

# ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

---

## MEETING #2

**October 5, 2004  
Nisku Inn and Conference Centre**

### Summary Report

#### **Purpose of Meeting**

At this meeting, the Council approved changes to its terms of reference and established a short-term action schedule (see attachment 1 for a list of attendees). Council also heard briefings on sector activities, implementation of Water for Life Strategy and water use efficiency and productivity targets (see attachment 2 for meeting agenda).

#### **Outcomes of Meeting**

As part of efforts to improve members' understanding of water management in the province, members participated in a pre-meeting wetland value and function tour and heard presentations on Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and the Irrigation sector.

Members agreed on short-term priorities that include:

- preliminary work on advising on a provincial water conservation target
- communicating the Council's role (website, facts sheet, etc.)
- reviewing the progress of the wetland policy development

The Council reviewed its terms of reference and directed changes and reaffirmed Council will align its work with the Water for Life strategy.

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Introductions

The Chair, Ron Hicks started the morning by welcoming everyone and identifying Ken Smith who was unable to attend the initial meeting. Jim Vollmershausen still unable to attend due to an injury. Thanked Jonathan Thompson for leading the wetland tour. Feedback on the tour was very positive.

The Council secretariat reviewed the process for creating and sending out the summary report of the last meeting. An addition on asset mapping was made. The Chair asked if everyone is comfortable with the way the summary report was done. No objections were raised. As well, the Chair confirmed with the Council members that the distribution of materials from the last meeting was satisfactory.

**Action 2.1: Secretariat will develop a template for members to complete on Asset Mapping. Secretariat will post the summary report from the last meeting on the Council website [www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/html/council.html](http://www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/html/council.html)**

The Council secretariat explained that Alberta Environment is working through the Chiefs Summit process to confirm a First Nations representative on the Council.

### 2. Terms of Reference

Council reviewed a re-drafted terms of reference that incorporated comments from the last meeting. There was discussion about the role of Council, the independence of Council and the process of decision-making and communication. The terms of reference will be revised and provided to Council for approval at the next meeting.

**Action 2.2: Council secretariat will work with Review Team and Executive to revise draft terms of reference for distribution prior to the next meeting.**

### 3. Presentation: Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (Bill Berzins)

Bill provided an overview of the experience of the Bow River Basin Council in developing a participatory approach to addressing water issues at the basin level (see attachment 3 for presentation "Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils"). He gave examples of the kinds of issues that have arisen (e.g. high recreational use levels that may create water health concerns; potential oxygen deficits related to significant municipal waste flows into the river). He also noted that the Council has developed a very significant network of contacts, and has a range of expertise available within its network. Municipalities have bought in to the basin council concept and have supported the Council financially. Bill noted that the Alberta Water Council should rely upon the Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils for regional information and expertise.

#### 4. Presentation: Irrigation (Dave Hill)

Dave provided an overview of the irrigation industry use of water (see attachment 4 for presentation “Irrigation in Alberta 101 the Road to Improved Efficiency, Productivity & Conservation”). The industry is the single largest user of water in the province and the irrigation districts hold very early (high priority) licences in the South Saskatchewan River Basin. The industry is very conscious of its responsibility to demonstrate responsible water management and cooperative approaches to addressing water use concerns at the basin level.

The industry has developed state-of-the-art analytical tools [computer simulation models] and accompanying water management information systems that provide projections of water use at the irrigation district as well as individual farm level. These tools provide for a wide range of present-day and what if evaluations and point to water savings from continuing infrastructure improvements and best management practices. These tools are also used to evaluate changes in water supply, new water uses within the irrigation districts and a wide range of future scenarios. Significant capital investment by irrigation districts and irrigators in advanced water application technologies has led to increases in productivity and efficiencies over the past decade -- irrigators today use a third less water per acre than they did just 15 years ago. Irrigation districts and their irrigators are committed to ongoing improvements in water management and in increased productivity.

#### 5. Priority Water Management Issues

##### **Water for Life Strategy Update**

Dave Trew, Alberta Environment, noted that the implementation of the Water for Life priorities has been transferred to the Science and Standards Branch. He provided the Council with an update of current actions, including the following (see attachment 5 for presentation “*Alberta’s Strategy for Sustainability Update on implementation*”):

- Efforts to establish and support partnerships in major basins throughout the province are being undertaken (such as Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, and Watershed Stewardship Groups).
- Policy proposals to address public concerns about the underground injection of water (developed with a multi-stakeholder committee) have been submitted to the Government of Alberta.
- Policy proposals to address public concerns about Coalbed Methane development and its potential impact on water are being developed through a multi-stakeholder process.
- Improvements to drinking water infrastructure are being evaluated.
- A one-window, self-serve access to information about Alberta’s water resources (surface water and groundwater) is being developed.

The Council discussed information needs to allow them to respond to the progress in the implementation of the Water for Life strategy.

**Action 2.3: AENV Science and Standards Branch to develop a communication format that will support the Council achieving its goal of stewarding the implementation of the Water for Life strategy. A proposal will be brought forward to the December meeting of the Council.**

### **Water Use Efficiency and Productivity Target**

Bev Yee, Alberta Environment described the rationale for the water conservation target identified in the *Water for Life* strategy, i.e. 30% improvement in water use efficiency and productivity by 2015 (from a 2005 baseline) (see attachment 6 for presentation “water Conservation”). She described how water is allocated and noted that future trends in demand and supply indicate that the 30% improvement is needed and doable. She asked Council to provide their view on the target and to initiate the discussion about how it should be achieved.

There was much discussion about the target, and a general feeling that the target is right “in principle” and that the Council can provide a leadership role in articulating the target (to better explain terms such as efficiency and productivity) and the best approaches to achieving it. Council members noted that “conservation target” should be part of the overall effort to improve water management."

### **Council Process for Policy Review, with Alberta’s Proposed Wetland as the First to Review**

Due to a shortage of time, discussion on this topic was deferred to the next meeting.

## **6. Communication Plan**

Val Mellesmoen, Alberta Environment referred to a draft communication plan that had been sent to the Council members prior to the meeting. Everyone agreed with the plan, in principle, and asked Val to finalize the plan based upon today’s discussion.

**Action 2,4: Council Secretariat will work with Communications to ensure that a finalized communication plan is brought forward to the next AWC meeting. The Council will use the Water for Life website as a place to post public messages. Secretariat will forward members an “interview tip sheet”.**

## **7. Potential Liability Concerns**

Tom Booth, Alberta Environment, advised the Council that their liability risk is low because they are an advisory group.

**Action 2.5: Council members to let the secretariat know if they have any concerns regarding liability. The secretariat will check how the Environmental Appeal Board handles the liability issue and report back to Council.**

## **8. Schedules for the First Business Year**

Council reviewed a list of action items for their first business year (which ends March 31, 2005). The discussion recognized that there is a relatively short period of time, but that Council has a budget to initiate some projects at this time. The business schedule was revised (see attachment 7 "Short Term Actions"). The Council made the following decisions on action items:

**Action 2.6: A working group will develop a "scoping document" identifying a recommended process to advise on water conservation targets. The document will be brought forward to the December meeting of the Council.**

The team will be led by Dave Hill, and will also include Rick Denton, Kevin Stashin, Tom Daniels, Richard Quail, Al Maurer, Mike Kelly, Ron Pearson and an AENV staffer.

**Action 2.7: Council will develop its first public report on the state of the Water Strategy by Spring 2005.**

Council felt that work on economic instruments should be delayed until after a CCME report on the topic is completed next spring 2005.

Linda Van Gastel agreed to make a presentation at the next meeting on the role of ASRA in coordinating water-related research, her role on Council and the need for an Alberta water research strategy. Linda asked Council members to provide her an overview of water-related research activities/identified gaps in their sector prior to the next meeting for inclusion in her presentation.

**Action 2.8: Council members to provide Linda with sector information on the water-related research activities/identified gaps in their sector prior to next meeting for inclusion in her presentation.**

Council decided to document the collaboration network each member is building within his or her sector.

**Action 2.9: Each member will create a one-page document how they are communicating with their sector and submit to Council secretariat.**

## 9. Key Messages and Preparation for Next Meeting

The chair read the following key messages for this meeting:

- Council held its second meeting
- As part of efforts to improve members' understanding of water management in the province, members participated in a pre-meeting tour of wetlands and heard presentations on Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and the Irrigation sector
- Members worked on their terms of reference that will guide their future activities
- Members agreed on their short-term priorities, which included preliminary work on advising on a provincial water conservation targets, communicating the council's role, reviewing the progress of the wetland policy.
- The Council will continue to align its work with the Water Strategy

Council agreed that their next meeting should be on **December 10, 2004**.

At the next meeting, the agenda items are:

- Finalize terms of reference
- Finalize communication plan
- Review "conservation target" scoping document
- Process for policy review (using Wetlands Policy as the focus)
- ASRA presentation on research coordination
- Determine process for completing first report on the progress of implementation of the Water Strategy

## MEETING #2 ACTION LOG

ACTION	ASSIGNED TO:	TARGET DATE
2.1 Prepare and distribute a template for members to complete on Asset Mapping	All members	Ongoing
2.2 Revise draft terms of reference for council for approval	Secretariat, Review Team/Executive	November 26
2.3 Prepare a reporting format that will support the Council achieving its goal of stewarding the implementation of the Water Strategy	AENV Science and Standards Branch	November 26
2.4 Prepare communications plan and website prototype for approval	AENV Communications Branch	November 26
2.5 Non-Government of Alberta Council members to identify any concerns with liability. Secretariat to check how the Environmental Appeal Board handles liability and report back to Council	Non-Government of Alberta members Secretariat	November 19
2.6 Prepare and distribute conservation target scoping document	Working Group, Secretariat staff	November 26
2.7 Council will develop its first public report on the state of the Water Strategy	To be determined	Spring 2005
2.8 Prepare a presentation on water-related research activities/identified gaps	Linda Van Gastel	November 26
2.9 Create a one-page document how each member is communicating with their sector and forward to Secretariat	All members	Ongoing

Attachment 1 – List of Attendees

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Nick Bayliss**, Province and Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)  
**Bill Berzins**, Non-government (Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils)  
**Tom Daniels**, Province and Authorities (Alberta Economic Development Authority)  
**Rick Denton**, Industry (Forestry)  
**Bart Guyon**, Government (Rural)  
**Ron Hicks**, Province and Authorities (Alberta Environment), Chair  
**Dave Hill**, Industry (Irrigation)  
**Mike Kelly**, Industry (Power Generation)  
**Al Kennedy**, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)  
**John Knapp**, Province and Authorities (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)  
**Al Maurer**, Government (Large Urban)  
**Larry Nolan**, Industry (Livestock)  
**Ron Pearson**, Non-government (Fishery Habitat Conservation)  
**Richard Quail**, Government (Small Urban)  
**Margaret Reine**, Non-government (Environmental)  
**Judy Smith**, Industry (Mining)  
**Ken Smith**, Province and Authorities (Alberta Energy)  
**Kevin Stashin**, Industry (Oil and Gas)  
**Jonathan Thompson**, Non-government (Wetland Habitat Conservation)  
**Linda Van Gastel**, Province and Authorities (Alberta Science and Research Authority)  
**Ray Wanuch**, Government (Metis Settlements)  
**Jay White**, Non-government (Lake Environment Conservation)

**OBSERVER**

**Ken Ambrock**, Province and Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)

**SUPPORT STAFF (ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT)**

Terry Sly  
Petra Rowell  
Bev Yee  
Robert Harrison  
Sherri-Dawn Annett

**FACILITATOR**

Bill McMillan, Equus Consulting Group Inc.

**Alberta Water Council**  
Agenda for 2nd Meeting  
October 5, 2004  
Ballroom 3, Nisku Inn and Conference Centre, Nisku

---

**Purpose:** Council will finalize its terms of reference and its short-term action schedule. Council will also receive sector briefings and briefings on water issues.

**9:00 Introduction – *Ron Hicks***

- Welcome Ken Smith and Jim Vollmershausen
- Review of notes and actions from last meeting
- Correspondence received
- First Nation member update (*Terry Sly*)
- Review of current agenda

**9:20 Re-Drafted Terms of Reference – *Facilitated by Bill McMillan***

- Council members will be asked to identify any concerns, gaps or recommended changes to the draft
- Discussion is intended to gain unanimous consent to a shared terms of reference
- Consensus process
- Project Team terms of reference template

***Council members will be asked to take morning refreshment as discussion proceeds. Refreshments will be brought into the room.***

**10:30 Priority Water Management Issues**

Council will receive its first briefings on water management issues it expects to address in its first year. These include the following:

- Water for Life update (*Bev Yee*)
- Water use efficiency and productivity target, discussion of how to move forward (*Bev Yee*)
- Council will initiate a process for policy review, with Alberta's proposed Wetland Policy as the first to be reviewed (*Robert Harrison*)

**12:00 Lunch (*to be provided in the room*)**

- 12:45      **Presentation: Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils****  
Bill Berzins will provide an overview of the role, evolution and current status of watershed planning and advisory councils.
- 1:30      **Presentation: Irrigation****  
David Hill will provide an update of current initiatives and perspective from the irrigation sector.
- 2:15      **Communication Plan (*Val Mellesmoen*)****  
A discussion to provide direction for the preparation of a communication plan for Council. This discussion will include defining the Council’s communications objective and role. A discussion of internal communication, and the role of a web page will be included.
- Council members will be asked to take afternoon refreshment as discussion proceeds. Refreshments will be brought into the room***
- 3:00      **Should Council Members be Concerned about Potential Liability? (*Thomas Booth*)****  
A short discussion of the available means to assure members are not exposed to civil liability. This discussion will include advice on how members can avoid liability or “conflict of interest” concerns.
- 3:20      **Schedule for the First Business Year (*Facilitated by Bill McMillan*)****  
Some meeting dates have already been scheduled. This discussion is intended to identify the business priorities and activities that Council wants to see in its first term. The discussion may lead to working group assignments.
- 3:50      **Key Messages and Preparation for Next Meeting (*Ron Hicks*)****  
The chair will ask for an evaluation from council members of the process and discussion thus far. 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.
- 4:15      **Adjournment****

Attachment 7

**Short Term Actions (to Spring, 2005)  
Revised at October 5, 2004 Meeting**

Action	Deadline
Review and advise on provincial water conservation target (i.e. 30% by 2015). Develop a plan that addresses this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phase 1: Working group establishes scoping document (project team) and circulates at least two weeks prior to next meeting.</li> <li>▪ Phase 2: Develop a database to support decision making</li> </ul>	TBA  December 2004  TBA
Issue a "state of the water strategy" report (secretariat, communications, project team). Determine messages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a list of priority water issues</li> <li>▪ Ongoing monitoring of progress (departmental reporting/information to Council)</li> <li>▪ Establish a stewardship plan</li> <li>▪ Ensure that information resulting from water strategy activities gets out to the public</li> </ul>	Spring 2005
Provide recommendations to province on usefulness of economic instruments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Step 1: Review information as it is provided.</li> </ul>	TBA  <i>Initiate work in May 2005, after CCME report.</i>
Establish an initial work plan (including timelines) that is consistent with the water strategy	October 2004
Create a communications plan (secretariat; communications)	December 2004
Inventory of key stakeholders/contacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Within sectors (members submit information about their sector communication/consultation process to secretariat)</li> <li>▪ External (beyond represented sectors)</li> </ul>	December 2004
Progress report on development of Wetland Policy. To be addressed at December 2004 meeting. Discussion about when and how AWC has input.	December 2004
Self-education of council: presentations from members, WPACs, other water agencies (Describe and implement schedule of presentations).	All sectors present prior to March 2005
Visit sites in Alberta that allow better "on the ground" understanding of water management issues.	Three sites by March 2005
Watershed Stewardship Groups communication/coordination	December 2004
Water research priorities. Establish a preliminary list of agencies, funding and projects.	December 2004