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## ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

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MEETING #22

**December 2, 2008**

**Calgary, Alberta**

### **Executive Summary**

The AWC Board recognized outgoing members at an event the evening before the Board meeting, and also enjoyed a presentation by former Alberta Environment Minister, Dr. Lorne Taylor.

As part of its regular business meeting, the Board confirmed Jay White as the new NGO Vice President and Rob Pritchard as the new Government Vice President for terms ending in November 2010. Executive Director Gord Edwards presented the 2009 core operating budget of \$1.31-million, which was approved. There will be three Board meetings in 2009, on March 19, June 4 and October 29.

The Board approved a process for bringing new issues to the Council. In addition to identifying new work through its regular strategic planning activities, the Council will now be able to receive and consider statements of opportunity from stakeholders for potential topics to examine. Criteria for considering such work were also approved as part of this decision.

The Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team presented its final report and recommendations for a Watershed Management Planning Framework. The report identifies key components of watershed management planning and provides guidance for partners working together under a shared governance structure to plan and implement watershed management plans to achieve *Water for Life* goals. Among other things, the team's 12 recommendations deal with the integration and alignment of these plans with other land and resource management planning initiatives. The Board accepted this report along with the proposed communications plan, and agreed to disband the project team.

Board members also approved the working definition of "healthy aquatic ecosystems" as proposed by the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team, knowing that more work will be needed to refine and revise the definition as it is used and tested and as efforts are made to measure the components.

The Board received three presentations from Alberta Environment on:

- The Value of Water Project Update,
- Integrating Water and Land Management through *Water for Life* and the Land Use Framework, and
- Water Allocation and Municipal Water Risk.

Alberta Environment presenters engaged in a brief discussion with the Board and responded to questions and comments.

## Summary of Discussion

### GENERAL BUSINESS OF COUNCIL

#### 1 Administration

##### 1.1 Welcome and Approve Agenda

Mike Kelly convened the meeting at 9:40 am. Those present introduced themselves. Mike reviewed the agenda and the order of the afternoon items was adjusted. The revised agenda was approved by consensus. Board members were reminded to advise their executive member of any agenda items they might have as far ahead as possible. The Board thanked EnCana for its support of the event the previous evening to recognize outgoing Board members.

##### 1.2 Appointment of Executive Officers

*Decision 22.1: Jay White was confirmed as the new NGO Vice President and Rob Pritchard as the new Government Vice President for terms ending in November 2010.*

The Board acknowledged the service and commitment to the Council of outgoing Vice Presidents Rick Quail and Danielle Droitsch.

##### 1.3 Approve Summary Report from September 16, 2008 meeting

*Decision 22.2: The revised summary report for Meeting 21 was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.*

##### 1.4 Action Items from September 16, 2008 Meeting

Gord Edwards advised that members for the new Sector Plan Monitoring Working Group are being identified, and draft terms of reference will come forward in March 2009.

A board member asked if a meeting between the Wetland Policy Project Team and Minister Renner was still being considered, to give the minister a chance to discuss the draft policy and implementation plan and the process with team members. Alberta Environment advised that the department is moving quickly to propose options for the draft policy and these are expected to go to the Minister in mid-December. A meeting might be possible if time permits, however, Minister Renner wants to move the draft policy through the governance system with the aim of having an announcement early in 2009.

Alberta Environment also advised that the Intra-Basin Water Movement report is being reviewed by the department's policy group and when that analysis and review is completed, they will report back to the board.

##### 1.5 Executive Director's Report

Gord Edwards directed the Board to his report in the briefing book. He mentioned some of the highlights, among them that the Council plans to do a major release in mid-December on the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity sector plan report. Given the timing of the release of Alberta Environment's Renewal Action Plan in January, there is the potential for additional coverage as part of Alberta Environment's releases. Work is underway on business planning with a workshop to be held in April. Gord provided a budget update for 2008. Not all the 2008 budget will be spent, but it can be carried over to 2009.

## **1.6 Proposed 2009 Core Operating Budget**

Gord Edwards presented the 2009 core operating budget of \$1.31-million budget. This is an increase over 2008 because the Council will have a full 12 months of operating costs for 2009 and will be adding a new project manager to staff. The wind-down fund will be topped up to \$200,000. Gord and Terry Sly responded to questions from the Board, noting specifically that:

- There won't be as much project activity in 2009 as there was in 2008, so the project budget is lower. As well, some of the work that was previously done by teams is now within the purview of the Board and is thus considered core funding (e.g., business planning).
- The consultant budget for core operations is higher due largely to the Board's use of consultants for business planning and the *Water for Life* Implementation Review.
- Gord has met with Alberta Environment and will be submitting a grant application in the next few weeks.
- The auditor will begin work shortly on the audit of the 2008 books.

Board members offered two suggestions for financial reporting by staff:

- Clarify the allocation of funds for project work and funds for board work.
- Increase the rigor with which in-kind contributions are determined and ensure this information is provided along with the financial report so the GoA understands the value being added by those who participate on the board and teams.

**Action 22.1: Council staff will clarify the allocation of funds for project work and funds for board work in future budget reports, and will ensure that in-kind contributions are accurately tracked**

*Decision 22.3: The 2009 Core Operating Budget was approved by consensus.*

## **1.7 Draft Process Guidelines**

Gord reviewed the history of the draft process guidelines, noting where additional material and clarification have been added. The intent is for Board members to review the draft guidelines, gather input from stakeholders as appropriate, and forward comments to Gord Edwards by January 31, 2009. The comments will be compiled and the executive will bring another draft forward for discussion and approval at the March Board meeting.

## **1.8 Process for Bringing New Issues to the Alberta Water Council**

Gord briefly summarized the need for a process for bringing new issues to the Council with reference to the document in the briefing book. He indicated that as Executive Director, he would respond to every statement of opportunity that was submitted, whether it fits the Council's criteria or not.

Board members supported having such a mechanism in place, and offered the following comments and suggestions:

- Change "province-wide" to "provincially significant" in the second criterion.
- Make the following text the first bullet under the criteria: "It represents a strategic opportunity to advance the goals and directions of the *Water for Life* strategy."

- Add a sixth point to the list of sections that a statement of opportunity should contain: “How timeliness of response would affect the issue.”

*Decision 22.4: The Board approved by consensus the process for bringing new issues to the Council, with the changes noted in the minutes.*

### **1.9 Meeting Dates and Locations for 2009**

Gord Edwards explained that only three meeting dates were proposed for 2009 because a number of other workshops and events are already planned for the Council, including a multi-day business planning workshop and WATSUP symposium.

*Decision 22.5: The Board approved the three meeting dates of March 19, June 4, and October 29, 2009.*

## **2 Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team**

Bob Cameron and Phyllis Kobasiuk presented the final report and recommendations for a Watershed Management Planning Framework. The report identifies key components of watershed management planning and provides guidance for partners working together under a shared governance structure to plan and implement watershed management plans to achieve *Water for Life* goals. Among other things, the team’s 12 recommendations deal with the integration and alignment of these plans with other land and resource management planning initiatives.

Other points noted by team members in the presentation included:

- The Government of Alberta (GoA) must communicate to Albertans the role of WPACs and WSGs, and clarity is needed about how all the various initiatives are aligned and integrated.
- The AWC should monitor the implementation of Alberta’s watershed management plans and be prepared to re-visit the watershed management framework, if necessary.
- Indicators of watershed health that can be used across watersheds should be developed.
- The GoA is encouraged to provide a timely response to these recommendations.

The Board discussed the report and recommendations, and Alberta Environment made the following comments in response to particular questions:

- WPACs must meet certain minimum requirements to ensure accountability and transparency before they receive funding support from Alberta Environment (e.g., they must be a registered society, they must have audited financial statements and annual reporting).
- There are currently no legal barriers to undertaking watershed management planning in Alberta; however, the *Framework for Water Management Planning* needs to be updated to better reflect a watershed and shared governance approach.

*Decision 22.6: The Board accepted the report and recommendations for a watershed management planning framework.*

*Decision 22.7: The Board agreed to disband the Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team.*

The Board discussed changes to two recommendations, agreeing to the following changes.

Recommendation 8 was revised to read:

The Alberta Water Council should review the implementation of Alberta's watershed management plans as part of the *Water for Life* Implementation Review process, and re-visit the question of needed legislation in the future.

Recommendation 11 was revised to read:

The Government of Alberta should pursue the development of an information network to support watershed management.

The Board also discussed the need for indicators of watershed health that can be used across watersheds. Members felt that although some standard indicators are needed, a suite of optional indicators should also be available.

**Action 22.2: Alberta Water Council staff will make Alberta Environment aware of the Board's discussion of the need for both core and optional indicators of watershed health.**

The Board then discussed the communication plan and key messages. Two changes were proposed and agreed to by the Board:

- Add a statement to the first bullet of the key messages noting that the process was collaborative and inclusive.
- The news release should reflect the enthusiasm and support with which the report was accepted by the Board.

*Decision 22.8: The Board approved the revised communication plan and key messages.*

The team was acknowledged by the Board for its hard work and diligence in completing the second of its two substantial tasks.

### **3 Water for Life Value of Water Study**

Gillian Kerr provided an update on the Value of Water project. She reviewed the project background and the current status and responded to questions from the Board, noting:

- Total economic value is only one aspect of the project. Other aspects being considered include the concept of wealth or importance, understanding principles, and looking at intrinsic values.
- The method of doing valuation doesn't apply just to water. It can be used in other areas to inform decisions on things like land use too.

### **4 Land-use Framework and Water for Life Integration Presentation**

Jim Ellis introduced this item by noting that numerous major pieces of provincial policy are close to being announced. These include the Energy Strategy, Oil Sands Strategy and the Land-use Framework, which is imminent. He also referenced the *Water for Life* (WFL) renewal strategy. The GoA will release a WFL Renewed Action Plan in early 2009 along with an Achievements Report on WFL implementation from 2003-2008. The GoA is making significant efforts to integrate environmental, economic and social considerations, and to look at integration across air, land and water.

Bev Yee presented an overview of the Land-use Framework (LUF) and described the integrated vision of the LUF with *Water for Life* and the other five major policy pieces already in place or being developed (Clean Air Strategy, Oil Sands Strategy, Energy Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy). The intent is that the LUF will be the overarching strategy along with the Cumulative Effects Strategy. The mechanisms for integration will be the regional plans which must take the other strategies into account. All regional plans are to be completed by 2012.

Bev reviewed the linkages and alignment of the LUF and WFL along with the goals, outcomes, principles and respective approaches to place-based planning. She noted that these two strategies are already aligned at strategic outcome levels, and that both strive to improve Alberta's ability to adaptively manage cumulative effects. Shared knowledge is the foundation and adaptive management is the driver.

Many governance and operational details are still being worked out, but Cabinet will be the single decision maker. Those decisions will be written in to the plans as appropriate, and some of the decisions are expected to be challenging.

Board members discussed the LUF and the approach to integration, noting the following comments (responses from AENV are in open bullets):

- Economic aspects are recognized at present only through oil sands and energy. Other sectors also affect cumulative effects management and land use (e.g., agriculture, tourism, manufacturing), even though they may not have formal strategies.
- The decision-making process for watershed planning is quite different from that for land use planning, and it will be a challenge for industry and NGOs to determine where to put their energy. It will be difficult to populate all the processes with knowledgeable people; which one will have credibility?
  - Different situations will emerge in different regions as time goes on. We do need a mix of volunteer consensus-based processes and government leadership to get integrated planning in place. The GoA is also challenged in terms of staffing.
- There is a concern that too many things are happening at once and there could be a lack of coordination; e.g., northeast regional plan and Athabasca WPAC.
  - Some regions may not be as advanced in getting their assessments done, and it remains to be seen how this might affect development of their plans. Where possible, a quantitative threshold will be set, which could be done on an interim basis and revisited as information is assembled. The GoA recognizes that it has a lot of policy gaps and is working to fill them. In some cases, interim policy may be needed quickly to assist the Regional Advisory Committees, and Alberta Environment (AENV) will likely have to develop some of this on its own because there won't be time for stakeholder consultations.
- Will changes be needed to provincial legislation in response to regional issues?
  - Legislative changes may be needed to support what comes forward.
- How will social and economic indicators be developed?
  - AENV has been doing cumulative effects management for a few years, but the social and economic aspects are new and need to be incorporated into the decision-making process.

## 5 Key Water Policy Actions in Support of *Water for Life* Outcomes

Ernie Hui introduced the presentation and provided context for the water policy actions being undertaken by Alberta Environment. Bob Barraclough then laid out the policy agenda in line with the three *Water for Life* outcomes. Under the “reliable supplies” outcome, AENV is moving ahead with a Water Allocation Initiative. A concept paper was prepared and Cabinet has approved the initiative. A concept paper was prepared for a Municipal Water Initiative under the “safe secure drinking water” outcome, which is also moving ahead. The first step for the two initiatives is to turn the concept papers into more detailed plans of action, get ministerial approval, then move into research and analysis. AENV is not yet certain how stakeholder consultation on these initiatives will be done, as capacity, alignment, and timing are all critical issues. Healthy aquatic ecosystems are also important, and other sections in AENV are moving this outcome ahead, including work on wetlands.

Board members discussed the presentation with Mr. Barraclough, noting the following questions (responses are in open bullets);

- What are the timeframes for the two papers?
  - The papers are done but are still internal. Work on detailed plans will start in early 2009 following ministerial approval. AENV has identified some issues that the department doesn’t have time to deal with right now, so there may be opportunities for the Council to help advance them.
- A raw water protection planning process would be helpful. How might this affect potential revisions to the *Water Act*?
  - The *Water Act* and the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* (EPEA) are being discussed as they are not currently designed to support cumulative effects. A team in AENV is looking at revising these Acts and potentially developing new cumulative effects legislation, which is needed because present legislation is point source-based, and doesn’t support the LUF place-based approach.

The board briefly discussed opportunities to contribute to this policy work, including through the WATSUP team and the work on healthy aquatic ecosystems. Members noted that a lot of good will and effort have been invested in *Water for Life* work to date and that should not be left behind. Speed is important in these initiatives but we also need to get things right. AENV encouraged the WATSUP team to continue its work and provide its advice. Water storage, especially in the south, is a very important issue for agriculture, and any supply solutions need to consider storage.

## 6 Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems

Scott Millar reviewed the tasks of the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems (HAE) project team and provided a status report on the team’s work. He then presented the HAE working definition developed by the team, noting changes made in response to input from the board. The team is working with the *Water for Life* Implementation Review Committee to review input from the survey and interviews, and plans to come back to the board in March with priority areas for more work. The team tried to focus on aspects of the definition that members thought were most important, knowing that more work will be needed to refine and revise the definition as it is used and tested and as efforts are made to measure the components.

*Decision 22.9: The Board approved the working definition of “healthy aquatic ecosystems.”*

## **7 Status Reports**

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

- The WATSUP symposium will be March 4-5, 2009 in Calgary and will feature a range of speakers on water markets, policy instruments, and other aspects. Additional information will come out in January.
- The Water Resource Information Working Group is being re-established and will look at the knowledge broker function along with water resource information to assess the status of these topics on the Council's agenda and what role the Council could have.

The ICLEI World Congress will be in Edmonton in June 2009, with municipal leaders from around the world sharing ideas and experience on urban sustainability. A number of events will be associated with the Congress including the Canadian Environmental Network's annual meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

## **Attachment 1: Meeting #22 Attendees**

### **Council Directors and Alternates**

Ken Ambrock, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)	Keith Murray, Industry (Forestry)
Barry Anderson, Government (Large Urban)	Dwight Oliver, Government (Rural)
Bob Cameron, NGO (Environmental)	Ron Pearson, NGO (Fishery Habitat Conservation)
Carolyn Campbell, NGO (Environmental)	Rob Pritchard, Government (Large Urban)
Jerry Cunningham, Government (Métis Settlements General Council)	Dave Rushford, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Danielle Droitsch, NGO (Environmental)	Doug Sawyer, Industry (Agriculture)
Jim Ellis, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)	John Skowronski, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)
David Hill, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Water Research Institute)	Judy Smith, Industry (Mining)
Colin Jeffares, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development)	Kevin Stashin, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Don Johnson, Government (Rural)	Lindsay Telfer, NGO (Environmental)
David Kay, NGO (Wetland Habitat Conservation)	Jonathan Thompson, NGO (Wetland Habitat Conservation)
Mike Kelly, Industry (Power Generation)	Jason Unger, NGO (Environmental)
Al Kennedy, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)	Allan Wells, Government (Métis Settlements General Council)
Dug Major, NGO (WPACs)	Jay White, NGO (Lake Environment Conservation)
Ron McMullin, Industry (Irrigation)	Jamie Wuite, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Food)
	Bev Yee, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)
	Gord Edwards, AWC Executive Director

### **Presenters:**

Gord Edwards, *Executive Director's Report; 2009 Core Operating Budget, Draft Process Guidelines, Process for Bringing New Issues to Council* (Items 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Phyllis Kobasiuk and Bob Cameron, *Shared Governance* (Item 2)

Gillian Kerr, *Water for Life Value of Water Study* (Item 3)

Bev Yee, *Land-use Framework and Water for Life Integration Process* (Item 4)

Ernie Hui and Bob Barraclough, *Key Water Policy Actions in Support of WFL Outcomes* (Item 5)

Scott Millar; *Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems* (Item 6)

### **Guests:**

Lauren Baldwin, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association	Kelly Ness, Alberta Environment
Randall Cripps, Environment Canada	Shirley Pickering, Highwood Water Management Public Advisory Council
Brian Free, Alberta Environment	Petra Rowell, Alberta Environment
Denise Hammel, First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group	Tracy Scott, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
Bill Macdonald, Alberta Environment	Bob Willard, Energy Resources Conservation Board
Scott Millar, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	

### **AWC Staff and Contractor Support**

Jennifer Beepat, Terry Sly, Lorie Wagner, Kim Sanderson

**Absent with Regrets:**

Alex MacKenzie, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)  
Eric McGhan, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)  
Larry Nolan, Industry (Livestock)  
Richard Quail, Government (Small Urban)  
Peter Watson, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)

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**Attachment 2: Meeting #22 Action Item Log**

Action	Who	By when
22.1: Council staff will clarify the allocation of funds for project work and funds for board work in future budget reports, and will ensure that in-kind contributions are accurately tracked.	Staff	Ongoing
22.2 Alberta Water Council staff will make Alberta Environment aware of the Board’s discussion of the need for both core and optional indicators of watershed health.	Staff	Jan 20

**Attachment 3: Decision Log**

*Decision 22.1: Jay White was confirmed as the new NGO Vice President and Rob Pritchard as the new Government Vice President for terms ending in November 2010.*

*Decision 22.2: The revised summary report for Meeting 21 was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.*

*Decision 22.3: The 2009 Core Operating Budget was approved by consensus.*

*Decision 22.4: The Board approved by consensus the process for bringing new issues to the Council, with the changes noted in the minutes.*

*Decision 22.5: The Board approved the three meeting dates of March 19, June 4, and October 29, 2009.*

*Decision 22.6: The Board accepted the report and recommendations for a watershed management planning framework.*

*Decision 22.7: The Board agreed to disband the Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team.*

*Decision 22.8: The Board approved the revised communication plan and key messages.*

*Decision 22.9: The Board approved the working definition of “healthy aquatic ecosystems.”*

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL  
AGENDA, MEETING #22  
**December 2, 2008**  
**McDougall Centre, Calgary**

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**NOTE: Broad Category caucusing will occur from 8:00 to 9:30 am.**

**GENERAL BUSINESS OF COUNCIL**

**9:40 1.0 Administration – Chair 50 min**

- 1.1 Welcome and approve agenda
- 1.2 Appointment of Executive Officer – NGO and Government broad category
- 1.3 Approve Summary Report from September 16, 2008 meeting
- 1.4 Review of actions from last meeting
- 1.5 Executive Director's report
- 1.6 Approve Proposed 2009 AWC Core Operating Budget
- 1.7 Draft Process Guidelines
- 1.8 Approve process for "Bringing New Issues to AWC"
- 1.9 Meeting dates and locations for 2009

**10:45 2.0 Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team 45 min**

Approve final report and recommendations for a framework for watershed management planning and disband the project team.

**11:30 3.0 Value of Water Study Update 15 min**

Hear an update about the Council's work with GoA on phase three of the study.

**11:45 Lunch (provided in the room) 45 min**

**12:30 4.0 Land-Use Framework (LUF) and Water for Life (WFL) Integration Presentation 60 min**

Hear a presentation detailing how the LUF, Cumulative Effects Management System (CEMS) and WFL strategies complement and support one another.

**1:30 5.0 Key Water Policy Actions in Support of Water for Life Outcomes 60 min**

Hear a presentation from Alberta Environment explaining their action plan for water policy initiatives in support of WFL outcomes.

**2:30 6.0 Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team 30 min**

Approve final working definition document and provide feedback on draft criteria for prioritizing top five topics

**3:00 7.0 Status Reports 15 min**

Refer members to status reports in the board package with brief opportunity for questions or clarification.

**3:15 8.0 New or Other Business 15 min**

New items of business or other items of information for Council

**3:30 Adjournment**