
ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

MEETING #23
March 19, 2009
Edmonton, Alberta

Executive Summary

The AWC completed its first Annual General Meeting, at which they approved the Council's audited financial statements and selected an auditor for 2009. The Members confirmed the board's membership and approved Sierra Club of Canada Prairie Chapter as a new board member to represent the Environmental sector.

Jim Ellis updated the board on actions the Council has previously recommended to the provincial government. Brief updates were provided on the Intra-basin Water Movement, Wetland Policy, and *Water for Life* Strategy Renewal report recommendations. An update was also provided on the province's water allocation projects. Jim noted that Alberta Environment is working with Council staff to establish a system to track progress on the Council's recommendations. Over 150 recommendations were created in 2008.

The Council's Process Guidelines were approved with a couple of minor amendments. The Process Guidelines are a companion to the Council's bylaws and describe in a general way the roles and responsibilities of the Board, project teams, working groups, committees and staff.

The Board approved the Terms of Reference for a new Sector Planning for Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Project Team. The new project team will provide a forum where stakeholders can share ideas, experience, opportunities and challenges in developing Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Plans. They will also report on progress toward completing the plans and evaluate and determine the need for enhancements to the CEP Framework and Annotated Table of Contents. The previous working group was disbanded.

The report *Recommendations to Advance the Goal of Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems* was approved by the Board. This work completes the Terms of Reference for the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team, which was disbanded. The report contains recommended projects for the Alberta Water Council, the Provincial Government and other stakeholders to undertake to advance this goal of the *Water for Life* strategy.

The Water Allocation Transfer System Upgrade Project Team provided an update on their work to date. They indicated that their symposium on March 4th and 5th in Calgary was very successful and explained their process moving forward as they complete the first draft of their recommendation report. They aim to bring forward a final report at the June board meeting.

The *Water for Life* Implementation Review Committee presented draft recommendations for the next *WFL* Implementation Review Report and sought input from the Board. They expect to present their completed report at the June board meeting.

Jay White presented information on ALMS' Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day Program.

Summary of Discussion

MEMBERS MEETING

1 Administration

1.1 Welcome, Introductions and Approve Agenda

Jay White convened the Annual General Meeting at 9:15 am and reviewed the member's portion of the agenda, which was approved by consensus. Jay welcomed Joseph Jobin from Treaty 8 First Nations to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

1.2 Approve Membership Changes

Danielle Droitsch (Water Matters Society) resigned from the Board in December 2008 creating a vacancy on the board in the ENGO sector. The Alberta Environmental Network confirmed that the Sierra Club of Canada Prairie Chapter should be their new Member and that Lindsay Telfer and Lisa Maria Fox will be their new director and alternate, respectively.

Members agreed by consensus to accept the resignation of the Water Matters Society and approve the Sierra Club of Canada Prairie Chapter as a new Member of the Alberta Water Council Association.

1.3 AWC Membership

The Annual General Meeting provides an opportunity for the Board to examine its membership and reaffirm that the balance and composition remain satisfactory.

Members agreed by consensus to approve the Council's membership.

Action 23.1: Staff will update the membership table to reflect the current membership and their representatives.

1.4 2008 Audited Financial Statements

Phil Dirks, CA with Hawkings Epp Dumont LLP presented the Council's audited financial statements. The audit was completed in January 2009 and provided to the Executive Committee at their February meeting. The audit showed that the Council's records and finances were in good shape.

Members agreed by consensus to approve the 2008 audited financial statements for the purpose of putting a summarized version in the 2008 annual report.

1.5 Select Auditor for 2009

The Council's bylaws require that the auditor for the Association be appointed at every annual general meeting. This enables the board to assess if the current auditor is meeting the Council's needs.

Members agreed by consensus to appoint Hawkings Epp Dumont LLP as auditors for the Alberta Water Council Association in 2009.

The meeting of Members was adjourned at 9:45 am.

GENERAL BUSINESS OF COUNCIL

1 Administration

1.1 Welcome and Approve Agenda

Mike Kelly convened the general business meeting at 9:45 am and reviewed the agenda, which was approved by consensus.

1.2 Approve Summary Report from December 2, 2008 meeting

Decision 23.1: The summary report for Meeting 22 was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.

1.3 Review of Actions from last meeting

Gord Edwards advised that the 2009 budget was amended to clarify funds allocated for project work and board work and that a review of in-kind contribution tracking is underway.

He also advised that Alberta Environment has been made aware of recommendations regarding the need for indicators of watershed health through the transmittal letter that accompanied the *Recommendations for a Watershed Management Planning Framework for Alberta* report.

1.4 Executive Director's Report

Gord Edwards directed the board to his report in the briefing binder and provided some highlights. The WATSUP team's symposium on March 4th & 5th in Calgary was exceptional and boosted the profile and credibility of Council. A brochure and a highlights handout have been prepared and copies were provided to Council members for distribution as they see fit. The Council will be facing a significant reduction in the grant from the Government of Alberta in 2009 and expects to know the final grant amount by the end of March. As a result, the Executive Committee has decided to amend the 2009 budget and will bring it to the June board meeting for approval. The Executive Committee also decided not to proceed with the business planning workshop this spring due to cost and timing considerations. In the interim, the Council's 2009 operational plan will be revised, possibly extended and brought forward to the June meeting with a revised budget.

Gord advised that status reports about on-going Council projects were provided in the briefing binder, however, in response to a previous request, Jim Ellis provided the following updates:

Intra-basin Water Movement

Since the Council's report on intra-basin water movement was completed, Minister Renner has received authority from the Cabinet Policy Committee to undertake a review of the water allocation system. Alberta Environment has reviewed the recommendations and will include

them in this broader review of water allocation. Environmental cumulative effects legislation currently under development will also incorporate some of these recommendations.

Wetland Policy

Because of some recent criticism regarding the release of government strategies without supporting implementation details, the department is working to ensure that the wetlands policy package includes both the policy and a detailed implementation plan. The wetlands policy is a significant piece of work that will support the new land use framework so the department is working to ensure it fits with and informs the new regional planning processes. The policy is expected to be released this spring, possibly in June.

Renewed *Water for Life* Strategy Action Plan

In response to the Council's recommendations, Minister Renner released a *Renewed Water for Life* strategy in the fall of 2008. *Water for Life* remains the strategic plan and approach to managing water in Alberta. An action plan has been developed to support the renewed strategy which contains 47 actions and is expected to be released this spring. While the action plan is being finalized, work on *Water for Life* initiatives continues.

Water Allocation System Review

Minister Renner attended the WATSUP symposium and was very impressed with the speakers, agenda, and organization of this event. Jim offered his congratulations to the WATSUP team on a job well done.

At the December board meeting, Alberta Environment staff presented an overview of the water allocation system project. Jim noted that the purpose of that presentation was to provide Council with an overview of the intent of the project and to allow Board members to understand where they can participate. The department is under significant pressure to deliver a review of the water allocation system in a very short time. The WATSUP team's work will be a critical piece of information, along with the work that the Alberta Water Research Institute is undertaking examining water allocation in other jurisdictions. The Minister has also established an Advisory Group that will be providing advice to the Minister on this topic. Mike Kelly, Ron Pearson and Judy Smith are all participating on the Advisory Group and will provide a link to the WATSUP team and the Council. All of these pieces of work are expected to be provided to the Minister in June. Information will be prepared over the summer for focused stakeholder consultations in the fall. The *Water Act* is being examined in the context of this work and may be amended if the results of this review suggest there is a need. However, there are existing tools available under the Act which have not yet been "turned on" and that may provide the necessary flexibility without amending the legislation.

AWC Recommendations

Jim noted that the Council has produced more than 150 recommendations to date and this work has been extremely helpful for Alberta Environment. He acknowledged that this represents a huge investment of time and effort and will have a significant impact on watershed management across the province.

A board member asked whether Jim could provide information on how the province plans to monitor the implementation of the recommendations Council has directed at them. Jim indicated that both the Council and GoA staff are working together to address this issue. He noted that the GoA is building an internal tracking system to ensure it is able to respond to and report back on the recommendations and that AWC staff are ensuring their tracking is coordinated.

A board member asked whether the GoA will be providing direction on wetlands to Calgary and Edmonton to incorporate in their regional plans. Jim agreed to follow up on this and report back at the next meeting.

Action 23.2: Jim Ellis to follow up with his colleagues on whether GoA will be providing direction on wetlands to the Calgary and Edmonton regional planning processes.

1.5 Approve Council's Process Guidelines

Gord Edwards reviewed work to date on the Council's process guidelines. The guidelines were last tabled for consideration at the December board meeting and feedback was requested from Council members by the end of January. Twelve responses were provided and the version in the briefing binder is a result of these comments and comments provided by the Executive Committee at their meeting in February.

Board members from the Alberta Environmental Network requested that these minutes state the uniqueness of the AEN's representation and that ENGO support for a decision at the Council does not reflect full support of the entire ENGO sector but does represent support by those organizations that are the members.

Board members agreed that the process guidelines will be provided to project teams when they are first established.

Decision 23.2: Council approved the Process Guidelines, with the following changes:

- *3.1.4 Voting; pg 8; strike the fifth bullet " Approval of Process Guidelines"*
- *5.4 Membership on ..., pg 15, , insert "regularly, including "in the fourth bullet which will now read "Brief their sector's Director regularly, including prior to the team's report ..."*

2 Sector Plan Monitoring Working Group

In December 2008, Council approved a report on Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) Sector Planning. Recommendation 21 in that report asked Council to establish a multi-stakeholder team to assist sectors in developing their CEP plans. At the December board meeting, a working group was established to develop a Terms of Reference for the new project team. Giselle Beaudry and John Skowronski, co-chairs of the working group, provided background, an overview of the TOR, a preliminary list of team members, objectives, deliverables and timelines for the work of the new team. It was recognized that the new team will require financial support and the project team will be securing the budget from its members.

The new team will prepare one main report in spring 2011, and will provide regular status reports to the Board prior to that. The main report will provide: (1) a general overview of how many sectors have completed plans and the targets they identified; (2) an overview of progress toward achieving CEP objectives where data is available; (3) challenges encountered with the CEP framework document; and (4) recommendations to assist in the 2012 evaluation of overall CEP progress.

A council member raised a concern that municipal infrastructure grants would be tied to the completion of CEP plans, which may negatively impact their sector. Alberta Environment indicated that no changes had been made to the granting process and that any changes would be done in a fair and consultative manner. Any sectors with concerns around this issue were invited to participate on the new Sector Planning for CEP team, which will provide input to the opportunities identified by Alberta Environment for amending the granting process to incent water conservation, efficiency, and productivity.

Decision 23.3: The Board:

1. *Approved by consensus the draft Terms of Reference for the Sector Planning for Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity project team*
2. *Approved the establishment of the Sector Planning for Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Project team*
3. *Disbanded the Sector Plan Monitoring Working Group*

3 Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems

The Healthy Aquatic Ecosystem (HAE) project team was established to: (1) develop a working definition of “healthy aquatic ecosystems,” (2) recommend potential projects of provincial importance and identify which groups would be suited to lead them, and (3) identify potential projects that could be undertaken within the AWC’s mandate. The working definition of HAE was approved at the December board meeting. Danielle Cobbaert described the process the group used to develop their final recommendations and presented the project team’s final report, *Recommended Projects to Advance the Goal of Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems*.

The team emphasized priority projects that could be completed in two to three years; however, an extensive list of potential projects is included for reference as there are other important projects that could be undertaken by other sectors to advance this goal. All recommendations are intended to inform operational and work planning processes in the various organizations identified as potential leads. All recommendations suggest a three year timeframe for reporting back to Council except for the recommendation concerning the development of indicators, which should provide a progress report back to Council in 18 months.

Board members discussed how budget was one of the biggest constraints with respect to making progress toward the goal of healthy aquatic ecosystems. It was suggested that there could be more coordination with other initiatives and organizations that are examining similar issues.

One amendment to the report was agreed to by Council; to replace the words “by Golder Associates” with “by a consultant” on the first page.

Decision 24.4: The Board:

1. *Approved by consensus the report, Recommended Projects to Advance the Goal of Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems*
2. *Approved the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team’s communication plan*
3. *Disbanded the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team.*

3 Water Allocation Transfer System Upgrade Project Team

Jim Webber of Western Irrigation District provided an update on the WATSUP team's work to date. The team was established in June 2008 with a mandate to develop recommendations to better utilize and enhance Alberta's water allocation transfer system as it currently exists under the *Water Act*. There are 16 sectors represented on the team and two-subgroups have been established: the symposium planning committee and a group developing a "straw dog" model against which options and solutions will be tested. The straw dog team is meeting weekly and the project team every two weeks. The project team expects to have a comprehensive draft report to present to Council in June. This draft will be provided to Alberta Environment to inform the water allocation system review currently underway by Alberta Environment.

The team has encountered some challenges in focusing the work within the confines of the *Water Act*. There may be recommendations that reach beyond the current Act but the majority of the team's work will focus on the existing system. Completing the work in the short timelines has also been a challenge. However, the team recognizes the importance of having recommendations to input into Alberta Environment's comprehensive review by June.

David Hill indicated that videotapes of the WATSUP symposium will be available for internal use and research purposes; however, they cannot be broadcast for other purposes. These will be made available through the AWC office, when complete.

4 Water for Life Implementation Review Committee

Lisa Maria Fox and Al Kennedy provided an overview of the process for completing the third objective review of progress on implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy. The assessment is being conducted at a strategic level and will provide a snapshot of progress as of December 31, 2008.

Based on an assessment of the available information, the committee prepared a draft Recommendation Report (v6) that provides an assessment of progress, recommendations to advance the strategy, and rationale for those recommendations. The committee feels that the recommendations should be measurable and achievable over the next 1.5 years.

The board provided the following feedback to the Review Committee:

- Regarding the drinking water section, there is a need to address using the term *unregulated* for private systems, when they are in fact, regulated, but not approved in the same manner as municipal systems.
- Regarding recommendations 4 & 5, the team should consider whether there is a need to expand this section to capture issues related to private septic systems.

- The board asked the committee to consider how it will integrate their strategic-level recommendations with the more specific recommendations from the HAE Project Team that were approved today.
- A board member noted that the knowledge broker function is extremely important and suggested the draft report was too modest in its comments on the need for research. During further discussion, the board requested more information on the WaterPortal initiative and how it is influencing this area of work. David Hill will provide AWC staff information on this matter and the board requested a demonstration of the new portal.

Two other comments were made regarding the overall implementation review process. It was noted that First Nations were not engaged in this committees' sector survey and that in the future they should be included. There was also discussion about whether a more detailed assessment of implementation progress is available from AENV, which would include dollar amounts spent for each element of the strategy. Jim explained that in the future the department will be reporting annually on *Water for Life* progress in a more detailed manner and will dovetail this process with the work of the Council's Implementation Review Committee.

The committee reviewed its revised timelines for completing their work. The report will now come to the Board for approval in June 2009. The delay is due in part to allow sectors adequate time to get feedback from their sectors. AWC directors should provide any additional feedback on the recommendation report to Terry Sly by April 3rd.

Action 23.3: Staff will organize a demonstration of the water portal for the next AWC board meeting.

Action 23.4: Directors will provide any additional comments on the draft recommendation report to Terry Sly by April 3rd.

5 Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day

Jay White presented information on AWQA Day, which was started five years ago as a project of Alberta Environment and Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. The program is now under the coordination of the Alberta Lake Management Society. AWQA Day is modeled after World Water Monitoring Day.

Jay described the context and project outcomes and described how some of the information from the water quality testing kits is being used. Kits can be requested on line at www.awqa.ca. Jay suggested that the Council might consider some "cross-branding" by putting information on AWQA Day on the AWC website and allowing the AWQA Day website to provide information and a link to the AWC website. However, this has to be tested with his organization.

Finally, Jay distributed information on the WaterEd West conference being organized by Inside Education for this fall in Banff. Bev Yee and Kevin Stashin are keynote speakers and he encouraged AWC members to attend.

6 Status Reports

Members were directed to the status reports in the briefing book for information on other Council projects.

Board members were reminded that an e-mail would be sent out with a survey and requested to take the time to fill it out as informs the organization of meetings.

Next meeting is June 4th at the McDougall Centre, Calgary.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Attachment 1: Meeting #23 Attendees

Council Directors and Alternates

Peter Aku, NGO (Fishery Habitat Conservation)
Barry Anderson, Government (Large Urban)
Maureen Bell, NGO (Environmental)
Wendy Boje, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Eric Butterworth, NGO (Wetland Habitat Conservation)
Bob Cameron, NGO (Environmental)
Carolyn Campbell, NGO (Environmental)
Danielle Cobbaert, NGO (Lake Environment Conservation)
Jerry Cunningham, Government (Métis Settlements General Council)
Jim Ellis, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)
Lisa Maria Fox, NGO (Environmental)
Jim Hackett, Industry (Power Generation)
David Hill, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Water Research Institute)
David Kay, NGO (Wetland Habitat Conservation)
Mike Kelly, Industry (Power Generation)
Al Kennedy, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)

Dug Major, NGO (WPACs)
Ron McMullin, Industry (Irrigation)
Debra Mooney, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)
Larry Nolan, Industry (Livestock)
Richard Quail, Government (Small Urban)
Dwight Oliver, Government (Rural)
Dave Rushford, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Doug Sawyer, Industry (Agriculture)
John Skowronski, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)
Judy Smith, Industry (Mining)
Jennifer Steber, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)
Lindsay Telfer, NGO (Environmental)
Jason Unger, NGO (Environmental)
Jay White, NGO (Lake Environment Conservation)
Jamie Wuite, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Food)
Bev Yee, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)
Gord Edwards, AWC Executive Director

Presenters:

Phil Dirks, Hawkings EPP Dumont, LLP, *2008 Audited Financial Statements* (Item 1.4)
Gord Edwards, *Executive Director's Report; Draft Process Guidelines*, (Items 1.4, 1.5)
John Skowronski and Giselle Beaudry, *Sector Plan Monitoring* (Item 2)
Danielle Cobbaert and Scott Millar, *Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems* (Item 3)
Jim Webber, *Water Allocation Transfer System Upgrade Project Team* (Item 4)
Lisa Maria Fox and Al Kennedy, *WFL Implementation Review* (Item 5)
Jay White, *Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day* (Item 6)

Guests:

Giselle Beaudry, Alberta Environment
Cori Carveth, Golder Associates
Phil Dirks, Hawkings EPP Dumont, LLP
Denise Verreault, First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group
Mark Haxby, Alberta Finance and Enterprise
Joseph Jobin, Treaty 8 First Nations
Bill Macdonald, Alberta Environment
Scott Millar, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
George Murphy, Alberta Environment
Kelly Ness, Alberta Environment

Eleanor Kneffel, Beaver River Watershed Alliance
Bryan Walton, Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
Jim Webber, Western Irrigation District

AWC Staff and Contractor Support

Jennifer Beepat, Christine Macken, Terry Sly, Lorie Wagner

Absent with Regrets:

David Breakwell, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)
Colin Jeffares, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development)
Alex MacKenzie, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)
Eric McGhan, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Keith Murray, Industry (Forestry)
Ron Pearson, NGO (Fishery Habitat Conservation)
Rob Pritchard, Government (Large Urban)
Kevin Stashin, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Allan Wells, Government (Métis Settlements General Council)

Attachment 2: Meeting #23 Action Item Log

Action	Who	By when
23.1: Staff will update the membership table to reflect the current membership and their representatives.	AWC Staff	June 4
23.2: Jim Ellis to follow up with his colleagues on whether GoA will be providing direction on wetlands to the Calgary and Edmonton regional planning processes.	Jim Ellis	June 4
23.3: Staff will organize a demonstration of the water portal for the next AWC board meeting.	AWC Staff	June 4
23.4: Directors will provide any additional comments on the draft recommendation report to Terry Sly by April 3 rd .	Directors & Alternates	April 3

Attachment 3: Decision Log

Members Meeting

Members agreed by consensus to accept the resignation of the Water Matters Society and approve the Sierra Club of Canada Prairie Chapter as a new Member of the Alberta Water Council Association.

Members agreed by consensus to approve the Council's membership.

Members agreed by consensus to approve the 2008 audited financial statements for the purpose of putting a summarized version in the 2008 annual report.

Members agreed by consensus to appoint Hawkings Epp Dumont LLP as auditors for the Alberta Water Council Association in 2009.

Meeting #23

Decision 23.1: The summary report for Meeting 22 was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.

Decision 23.2: Council approved the Process Guidelines, with the following changes:

- *3.1.4 Voting; pg 8; strike the fifth bullet “ Approval of Process Guidelines”*
- *5.4 Membership on ..., pg 15, , insert “regularly, including ”in the fourth bullet which will now read “Brief their sector’s Director regularly, including prior to the team’s report ... ”*

Decision 23.3: The Board:

- 1. Approved by consensus the Terms of Reference for the Sector Planning for Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity project team*
- 2. Approved the establishment of the Sector Planning for Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity project team*
- 3. Disbanded the Sector Plan Monitoring Working Group*

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ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL
AGENDA, MEETING #23
March 19, 2009
Matrix Hotel - Edmonton
10001 – 107th Street

NOTE: Broad Category caucusing will occur from 8:00 to 9:00 am.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 9:10 1.0 Administration – Chair 20 min**
- 1.1 Welcome, introductions and approve agenda
 - 1.2 Approve membership changes
 - 1.3 AWC Membership
 - 1.4 2008 Audited Financial Statements
 - 1.5 Select Auditor for 2009

GENERAL BUSINESS OF COUNCIL

- 9:30 1.0 Administration – Chair 45 min**
- 1.1 Welcome and approve agenda
 - 1.2 Approve Summary Report from December 2, 2008 meeting
 - 1.3 Review of actions from last meeting
 - 1.4 Executive Director's report
 - 1.5 Approve Council's Process Guidelines
- 10:15 2.0 Sector Plan Monitoring Working Group 30 min**
Approve terms of reference for the creation of a project team to provide guidance on sector planning.
- 10:45 Break 15 min**
- 11:00 3.0 Healthy Aquatic Ecosystem Project Team 30 min**
Approve the final report and communication plan. Disband the project team.
- 11:30 4.0 Water Allocation Transfer System Update Project Team 30 min**
Update on the work of the project team.
- 12:00 Lunch (provided in the room) 60 min**
- 1:00 5.0 Water for Life Implementation Review Committee 45 min**
Receive feedback from the Board on the direction of the committee's work.
- 1:45 6.0 Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day 15min**
Hear a presentation on the AWQA program.
- 2:00 7.0 Status Reports 15 min**
Refer members to status reports in the board package with brief opportunity for questions or clarification.
- 2:15 8.0 New or Other Business 15 min**
New items of business or other items of information for Council
- 2:30 Adjournment**