

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

MEETING #44

November 3, 2016

Government House, Edmonton, Alberta

Executive Summary

As is customary for the fall meeting, board members attended an event the previous evening to honour retiring directors and alternates. Honourable Shannon Phillips briefly addressed the board at this event.

At the board meeting, two new alternate directors were welcomed: Wade Clark representing Alberta Energy and Greg Moffatt representing the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada for the Chemical and Petrochemical sector. Al Kemmere and Jay White were named to two-year terms as executive representatives for the Government and Non-Government Organizations sectors respectively. The board ratified the executive's selection of Andre Corbould as AWC president to complete the current term through October 2017. The board approved the 2017 core operating budget, and selected meeting dates for the coming year: March 16 and October 26 in Calgary, and June 15 in Edmonton. Executive Director Gord Edwards retires at the end of January 2017; the executive was authorized to serve as a hiring committee, with support from AEP, to recruit and hire a new executive director. Work on a new three-year business plan will begin once the new person is in place.

Andre Corbould provided an update on GoA activities, noting the water policy priorities that have been identified. The board also received a presentation from AEP on the review of WPAC roles and responsibilities and next steps, as well as an update on changes and ongoing research supported by Alberta Innovates' Water Innovation Program.

Thorsten Hebben, AEP Director of Surface Water Policy, gave a detailed presentation on the Alberta Wetland Policy and Implementation Plan and the incorporation of AWC recommendations. The AWC developed 81 recommendations on this topic and of these, 98% are completed or in progress and 2% are not being considered.

One AWC committee and two project teams presented their work. The board approved the report, including 12 recommendations, and the communications plan from the Water for Life Implementation Review Committee. The committee concluded that the strategy remains resilient and relevant, and progress has occurred on each goal and key direction but some gaps and weaknesses remain; further, integration with other GoA priorities (e.g., the Land-use Framework, IRMS) remains unclear. Increased adaptability is needed, and continued effort should be made to track and communicate progress.

The Lake Watershed Management Project Team presented its final report and recommendations. Board members offered several comments and asked the team to do a little more work to fine-tune the report and bring it back for approval at a later date. The Evaluating Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Project Team updated the board on its results and proposed theme areas for its recommendations. The final report will come forward at the next board meeting.

Summary of Discussion

Andre Corbould convened the meeting at 9:05 a.m., welcoming everyone and reviewing safety procedures for the building. He thanked AFPA for sponsoring the reception at the recognition dinner the previous evening. Those present introduced themselves.

1 Administration

1.1 Approve Agenda

The Chair reviewed the agenda, which was approved by consensus.

1.2 Action Items from April 7, 2016 Meeting

The Chair directed board members to the two action items and their status, as described in the briefing book. There were no additional questions or comments.

1.3 Summary Report from April 7, 2016 Meeting

In response to a question about a statement in the minutes regarding discussions to identify issues for which the GoA needs advice and assistance, Andre Corbould noted that those discussions are continuing. He hopes to have more concrete information early in 2017.

Decision 44.1: The summary report for the April 7, 2016 meeting was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the AWC website.

1.4 Appointment of New Executive Officers

Al Kemmere and Jay White have been designated by the Government broad category and the Non-Government Organizations broad category respectively as their representatives on the executive committee, with terms ending in October 2018. Andre Corbould was designated as the representative for the Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities sector to complete the term ending in October 2017. In accordance with AWC bylaws, the executive members have chosen Andre Corbould as president.

Decision 44.2: The board ratified the executive committee's selection of Andre Corbould as AWC president.

1.5 Management Report

Gord Edwards directed the board to his management report in the briefing package and focused on some of the key points. CASA staff will be moving into the AWC offices by the spring and renovations will be done to accommodate this move. This meeting is normally when the AWC would begin work on a new three-year business plan, but the executive agreed to defer this task until a new executive director is in place. Work will likely begin in conjunction with the March 2017 meeting. Gord will be retiring at the end of January and closed by expressing his appreciation to the board for its continuing commitment and contributions and for the opportunity to work with such a remarkable group of volunteers for the last part of his career.

1.6 Proposed 2017 Core Operating Budget

Gord presented the core operating budget for 2017 with reference to the briefing materials. Human resources continue to be the single largest portion of the budget, although numbers

were lower for 2016 due to his reduced time commitment and to one project manager being on maternity leave. He reviewed projected expenditures for 2017, commenting on any differences and providing rationale. One new statement of opportunity has been submitted, but staff are waiting to see how it will align with AEP's five-year strategy when that is ready.

Decision 44.3: The board approved the proposed 2017 AWC Core Operating Budget.

1.7 Meeting Dates for 2017

Decision 44.4: The board agreed to meet three times in 2017, in Calgary on March 16 and October 26, and in Edmonton on June 15.

1.8 Executive Director Succession

The Chair and board thanked Gord Edwards for his nine years of service to the AWC. With board approval, the executive committee has agreed to act as a hiring committee with support from AEP human resources staff. The Chair will work with Gord to develop a recruitment strategy in consultation with AEP. Funds have been set aside for recruitment and hiring. The hiring committee hopes to have someone in place by early January in order to overlap with Gord for a few weeks.

Decision 44.5: The board agreed to grant the executive committee authority to hire the next executive director.

2 Government of Alberta (GoA) Update

Andre Corbould gave an update on GoA activities related to water, focusing on the key points noted below. AEP will provide a detailed written description for the board in a separate document to be distributed with the minutes.

- Environment and Parks water policy priorities
- creation of Environment and Parks draft strategic plan
- whirling disease (includes supplemental information)
- Integrated Resource Management: System, organizations, common priorities
- status of regional plan implementation and planning
- climate leadership plan
- adoption of National Plumbing Code of Canada (for Municipal Affairs)

Discussion and Comments

Comment: Whirling disease was noted in the Oldman watershed around 1986.

Q: Is there a schedule for completing the remaining regional plans?

Andre Corbould (AC): The published schedule is still in place for all the plans. GoA is considering if we have internal capacity to address issues related to the Eastern Slopes separately or if all seven plans must first be completed. There are numerous commonalities and some urgency to deal with this matter but timing is a factor especially in terms of consultation.

Q: Can you comment on the amount of monitoring being done now that those responsibilities are back in the GoA's purview.

AC: Nothing has changed in terms of the monitoring being done but the direction to Dr. Wrona is to enhance the speed with which we expand monitoring. He is developing a science and monitoring plan that will see expansion. He has been asked to take a provincial approach and the main office for his group will be in Calgary; we are also looking at offices in Lethbridge, Fort McMurray and other locations to give a true regional base. We know we are behind on monitoring activity and will be allocating the funds previously collected as we catch up. The Indigenous and science panels are in place, and the next step is to publish the science and monitoring plan.

Q: Is any community monitoring being planned?

AC: The minister and the premier are keen to move ahead on community-based monitoring and this is a big deliverable but we aren't sure yet what it will look like. The existing airsheds provide a good backbone for air, the WPACs provide the same basis for water, and we think municipalities could serve this function for land. We will be having more discussions with potential partners in 2017. In terms of biodiversity, we see this as more of a policy piece rather than monitoring and science. There was some duplication when AEMERA was brought back into government and the next step is to rationalize and talk to agencies like the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute to ensure efforts are complementary. When the external rationalization is complete, some gaps and overlaps are likely to appear and we can deal with them then.

3 Lake Watershed Management Project Team

Petra Rowell presented the final report and recommendations from the Lake Watershed Management Project Team, with reference to the briefing book material. She reviewed the team's objectives, summarized its work and presented the 13 recommendations which are organized in six theme areas. The communications plan was briefly described and the board was encouraged to look at the video on lakes, which is available on the AWC's website.

Discussion

Board members asked questions and provided comments, and presenters and staff responded.

- Is there a price tag on recommendation 8?
 - No. It's more about putting whatever resources are available to lakes that are a priority.
- This recommendation is too open-ended and it would be easy for the GoA to say this is being done now. It might be beneficial to include a cost estimate for this work. The concern is that we will never be able to satisfy the request, so it becomes a difficult recommendation to fulfill.
 - The AWC tries to focus recommendations on “the what” and leave “the how” to the implementer, since project teams typically do not have the requisite expertise to say exactly how a recommendation should be implemented.
- Is there a specific result we are trying to get with this recommendation? I think we are already doing a lot of what this recommendation asks for.
 - It was made in response to questions about why resources are being allocated to a certain lake, when another lake – for example, one that provides drinking water for people – is not getting sufficient attention.
 - When it comes time to track implementation progress, the GoA can describe the actions it is taking.

- If the recommendation remains as is, the GoA will likely accept it. If estimated costs are added, AEP may or may not agree, but it could help to set priorities.
 - One solution could be for AWC staff to coordinate with the project team as it considers this issue in the larger context and proposes a solution to address it.
- This is about “the what.” If we are doing this as an advisory approach, that is one thing, but creating a local lead authority (recommendation 7) causes some worry.
 - The intent is not to create another level of bureaucracy. We want municipalities at the table but we hope the advice works its way into the various plans. We know they all have to align with regional plans.
- Will authority on this come through the regional plans, which will be above municipal plans?
 - We would have to look at the scale of the issue.
- Lakes are often bounded by many jurisdictions and if there is not a lead jurisdiction, nothing happens. We need to figure out what happens with cross-boundary situations.
- If priorities are identified, then the project needs to get done. What time frame are we talking about? How do we deal in a timely manner with a lake that has an issue and allocate resources to address it?
- I see a link between recommendation 5 which involves creating priorities, and recommendation 8 which says to follow them.
- Could we rephrase recommendation 8 to ask the GoA to develop an implementation plan to address recommendation 5? We need a lead agency to do an implementation plan, which may or may not be the GoA.
 - The recommendation notes the intent to have a collaborative approach. Presumably implementation would be addressed as part of developing the provincial lake management policy in collaboration with other groups. In any event, the team was specifically asked not to do an implementation plan. This recommendation could be getting ahead of other processes that are part of developing and implementing a lake policy.
- I suggest for recommendation 7 we delete the word “authority.” Also, recommendations 5-7 in particular don’t flow in a logical linear sequence. These are key recommendations so this section should be restructured to be more linear and perhaps serve as a framework into which other points could fall.
- A high level definition of the term “reservoir” should be added to the glossary.

Decision 44.6: The board agreed to:

- a) defer approval of the Lake Watershed Management Team’s report and recommendations and the communications plan to a later date after the team has had time to consider how to address the issues raised***
- b) not disband the team***
- c) ask the team to refine the report and recommendations by addressing the feedback provided by the board at this meeting and undertake further sector engagement as needed.***

4 Water for Life Implementation Review Committee

Gordon Thompson described the history of the Water for Life strategy and action plan and the AWC’s implementation review process. Kristen Lorenz presented the committee’s 12

recommendations. The committee concluded in its overall assessment that the strategy remains resilient and relevant, and progress has occurred on each goal and key direction but some gaps and weaknesses remain, some of which were noted in the last review; further, integration with other GoA priorities (e.g., the Land-use Framework, IRMS) remains unclear. Increased adaptability is needed, and continued effort should be made to track and communicate progress.

Discussion

Board members asked questions and provided comments, and presenters and staff responded.

- Did all sectors respond to the survey?
 - The committee went through the AWC board in conducting the survey, and received about 100 responses. Some sectors coordinated their response and others were submitted individually. We would have to check, but I think we heard from all sectors.
- This committee uses “short, medium and long term” as timeframes for implementation, while the previous team specified a year. Should AWC be consistent, and does the GoA have a preference for one approach or the other?
 - The committee used this approach to be consistent with the action plan.
 - GoA: GoA would likely prefer “short, medium and long term” but it’s not an issue. If clear dates are noted, the GoA can define the time frame. In general, GoA sees short term as 18-24 months, medium term is 24-48 months, and long term is beyond 48 months. It’s not necessary for recommendations to use identical formats.
- The recommendations have three different levels of classification: criteria, indicators and performance measures. Sometimes we have data but it’s not linked in an appropriate way to these three levels, which makes it hard to report. The problem may not be a lack of data but rather a lack of links. We have many of the parts already, we just need to integrate them better. It would be useful to have this information and analysis, but I don’t have a suggestion right now.
- Recommendation 12 talks about the need to develop performance metrics. Recommendation 5 singles out two components; why are these not included in recommendation 12?
 - Recommendation 5 came out of the panel of subject matter experts. A lot of work is happening under the umbrella of regional planning to meet the intent of ensuring healthy aquatic ecosystems, but it is not being communicated very well. That is the basis for recommendation 5. Recommendation 12 is from a previous iteration of the Water for Life Implementation Review committee, which has not been acted on yet, and the committee wanted to ensure it didn’t get lost.
- In terms of increased adaptability, does the committee think there is enough in the recommendations to address the need for flexibility and adaptability when it comes to climate change?
 - We do feel the recommendations are sufficient. You have to be able to measure what you are going to manage. To deal with climate change, we have to know what we’re doing now and how to measure changes.

Decision 44.7: The board approved the report and communications plan as presented by the Water for Life Implementation Review Committee, and agreed to release the current members but retain the standing committee.

5 Evaluating Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Project Team

Rob Hoffman reviewed the history and timeline for the AWC's work on water conservation efficiency and productivity (CEP). He briefly described the results reported by each of the major water-using sectors. Kim McLeod presented the CEP desired outcomes against the Water for Life goals and key findings in terms of both CEP performance and the overall CEP reporting process, noting strengths, gaps and opportunities. She summarized the themes for the proposed recommendations.

Discussion

Board members asked questions and provided comments, and presenters and staff responded.

- It seems that some sectors have outpaced others and that individual Albertans may be lagging some sectors in terms of their water usage and conservation. As results come forward, it might be appropriate for the Minister of Environment and Parks to issue a challenge to individuals to step up, given the results achieved by industry sectors.
 - Urban municipalities have made major improvements (e.g., metering, infrastructure upgrades) and many have actively encouraged conservation. Some of their gains reflect individual usage. As well, some industrial users are on the municipal system.
- When we set up for the next five years, how do we address the gaps? Could the team offer any advice here (e.g., greywater)? This might save a new team some work and could perhaps give more flexibility and enable data to be more easily retrieved.
 - The GoA is considering how to increase reuse and how we can report on this.
- Fracking data is not shown in this work. A lot of fracking permits have been issued, and if we look at potential cumulative water use, there could be concerns.
 - Fracking data does go into WURS and some data are now available, but there hasn't been enough activity to ascertain trends. This is an emerging area and can receive more focus in future work.
 - The permits are temporary diversion licences with a one-year term. The Alberta Energy Regulator has been looking at this issue via an area based pilot project to get operators in one play together to source water and use it as efficiently as possible.

6 Presentation on the Review of WPAC Roles and Responsibilities

Rick Blackwood made a presentation to the board on the work done by Ernie Hui on WPAC roles and responsibilities. With Ernie's retirement, this work has been moved to Rick and his team. Rick summarized the changes that have occurred since WPACs were formed in 2003. He presented the key points that came back from WPACs in Ernie's consultation with them and noted areas where there is alignment between WPACs and AEP. Two areas are still under discussion:

- State of the basin reporting (and "monitoring" as a function)
- WPACs' contributions to water management planning and regional plan development

AEP staff will consolidate all the discussions and prepare a report to clarify WPAC roles in Alberta's water management system by the end of 2016. Grants have been a big challenge and the goal is to get more certainty in the next budget and granting cycle.

7 Alberta Innovates – Energy and Environment Solutions Research Update

Brett Purdy gave a short update on some important changes in the structure and organization of Alberta Innovates in the last year. Among other changes, the Water and Land group now reports through the Clean Energy Division. He noted investment since 2003 in water research and innovation, including the approach for program targets and portfolio management. The aim is to maintain balance in four key areas: future supply and watershed management; healthy aquatic ecosystems; water use conservation, efficiency and productivity; and water quality protection. Brett described the range of projects that have been funded in response to calls for proposals, and gave examples of some key projects that have been funded for some time to study disturbance and resilience.

8 Incorporating AWC Recommendations into the Alberta Wetland Policy and Implementation Plan

Thorsten Hebben provided an update on the Alberta Wetland Policy (WP) and Implementation Plan, as well as detailed spreadsheets that reflected how the 81 AWC recommendations were incorporated. Of these recommendations, 98% are completed or in progress and 2% are not being considered. A few details still need to be added to these tables and an electronic version will be provided to the AWC when updates are completed. Thorsten reviewed the legislative context for the WP and noted a number of other aspects that bear on the current situation, then showed how the policy fits within the structure of the IRMS. He reviewed the two phases of implementation and described next steps, before responding to questions from the board. The US is applying the term “no net loss” to their equivalent of prairie parkland and it’s not working. A lot of antagonism and conflict has arisen over this concept so terminology may not be the answer. We may be better off focusing on building a system to get to the desired outcomes without necessarily emphasizing wetland restoration and replacement.

Discussion

Q: What about enhancement vs. replacement? The Municipal Government Act review talks about collaboration between municipalities. Could this impede implementation of the WP? Could wetland replacement be transferred to another nearby municipality?

Thorsten Hebben (TH): That discussion is happening now in the Calgary area, which has very little area to enable wetland replacement. They are talking about restoration upstream. AEP will have a protocol for enhancement but it is not yet ready. We need to be clear that enhancement is very much function-based. The challenge is how to do it in each context. Collaboration is fine, within reason.

Comment: I’m happy to see the reference to developing a wetland education plan. We need to educate and do more “on the ground” work to help people better understand the value of wetlands. Also the issue of road construction is an issue for rural municipalities. If they plan to do road rehabilitation, the time frame is very short. Given the need for an assessment and follow-up it could take two years to make a decision, which is frustrating.

TH: I would ask what has changed. This has been a requirement for over ten years. So maybe it’s a fear of potential reprisal that wasn’t there before. But we do need to figure out how to address this issue for roads through peatland areas and identify potential tools.

Q: Who do you still need to collect restoration funds from for the Green Zone?

TH: This only applies now to a minority of land uses.

Comment: The challenge remains as to how to protect wetlands from damage due to land use change around them.

9 New or Other Business

A board member noted that an Indigenous perspective on the AWC's work in the reports that were approved today seems to be lacking. The GoA is working to improve its relationship with Indigenous peoples and it might be useful for the AWC to consider ways to better engage with them. One possibility could be to have a representative from the Aboriginal Consultation Office join the board to assist with liaison. It was noted that the AWC bylaws specify three seats for representatives of Treaties 6, 7 and 8, as well as a seat for a Métis representative. Staff have reached out to them every year but any suggestions for improvement or for other ways to engage these communities would be welcomed.

The board meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Attachment 1: Meeting #44 Attendees

AWC Directors and Alternates

Mark Brostrom, Government (Large Urban)
Bob Cameron, NGO (Environmental)
Wade Clark, GoA and Provincial
Authorities (Alberta Energy)
Andre Corbould, GoA and Provincial
Authorities (Alberta Environment and
Parks)
Deanna Cottrell, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Cheryl Fujikawa, NGO (WPACs)
James Guthrie, Industry (Mining)
Jim Hackett, Industry (Power Generation)
Rob Hoffman, Industry (Chemical and
Petrochemical)
Al Kemmere, Government (Rural)
Ron McMullin, Industry (Irrigation)
Greg Moffatt, Industry (Chemical and
Petrochemical)

Dan Moore, Industry (Forestry)
Keith Murray, Industry (Forestry)
Brett Purdy, GoA and Provincial Authorities
(Alberta Innovates)
Hugh Sanders, NGO (WPACs)
Melodie Stol, Government (Small Urban)
Merry Turtiak, GoA and Provincial
Authorities (Alberta Health)
Jay White, NGO (Lake Environment
Conservation)
Jamie Wuite, GoA and Provincial
Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and
Forestry)
Gord Edwards, AWC Executive Director

Presenters:

Gord Edwards, *Management Report* (Item 1.5)
Andre Corbould, *GoA Update* (Item 2)
Petra Rowell, *Lake Management Project Team* (Item 3)
Kristen Lorenz and Gordon Thompson, *Water for Life Implementation Review* (Item 4)
Rob Hoffman and Kim McLeod, *Evaluating Water CEP Team* (Item 5)
Rick Blackwood, *WPACs in Today's Water Management System* (Item 6)
Brett Purdy, *Alberta Innovates Research Update* (Item 7)
Thorsten Hebben, *Incorporating AWC Recommendations into the Alberta Wetland Policy and
Implementation Plan* (Item 8)

Guests:

Mary Metz and Sharon Willianen, AEP

AWC Staff and Contractors:

Andre Asselin, Anuja Ramgoolam, Petra Rowell, Kim Sanderson

Absent with Regrets:

Maureen Bell, NGO (Environmental)
Dave Burdek, GoA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Forestry)
Carolyn Campbell, NGO (Environmental)
Silvia D'Amelio, NGO (Fisheries Habitat Conservation)
Doug Lammie, GoA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)
Perry McCormick, NGO (Wetland Habitat Conservation)
Mary Onukem, Government (Métis Settlements)
Stuart Thiessen, Industry (Livestock)
Jason Unger, NGO (Environmental)

Attachment 2: Meeting #44 Action Item Log

None arising.

Attachment 3: Meeting #44 Decision Log

Decision 44.1: The summary report for the April 7, 2016 meeting was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the AWC website.

Decision 44.2: The board ratified the executive committee's selection of Andre Corbould as AWC president.

Decision 44.3: The board approved the proposed 2017 AWC Core Operating Budget.

Decision 44.4: The board agreed to meet three times in 2017, in Calgary on March 16 and October 26, and in Edmonton on June 15.

Decision 44.5: The board agreed to grant the executive committee authority to hire the next executive director.

Decision 44.6: The board agreed to:

- a) defer approval of the Lake Watershed Management Team's report and recommendations and the communications plan to a later date after the team has had time to consider how to address the issues raised*
- b) not disband the team*
- c) ask the team to refine the report and recommendations by addressing the feedback provided by the board at this meeting and undertake further sector engagement as needed.*

Decision 44.7: The board approved the report and communications plan as presented by the Water for Life Implementation Review Committee, and agreed to release the current members but retain the standing committee.

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL
AGENDA, MEETING #44

November 3, 2016
Government House
12845 – 102 Avenue, Edmonton

NOTE: Broad Category caucusing from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m.

GENERAL BUSINESS OF COUNCIL

9:00 1.0 Administration 30 min

- 1.1 Welcome, review health and safety and approve agenda
- 1.2 Review of actions from last meeting
- 1.3 Approve April 7, 2016 meeting summary
- 1.4 Appointment of executive officers – Non-government Organizations and Government; ratifying new President
- 1.5 Management Report
- 1.6 Approve AWC Proposed 2017 Core Operating Budget
- 1.7 Approve meeting dates for 2017
- 1.8 Executive director succession

9:30 2.0 Government of Alberta Update 30 min

Hear an update from the GoA.

10:00 Break 15 min

10:15 3.0 Lake Watershed Management Project Team 30 min

Approve the team's report and communications plan, and disband the team

10:45 4.0 Water for Life Implementation Review Committee 30 min

Approve the committee's report and communications plan, and disband the committee

11:15 5.0 Evaluating Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Project Team 30 min

Hear an update on the team's work including draft recommendation themes

11:45 Lunch 45 min

12:30 6.0 Informative Presentation on the Review of WPAC Roles and Responsibilities 30 min

Hear a report on the review of WPAC roles in Alberta's water management system

1:00 7.0 Alberta Innovates Energy and Environment Solutions – Research Update 30 min

Hear an update from about recent AIEES' Water Innovation Program

Break 15 min

1:45 8.0 Incorporating AWC Recommendations into the Alberta Wetland Policy and Impl. Plan 2hrs

Hear how the GoA considered and incorporated AWC recommendations into the Wetland Policy

3:45 9.0 New or Other Business 15 min

New items of business or other items of information

4:00 Adjourn