to an arm's length organization, is not documented as part of this summary report for meeting 8.

Key Points:

- Alberta Water Council members continued the process of developing a three-year business plan, and will continue this work at their next meeting.
- Council had an initial discussion on process and timing of becoming an arms-length organization, separate from Alberta Environment with its own bylaws and governance structure.
- Council approved the Alberta Water Research Strategy, endorsed the priority areas defined in the strategy, and agreed to recommend the strategy to the Government of Alberta for implementation and funding. The Council wants to participate in the development of governance and implementation model for the strategy and asked the Water Research Steering Committee to give further thought to governance and implementation and keep Council informed.
- The Council supports the creation of an Environmental Endowment Fund by the Government of Alberta to support initiatives related to the broad scope of Alberta's air, land, water and natural resources (i.e. fish, wildlife, forest, grasslands). From a Council perspective, this fund could enhance the implementation of Water for Life objectives. In particular, the Council supports the use of revenues from the endowment to provide sustained support for Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups, and to develop and distribute education and awareness tools to increase Albertans' understanding of water use and management issues. Endowment support of these two areas would result in a lasting legacy for Albertans.
- Members heard a presentation on the "Valuation of Water" study, outlining the current status of the study and expected deliverables.
- Members heard a presentation on Alberta Environment's response to the Wabamun Lake spill associated with the CN derailment on August 3, 2005.

Attachments to the Meeting Summary:

1. Attendees
2. Action Item Log
3. Decision Log
4. Meeting Agenda

Summary of Discussion

Transition to Arm's Length Organization

At the end of the strategic planning session, Council discussed the anticipated transition to an arm's length organization. Being an independent organization has a number of advantages and would present new opportunities for partnerships. Preliminary work will be needed to identify potential next steps in a transition plan. Members offered the following comments on the transition to an arm's length organization:

- Independence will be an important factor in the Council's future success and a number of good models are available for the Council to consider. Such independence may also create more accountability.
- The Council should move in this direction, but timing is a concern. Members are dealing with a number of issues and should be cautious about how much can be added. Setting up a new organization will require a realistic time frame, and it could take a year, so the transition should be put into the first year of the business plan.
- Much of the strategic planning work is relevant to the new organizational structure. A small team may be needed to guide the transition work.
- Funding options need to be clarified.
 - Peter noted that funding is not expected to be a barrier, as Alberta Environment will be contributing more to implementing WFL and hopes that other ministries will too. The Government of Alberta wants to ensure the capacity exists for the organizations it has set up or encouraged. The executive thought it would be helpful for the Council to hear a presentation on the CASA model to help inform the overall discussion.

Members agreed to further discuss the transition to an independent organization at the January 2006 meeting.

Action 8.1: The secretariat will gather more information, including legal advice, the projected time involved, and key steps in the process of setting up an independent organization, and report back to the January 2006 meeting.

Action 8.2: The secretariat will invite CASA to make a presentation to the January Council meeting.

General Business Meeting

1. Administration

Peter Watson had to return to Edmonton so Bill Berzins convened the business meeting at 12:40 p.m. New Council member Kim Sturgess was welcomed, as were observers Les Wetter, Gloria Keays, Tim LeClair, Joyce Ingram, and Bob Willard.

1.1 Review of Agenda

A report on the discussion and outcome of the executive meeting was added to the agenda as item 1.6. With this change, the agenda was adopted as distributed.

1.2 Approval of Summary Report from September 20, 2005 Meeting

The summary report from the September 20, 2005 meeting was adopted by consensus.

1.3 Action Items from September 20, 2005 Meeting

Terry Sly reviewed the action items from the last meeting, all of which have been completed.

1.4 Media, Communications and Outreach Activities

Terry Sly provided a short summary of recent activities:

1. David Hill made a presentation to the Oldman Watershed Council on the work of the AWC on September 28.
2. Peter Watson made a presentation to the AFPA on “Sharing Responsibility for Environmental Outcomes through Partnerships and Stewardship” on September 29. The presentation used the AWC and WPACs as an example of partnerships.
3. The Wetland Policy Project Team held two consultation sessions with key stakeholders to solicit sector input on wetland concerns, issues and solutions. Co-chairs Jonathan Thompson and Ian Rudland attended both sessions, and some of the project team members, also attended. The sessions involved about 20 stakeholders each and were held in Calgary on October 13th and Nisku the next day.
4. Jay White and Bill Berzins were quoted in an article in “Irrigating Alberta Fall 2005” issue related to wetlands. Bill touched on the role of the Council and some of its work. Jay talked about the development of a comprehensive wetland policy and stressed the importance of having functional wetlands on the landscape.
5. Lisa King, Gerald Cunningham and Terry Sly held an information session with the Aboriginal communities of the Lesser Slave Lake basin in High Prairie on October 14th to provide information on Council, update them on the water management planning initiative for the Lesser Slave Lake, and get feedback on how their representatives can effectively represent them on the AWC, and what they see the Council doing for them.
6. The AWC report “Review of Implementation Progress of WFL, 2004/05” was released on October 18th. *The Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald* ran a story based on the news release on October 19th. Ron Pearson was extensively quoted throughout the article. *The Medicine Hat News* ran a story on Oct 20th, also quoting Ron. Ron did an interview on the 630 CHED Rutherford Show and is scheduled to do another interview on Nov. 21st with Shaw Cable. Ron noted the media’s approaches have all been objective and interested in the scope of WFL and the resolve to get it done.
7. Bev Yee, at the request of Kevin Stashin, made a presentation to the Heavy Oil VP Breakfast Club on October 19th. A portion of Bev’s presentation touched on the *Water for Life* strategy, partnerships and the Alberta Water Council.
8. Judy Smith gave an update to the Alberta Chamber of Resources on the work of the AWC on October 20th.
9. The AWC Annual Report was released on October 31st.
10. Bev Yee spoke at the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance conference on November 2nd. Her talk was titled “Sharing Responsibility for Watershed Management through Partnerships and Stewardship.” The Council had a display at the conference and about 100 copies of the two reports were taken by delegates.
11. Terry Sly and Lisa King spoke to the First Nation Technical Services Advisory Group Conference on November 8th, with a presentation similar to Bev’s. In the discussion about the Alberta Water Council, Lisa introduced herself as their member on the Council, provided information on the work of the Council, and invited members to speak to her about how she can more effectively represent them.

1.5 Release of Council's Two Reports

The Council recognized the Reporting Project Team, and Ron Pearson in particular, for their work to get the two reports published and for the media work Ron did. These reports and the media attention will continue to raise the AWC's profile. Council members appreciated receiving the media clips about the reports and indicated they would like to continue getting these on a regular basis when the AWC is in the news.

1.6 Report from Executive Committee

The notes from the November 8th executive meeting were distributed to members prior to this meeting. Bill Berzins advised that executive committee minutes will be distributed following future meetings and that a brief oral report will be made at each Council meeting. He provided an overview of the key items:

Honoraria. The executive recommended that stakeholders who participate on AWC teams should receive honoraria on the same basis as AWC members. This will ensure fairness and equity and help to eliminate barriers to participation while recognizing the valuable contribution of stakeholder time. To date, the amount paid in honoraria has been about \$10,000 per year. The secretariat has also started to track in-kind contributions of time by Council and team members to show the value of the commitment by AWC supporters. Council supported the executive recommendation that honoraria be paid to stakeholders on AWC teams and working groups, on the same basis as AWC members.

b) Consultation and interaction with First Nations, WPACs and others. The executive recognizes the need for stakeholder meetings related to implementation of WFL and agreed to support and facilitate such stakeholder discussions. A more formal process is needed to structure and enhance outreach activity, and the secretariat was asked to work with the executive to draft a strategy for managing and supporting this outreach work. The executive will discuss this item in December.

c) Use of alternates or observers. When Council first discussed this matter, members agreed they wanted everyone to commit to attending meetings and participating actively, so it was decided not to permit alternates. Members have demonstrated their commitment, and the executive thought it might be time to review the original decision and allow alternates. Members generally supported the opportunity to have an alternate. Having alternates will expand the reach of the Council into its member organizations, there will be a wider breadth of experience at the table, and it will solve the problem of occasional absences by members and ensure continuity. Having alternates does not diminish the commitment expected from members. The Council needs to be very clear about the engagement of alternates and what their role will be. Selection of alternates will need careful discussion to ensure that they understand the ground rules and can participate collaboratively. CASA allows sectors to select their own member and alternate, but has developed criteria for effective membership, which are provided to the stakeholder groups as guidance in selection. The executive has asked the secretariat to propose a process for selecting alternates, to develop some criteria for selection and to identify ground rules for participation on the Council and its working groups and project teams. The executive will review the draft material at its December meeting and provide initial feedback before the proposal comes to a Council meeting.

2. Water Research Strategy

Linda Van Gastel presented the final draft research strategy. This process was lead by the Alberta Science and Research Authority, and a steering committee chaired by Linda. The committee oversaw preparation of the strategy including consultations to gather input. Linda reviewed the two goals, which are to provide research results in key areas, and to develop an integrated water research system. Three strategies were identified under each goal. One of the key strategies is developing a water knowledge management and brokering function to support water management decision-making (referred to as a knowledge broker).

Within each strategy, priorities were identified through the water research strategy consultation process. These priorities are intended as a starting point, and would be the initial focus of research activity, but other priorities are likely to be identified and can be added to the list over time. Linda advised that various provincial government departments have reviewed the draft strategy and there has been nothing to indicate that government would not support the direction of the strategy. There is some urgency to get the strategy into the government's business planning process so that funding allocations can be made for the research.

Council members commended the committee for a good piece of work but had some questions about Council's ongoing role and accountability for delivery of the strategy. Linda indicated that the strategy was developed by ASRA at the Council's request and the intent is for Council to approve it and recommend it to the Government of Alberta for implementation. There is accountability from the Water Research System to the Council to ensure that research delivers on what water system needs to make decisions in support of water for life. Members made the following suggestions:

- Traditional knowledge should be explicitly acknowledged in the strategy, perhaps as part of the knowledge broker function.
- Under the "water in the landscape" priority, wetlands and riparian areas should be clearly noted as a component.
- The AWC should be involved with, and provide guidance to, the development of governance and implementation of the strategy, in particular the development of the knowledge broker function.

Council asked Linda and the steering committee to do further work and report back to the next meeting. The steering committee presently has three AWC members; Environment Canada agreed to join the committee, and has a particular interest in the knowledge broker item.

Action: 8.3: The Water Research Steering Committee will develop further details on a potential governance structure and implementation process for the strategy, and report back to the January Council meeting.

Decision 8.1: The Council agreed to:

- 1. Endorse the priority areas defined in the Alberta Water Research Strategy**
- 2. Approve the Alberta Water Research Strategy**
- 3. Recommend the Alberta Water Research Strategy to the Government of Alberta for implementation and funding.**
- 4. Wanting to participate in development of governance and implementation model for the strategy, and wants the Water research Steering Committee to give further thought to governance and implementation.**

3. Proposed Environmental Endowment Fund

Dave Belyea from Alberta Environment presented background on the proposed environmental endowment. The idea originated with the Minister's Environmental Protection Advisory Committee and the intent is to fund projects that would not fall under normal departmental budgets or activities. AENV is talking to various multi-stakeholder groups to get their input and suggestions. Dave advised that the preference of the Finance Department, which is looking at three possible endowment funds (rural development and social areas are the other two), is for projects that do not require an ongoing commitment from the fund or structures that need continuing maintenance. Council discussed this item, expressing concern about a potential focus on short-term projects when long-term, stable support is often needed for many projects and capacity building. The Council agreed to provide the following input on the proposed environmental endowment fund:

The Council supports the creation of an Environmental Endowment Fund by the Government of Alberta to support initiatives related to the broad scope of Alberta's air, land, water and natural resources (e.g., fish, wildlife, forest, grasslands). From a Council perspective, this fund could enhance the implementation of Water for Life objectives. In particular, the Council supports the use of revenues from the endowment to provide sustained support for Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups, and to develop and distribute education and awareness tools to increase Albertans' understanding of water use and management issues. Endowment support of these two areas would result in a lasting legacy for Albertans.

Dave asked members to forward any additional comments they might have to him.

4. Valuation of Water Study

Mark Haxby with Alberta Economic Development presented an overview of the study now being done on the Value of Water to the Alberta Economy. This study complements the CCME study on analysis of economic instruments for water conservation, also referred to as "the Marbek report." This study is on the CCME website at http://www.ccme.ca/ourwork/water.html?category_id=84. The study steering committee includes a number of provincial and federal departments and agencies as well as representatives from the Saskatchewan and Manitoba governments. It is co-chaired by Alberta Economic Development and Environment Canada. Phase 1 deals with valuing water in the Alberta portion of the South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB). Mark described the deliverables from the project, noting that a complete report for phase 1 is expected in February 2006. Phase 2 will estimate the contribution of water to the wealth of the Alberta economy and is expected to be done by March 31, 2006. The current focus is on surface water, as there is very little information on groundwater. Information on groundwater is being collected and when the database is done, the hope is to add groundwater to it.

During discussion, the following points emerged:

- The results of the project will feed into the system of national accounts. The study will look at the Alberta portion of SSRB, which goes up as far as Red Deer.
- The study will help develop policy and a water management decision-making tool, and there is confidence that a solid tool will emerge from the study.
- After the model is finished it will be in the public domain and the hope is water managers and academia will use it. The WPACs will be able to use it to help evaluate water management

and allocations. The model will have scenario capability. Mark indicated that as the model is used, the steering committee would like feedback on possible improvements.

- It is important and urgent for this work to move ahead in order to help shape the public perception about the true value of water and what it costs for municipalities, for example, to provide safe water to their residents.

Members agreed they would like to stay informed about this study, and receive either an update in January or a final report in March, depending on the fullness of meeting agendas.

Action 8.4: Mark Haxby will forward a short backgrounder from the Gardner Pinfold study done for Environment Canada that outlines the framework and techniques for valuing water on a Total Economic Value approach to Terry for distribution to Council.

5. Wabamun Lake Spill

Martin Foy reviewed the response of Alberta Environment to the spill that occurred at Lake Wabamun in August 2005 when 43 CN freight cars went off the tracks. He provided an overview of the emergency response, described the role of the department and progress to date in the clean-up, and the process for learning from the incident. More information will be available following the release of the Environmental Protection Commission's report, expected at the end of December.

6. Key Messages and Preparation for the Next Meeting

The following key points were proposed and accepted:

- Alberta Water Council members continued the process of developing a three-year business plan, and will continue this work at their next meeting.
- Council had an initial discussion on process and timing of becoming an arms-length organization; separate from Alberta Environment with its own bylaws and governance structure.
- Council approved the Alberta Water Research Strategy, endorsed the priority areas defined in the strategy, and agreed to recommend the strategy to the Government of Alberta for implementation and funding. The Council wants to participate in the development of governance and implementation model for the strategy and asked the Water Research Steering Committee to give further thought to governance and implementation and keep Council informed..
- The Council supports the creation of an Environmental Endowment Fund by the Government of Alberta to support initiatives related to the broad scope of Alberta's air, land, water and natural resources (i.e. fish, wildlife, forest, grasslands). From a Council perspective, this fund could enhance the implementation of Water for Life objectives. In particular, the Council supports the use of revenues from the endowment to provide sustained support for Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups, and to develop and distribute education and awareness tools to increase Albertans' understanding of water use and management issues. Endowment support of these two areas would result in a lasting legacy for Albertans.
- Members heard a presentation on the "Valuation of Water" study, outlining the current status of the study and expected deliverables.
- Members heard a presentation on Alberta Environment's response to the Wabamun Lake spill associated with the CN derailment on August 3, 2005.

The next meeting will be on January 19th in Edmonton. Given the number of items expected to be on the agenda and plans to complete the strategic planning work, members agreed that it would be prudent to start the meeting on the evening of January 18th.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Attachment 1: Meeting #8 Attendees

Council Members:

Bill Berzins, Non-government Organization (Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils)
Rick Denton, Industry (Forestry)
John Donner, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development)
David Hill, Industry (Irrigation)
Mike Kelly, Industry (Power Generation)
Al Kennedy, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)
Lisa King, Government (First Nations)
Larry Nolan, Industry (Livestock)
Ron Pearson, Non-government Organization (Fishery Habitat Conservation)
Margaret Reine, Non-government Organization (Environmental)
Richard Quail, Government (Small Urban)
Judy Smith, Industry (Mining)
Kevin Stashin, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Kim Sturgess, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Economic Development Authority)
Linda Van Gastel, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Science and Research Authority)
Jim Vollmershausen, Government (Environment Canada)
Peter Watson, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)
Jay White, Non-government Organization (Lake Environment Conservation)

Observers:

Barry Chetwin, Alberta Environment
Joyce Ingram, Alberta Sustainable Development (for Brad Pickering)
Gloria Keays, Alberta Health and Wellness (for Nick Bayliss)
Cam Lane, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Tim LeClair, Metis Settlements Council (for Gerald Cunningham)
Les Wetter, Ducks Unlimited (for Jonathan Thompson)
Bob Willard, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (for Joe Miller)

Support Staff:

Terry Sly
Kim Sanderson

Non-AWC Presenters:

Dave Belyea, Alberta Environment
Mark Haxby, Alberta Economic Development
Gillian Kerr, Alberta Environment
Angela McGonigal, Alberta Environment
Grant McIntyre, Alberta Innovation and Science

Absent with Regrets:

Bob Barss, Government (Rural)
Nick Bayliss, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)
Gerald Cunningham, Government (Metis Settlements General Council)
Al Maurer, Government (Large Urban)
Joe Miller, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)
Brad Pickering, Province (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Jonathan Thompson, Non-government Organization (Wetland Habitat Conservation)

Attachment 2: Meeting #8 Action Item Log

Action	Who	By when
8.1: Gather more information, including legal advice, the projected time involved, and key steps in the process of setting up an independent organization, and report back to the January 2006 meeting.	Secretariat	Dec. 31, 2005
8.2: Invite CASA to make a presentation to the January Council meeting.	Secretariat	Dec. 15, 2005
8.3: Develop further details on a potential governance structure and implementation process for the strategy, and report back to the January Council meeting.	Water Research Steering Committee	Jan. 18, 2006
8.4: Mark Haxby will forward a short backgrounder from the Gardner Pinfold study done for Environment Canada that outlines the framework and techniques for valuing water on a Total Economic Value approach to Terry for distribution to Council.	Mark Haxby, Terry Sly	Nov. 25, 2005

Attachment 3: Meeting #8 Decision Log

At this meeting, the Alberta Water Council made the following decision:

Decision 8.1: The Council agreed to:

1. Endorse the priority areas defined in the Alberta Water Research Strategy.
2. Approve the Alberta Water Research Strategy.
3. Recommend the Alberta Water Research Strategy to the Government of Alberta for implementation.
4. Participate in development of governance and implementation for the strategy, particularly as it relates to the Knowledge Broker, and other aspects as appropriate.

Attachment 4: Meeting #8 Agenda

Alberta Water Council

Agenda, Meeting #8

November 17, 2005

McDougall Centre, Calgary Alberta

The Alberta Water Council held a half-day strategic planning session followed by a half-day business meeting. Except for the discussion of the transition to an arm's length organization, the strategic planning activities are not part of this meeting summary.

GENERAL BUSINESS OF COUNCIL

- 1:00** **1. Administration – Chair 30 min**
1.1 Welcome and approve agenda
1.2 Approve Summary Report (September 20, 2005 meeting)
1.3 Review of actions from last meeting
1.4 Media, Communication and Outreach Activities
1.5 Release of Council's two reports
1.6 Report from Executive Committee
- 1:30** **2. Water Research Strategy 45 min**
Linda Van Gastel will make a presentation on the second draft of the strategy.
- 2:15** **3. Proposed Environmental Endowment Fund 30 min**
Dave Belyea, Alberta Environment, will provide Council with some background on the Environmental Endowment initiative and seek Council's input.
- 2:45** **Coffee Break 15 min**
- 3:00** **4. Valuation of Water Study 45 min**
Mark Haxby, Alberta Economic Development, will provide an overview of the study, including deliverables.
- 3:45** **5. Wabamun Lake Spill 30 min**
Alberta Environment will make a presentation on the Wabamun Lake spill associated with the CN derailment.
- 4:15** **6. Other Business 5 min**
New items of business or other items of information for Council
- 4:20** **7. Key Messages and Preparation for Next Meeting (Chair) 10 min**
Confirmation of the key messages from this meeting will be requested. The chair will confirm the next meeting and ensure that any actions required for the next meeting are assigned.
- 4:30** **Adjournment**