

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

MEETING #15

March 27, 2007

Edmonton, Alberta

Executive Summary

Peter Watson advised that the Minister of Environment is comfortable with the Council's plans to transition to an arm's length organization, so this process will be formally set in motion and is expected to take at least six months to complete. Bev Yee gave a presentation on the Government of Alberta's current environmental initiatives, which helped to place the Council's activities in a broader context.

Council approved the 2007 Operational Plan presented by the Business Planning Subcommittee. Three projects will be completed by June and three others are expected to wrap up later in 2007. In addition to the ongoing core work of the Council, the five main areas of activity for 2007 are:

- Renewal of the water strategy
- Policy advice on intra-basin movement of water
- Wetland policy
- Shared governance and watershed management framework
- Sector planning.

Three Council teams will be engaging stakeholders in the next few months to get input on the *Water for Life* renewal, Policy Review on Intra-basin Water Movement, and the development of Wetland Policy and Implementation Plan. The teams have been asked to review and coordinate actions in this regard.

Draft terms of reference for a Water Strategy Renewal Project Team were discussed. This renewal was one of the requests made by Hon. Rob Renner at the January Council meeting. Sector meetings are planned for June followed by workshops in September. The Council identified several revisions and approved the terms of reference with those revisions incorporated. The aim is to have final recommendations for Council approval at the November 2007 meeting. Members agreed to hold a special meeting on May 29 to review and discuss stakeholder engagement plans.

Council approved terms of reference for a Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Project Team. Council approved in principle the draft annual report, which will undergo minor revisions and be forwarded to the executive for final signoff. The communications plan was also approved, and work will begin very quickly on the four key areas of priority action. Activity will focus first on developing key messages and basic communications materials.

Updates were presented on the Alberta Water Research Institute and progress to date by the Intra-basin Water Movement project team.

Summary of Discussion

David Hill convened the meeting at 9:10 am. Those present introduced themselves. Kevin Stashin introduced Dave Rushford, Encana Corporation as the new alternate member for Oil and Gas sector.

1 Administration

1.1 Review of Agenda

An update on the policy review of intra-basin water movement was added under other business. The revised agenda was approved by consensus.

1.2 Approval of Summary Report from January 30, 2007 Meeting

The summary report was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.

1.3 Action Items from January 30, 2007 Meeting

Terry Sly reviewed the action items from the last meeting, as distributed in the briefing package. All actions have been completed.

1.4 Executive Committee Report

The Chair provided brief background on opportunities for enhanced collaboration and integration with the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA). The Council had earlier considered a joint secretariat with CASA but decided against this approach. This item arose again when the CASA executive director resigned in December. The executives for the two organizations met to discuss possible options for collaboration and better integration of air and water issues, and the two secretariats drafted a chart of potential collaboration and integration opportunities for discussion. It was agreed to continue with two separate secretariats but that a new joint committee could be established to more formally explore opportunities for the two organizations. Each broad category would be asked to identify a member. Council members made the following comments:

- The Council's first priority has to be addressing its own mandate and tasks.
- Once we identify opportunities, there could be expectations that we pursue them. Given all our other work now, it would be better to wait until 2008 to take this on.
- The Council is undertaking renewal of the water strategy, and CASA will be considering at its next meeting whether it will lead the renewal and update of the Clean Air Strategy for Alberta. Both organizations will be doing some high level work that eventually needs to be integrated as we think about health and other related issues. There will be opportunities for linkages and these will almost certainly be explored. Most of the other items in the table are administrative.

Decision 15.1: Council agreed that a committee to look at opportunities for collaboration with CASA is not needed at the present time. The secretariats for the two organizations will be asked to watch for potential collaborative opportunities and if a joint project or discussions arise, the executive committee should be engaged.

Peter Watson provided a short update on the Council's transition to an arm's length organization. He briefed Minister Renner who is comfortable with the plans, so the Council can now move ahead with the transition. An interim solution to honoraria is now in place. It

will likely take at least six months to get a new organization up and running, with a secretariat in place, office space, and formal incorporation. The inaugural meeting could possibly be held in September. It was previously agreed that the executive will serve as the hiring committee for a permanent executive director.

Action 15.1: The secretariat will attach a short status report on transition to the minutes briefly describing the key tasks to be done.

2 Government of Alberta's Environmental Initiatives

Bev Yee presented an update on the GOA's environmental initiatives, including climate change, water, cumulative effects management and the land use framework. She reviewed Alberta Environment's overall role and key elements of the business plan; Peter Watson provided further elaboration on some of the specific components.

One of the major emerging opportunities for the renewal is to address groundwater. The Rosenberg Forum suggested that the province might want to consider a different approach to groundwater management. It will likely take many years for the next evolution of groundwater maps to be completed across the province. The Rosenberg Forum recommended a phased approach to this issue, and that work should start in areas where there is the most intense pressure and competing uses. The following comments were made in discussing the overall environmental initiatives:

- The SREM work will continue and the three departments involved are working on an integrated strategic plan to guide the next business planning cycle.
- The recent levels set on the lower Athabasca are intended to serve as interim water conservation objectives and set some withdrawal limits; they do not represent instream flow needs.
- The moratorium on licences in the South Saskatchewan Basin has resulted in increased drilling for groundwater. This proliferation is a very great concern, as is the messaging about management and whether "first in time, first in right" will apply to groundwater. Peter noted that this issue was discussed with the minister. The aim is to move the thinking from "abundance" to "scarcity," which means thinking carefully about new management approaches for both groundwater and surface water. Renewal presents an opportunity to do this.
- The public has high expectations for water management in Alberta, and the Council could advance understanding in a number of areas, including instream flow needs and other aspects of healthy aquatic ecosystems.

3 AWC 2007 Operational Plan

Peter Watson presented the Business Planning Subcommittee's (BPS) updated draft of the Operational Plan; revised copies were circulated to replace the draft in the briefing book. In doing its update, the subcommittee felt that the limiting factor for the Council is human capacity, not financial capacity. If the Council is going to take on the two new projects requested by the Minister, some work needs to be expedited or some things need to be dropped or deferred. The Council has completed a number of items and the BPS reviewed the status of all actions in the previous Operational Plan and assessed capacity for 2007. Policy advice from the Council goes to the Government of Alberta as a whole, not just the Minister of Environment, and the Operational Plan will reflect that.

The BPS proposed a new area for action as part of the “oversight” work under goal one: Item 1.1.5, Oil Sands Development Issues Awareness. They are open to how much this covers, but proposed that members who are actively working on this issue to develop a formal presentation to share with Council.

Action 15.2: Council members who are engaged in oil sands development issues will work with the secretariat to develop a presentation that considers the implications of oil sands developments on water in the region.

The updated Plan identifies new activities, project work that is already underway (carry-over projects), and core Council activities. Of the work underway, the BPS proposed that three projects be completed by June or be deferred:

- Policy Issues and Gaps will wrap up by June with a final report
- Water Resource Information will conclude by June
- The Knowledge Broker team will be suspended until activity occurring outside the Council is further along; at that point, the need for the team and its potential role can be reassessed. The team was asked to prepare a report for the June meeting that looks at the lessons learned through its experience, particularly with respect to process and governance.

Three other carry-over projects will be continued and will wrap up later in 2007:

- Wetland Policy
- Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Planning
- Transition (which is expected to be carried mostly by the secretariat)

Thus, the five main areas of project activity proposed for 2007 are:

- Renewal of the water strategy
- Policy advice on intra-basin movement of water
- Wetland policy
- Shared governance and watershed management framework
- Sector planning

Council members discussed the updated Operational Plan, noting these comments:

- We want to make sure that projects are not too rushed and that there is enough time to work toward consensus.
- A few small revisions have been noted and these will be made to the final version.
- Three different teams are planning consultations between June and October, in addition to other consultations that are occurring or planned. Council’s consultations should be carefully coordinated to ensure the messages are aligned, that they are clearly separate from other consultations, and that they are not overtaxing members or the public.

Action 15.3: The three Council teams planning consultations in the next few months (Renewal, Review of Policy on Intra-basin Water Movement and Wetland Policy) should collaborate on their processes, messaging and other planning aspects and provide this information to the executive to ensure the processes are coordinated.

Action 15.4: The secretariat will make the minor revisions to the 2007 Operational Plan, as discussed, and distribute to members.

Decision 15.2: Council approved the 2007 Operational Plan.

4 Renewal of *Water for Life*

Kevin Stashin reviewed the draft terms of reference and the plan for renewal of the *Water for Life* strategy, directing members to the material in the briefing package. This project is intended to ensure that actions of the strategy are relevant to the timely completion of the strategy outcomes. He explained the key phases of the project, noting that Council members will have opportunities throughout the process to provide feedback. He reviewed the timelines, noting that the intent is to have final recommendations for Council approval at the November 2007 meeting. The first consultations are planned for June, which means the project team will need Council approval of the consultation package by May 31.

Council members discussed the draft terms of reference, noting the following comments:

- The consultation plan seems to be excessive, especially in light of other consultation activities now underway and planned by the Council and others. The current strategy is not yet completed so could the renewal be accomplished through a less elaborate process such as a gap analysis or identification of new and emerging issues?
- The purpose is to get traction for the renewal, and to do this it must be credible, which means consulting with stakeholders.
- This proposal is very ambitious and bears some resemblance to the initial WFL consultations. We may be able to accomplish our goal simply by focusing on things that didn't get enough attention the first time rather than go over the same ground.
- If we want to refocus the strategy, we should start by looking at what the review report identified as needing more attention, such as healthy aquatic ecosystems. We should be able to simplify the process.
- It is important that we stay at the right level – with the idea of strategic intent – and not get into too much detail. For example, what is the strategic intent with groundwater, which was largely missing from the original strategy? What kind of new institutional thinking is needed with respect to groundwater management? To address these issues, discussions with the various sectors involved with groundwater would seem to be necessary. We need to find a way to engage those who will execute the strategic intent of the strategy over the long term. The Council has done a good job in reviewing implementation, but the renewal is an excellent opportunity to influence the intent and direction of the strategy and speak to the GOA in a different way. The renewal gets above review of individual strategies.
- The renewal can't be seen to be exclusive, which means we need a mechanism for interested Albertans to have input. There will be ample opportunity over the coming months for the GOA, Minister Renner, and the Council to profile examples and focus people on the challenges we face. Release of the review report and launch of the renewal will kick-start the project and should get some attention.
- Although Minister Renner has been tasked with making sure the renewal happens, this is clearly a GOA initiative and other ministers should also be engaged and committed to renewal. It would be good if the team could build this into its work plan so that all the involved ministries consider how to deliver on the strategy's intent. GOA members can work to build awareness on the part of their ministers.

In light of this feedback, the Steering Committee proposed, and the Council accepted by consensus, the following changes to the draft terms of reference:

- Change the term “consultation” to “engagement.”
- Keep the same timelines, with sector meetings in June and workshops in September.
- Eliminate the August engagement with sectors (second phase).
- Métis engagement process will be lead by the AWC member from that sector.

The Council agreed with the following “next steps” in the renewal process:

- The Steering Committee will have AWC decision-making authority between Council meetings and if anything controversial arises, the executive will be consulted. If terms of reference require further changes, those will also come back to the Council.
- The Steering Committee, with assistance from Alberta Environment, will immediately hire a consultant to undertake the work described in the draft terms of reference.
- A project team will be established with a total of nine members: three from the GOA (including one from Alberta Environment), two from industry, two from other government, and two NGOs. Sectors wishing to be on this team will advise the secretariat.
- The Council will have a special meeting face to face in Calgary and via Live Meeting for those not able to attend, on the afternoon of May 29 to approve the plans for June stakeholder engagement.

Action 15.5: The Steering Committee will revise the draft terms of reference to reflect the direction provided by Council and forward to Terry Sly for circulation to all members for final comments.

Action 15.6: The Secretariat will arrange the May 29 meeting and advise members.

There was further discussion regarding the engagement with First Nations and how that process would occur. The Steering Committee anticipated that the GOA would assist the Council in engaging First Nations. Council agreed to leave this expectation in the draft terms of reference.

Action 15.7: The GOA members will discuss what role it should play with respect to First Nations engagement and advise the Strategy Renewal Steering Committee.

Decision 15.3: Council agreed in principle to the revised terms of reference for the Water Strategy Renewal project team, with the executive to have final signoff on any further changes.

5 Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Working Group

David Hill presented the draft terms of reference for a Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) Sector Plan project team. Four components of work have been identified:

- Develop an annotated table of contents for sectors to follow when developing their CEP plans.
- Identify which water-using sectors require development of plans.
- Evaluate and outline tools to address issues of participation and accountability.
- Facilitate the collection of best management practices and benchmark water use information for education and future target-setting.

The goal is to complete this work by the end of 2007. A team of up to 16 members is proposed to ensure that all the key players are involved. Efforts are underway to complete the team membership.

Decision 15.4: Council approved the draft terms of reference for and establishment of a Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Project Team.

6 Annual Report

Al Kennedy presented the draft 2005-06 Annual Report, referring members to the text in the briefing package. The design concept was featured in the presentation. Overall, the Council was happy with the report. Hard copies will be provided to all members and a pdf version will be posted on the Council's website. A few suggestions were made and these were noted in the report. Council members will provide any final editorial comments by April 5 to the secretariat.

Decision 15:5 Council approved in principle the draft annual report and authorized the executive to approve the final draft for publication after comments from Council members have been incorporated.

7 Communication Strategy Subcommittee

Val Mellesmoen presented the communications plan. She reviewed the overall process and goals, focusing on the four key areas of priority action. The committee is proposing an overall budget of \$92,500 to complete the priority actions in the next six months. Council members provided feedback, noting particularly the importance of having a website that can be used interactively for the various consultations. The overall goal is to get the message out to the key target audiences first, then do further outreach to ensure that the broader public and WPACs are in the communications loop.

Decision 15.6: Council agreed to:

1. *Accept the communications plan from the Communication Strategy Subcommittee;*
2. *Disband the Communication Strategy Subcommittee; and*
3. *Establish a Communications Committee to oversee the implementation of the communications plan.*

Action 15.8: The secretariat will assemble the communication committee to lead the implementation of the communications plan.

8 Alberta Water Research Institute

Linda Van Gastel provided an update on the Water Research Institute, referring members to the information sheet in the briefing book. A grant agreement for the \$30-million to implement the water research strategy will be in effect for seven years. A Management Advisory Board has been established, three members of which also sit on the Council. A business plan is being developed and recruitment of an executive director is underway.

9 New or Other Business

- a) **Intra-basin Water Movement.** Bill Berzins distributed an issues sheet developed by the team working on this matter. The team has a plan for how they want to proceed. One of their priorities is to reach out to groups that expect to be heard and to capture their comments. They expect to finalize draft terms of reference in the next 4-6 weeks. Bill asked members who knew of anyone who should be contacted for this project to let Bill or project manager Karen McCallion know. This team expects to engage stakeholders shortly and some Council members may want to be involved in that process. One member commented that the Balzac development could be viewed as a land use planning issue as well as a water issue.

Council members made the following suggestions:

- The team should contact the Alberta Economic Development Authority and First Nations to ensure they are engaged.
 - The team was urged to add a bullet on groundwater as well as surface water on its issues sheet.
- b) **Council's role with respect to consultation and stakeholder engagement.** The question arose as to what the Council's role is with respect to broad-based public consultation and if this is part of the Council's mandate. Where does the role end, and what happens if stakeholders, the public or government are not satisfied with the result? It was noted that the need for consultations should be addressed in a team's terms of reference and Council should reflect on a case-by-case basis what's needed and what is appropriate. When the GOA asks the Council to take something on, consultation may well be part of the process. The Council needs to consider what should be part of the plan in each case.

10 Next Meetings

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be June 14 in Calgary.

Members agreed to hold an additional half-day meeting on the afternoon of May 29. The venue will also be Calgary for those able to attend in person, and for others, a hook-up via Live Meeting will be arranged.

The date for the September meeting in Edmonton has been moved to September 18.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.

Attachment 1: Meeting #15 Attendees

Council Members and Alternates:

Nick Bayliss, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)
Bill Berzins, Non-government Organization (Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils)
Jack deBoer, Industry (Agriculture)
Danielle Droitsch, Non-government Organization (Environmental)
Susanne Forbrich, Government (Environment Canada)
Brian Hammond, Government (Rural)
David Hill, Industry (Irrigation)
Joyce Ingram, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Al Kennedy, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)
Tim LeClair, Government (Métis Settlements General Council)
Al Maurer, Government (Large Urban)
Joe Miller, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)
Keith Murray, Industry (Forestry)
Richard Quail, Government (Small Urban)
Dave Rushford, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Kevin Stashin, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Kim Sturgess, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Economic Development Authority)
Don Thompson, Industry (Mining)
Jonathan Thompson, Non-government Organization (Wetland Habitat Conservation)
Frank Vagi, Non-government Organization (Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils)
Linda Van Gastel, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Science and Research Authority)
Peter Watson, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)
Jay White, Non-government Organization (Lake Environment Conservation)
Beverly Yee, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)

Guests:

Jillian Flett, Clean Air Strategic Alliance	George Murphy, Alberta Environment
Gillian Kerr, Alberta Environment	Carrie Selin, Intensive Livestock Working Group
Cam Lane, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	Jamie Wuite, Alberta Agriculture and Food

Secretariat:

Giselle Beaudry	Kate Rich	Tim Toth
Sylvie Forest	Kim Sanderson	Lorie Wagner
Karen McCallion	Terry Sly	Neil Wandler

Absent with Regrets:

Gerald Cunningham, Government (Métis Settlements General Council)
John Donner, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Food)
Mike Kelly, Industry (Power Generation)
Lisa King, Government (First Nations)
Larry Nolan, Industry (Livestock)
Ron Pearson, Non-government Organization (Fishery Habitat Conservation)
Brad Pickering, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Judy Smith, Industry (Mining)
Jim Vollmershausen, Government (Environment Canada)

Attachment 2: Meeting #15 Action Item Log

Action	Who	By when
15.1: The secretariat will attach a short status report on transition to the minutes briefly describing the key tasks to be done.	Secretariat	April 16
15.2: Council members who are engaged in oil sands development issues will work with the secretariat to develop a presentation that considers the implications of oil sands developments on water in the region.	Council members engaged in oil sands development issues, secretariat	August 15
15.3: The three Council teams planning consultations in the next few months (Renewal, Review of Policy on Intra-basin Water Movement and Wetland Policy) should collaborate on their processes, messaging and other planning aspects and provide this information to the executive to ensure the processes are coordinated.	Water Strategy Renewal Team, Review of Policy on Intra-basin Water Movement Team, Wetland Policy Team	April 30
15.4: The secretariat will make the minor revisions to the 2007 Operational Plan, as discussed, and distribute to members.	Secretariat	April 6
15.5: The Steering Committee will revise the draft terms of reference to reflect the direction provided by Council and forward to Terry Sly for circulation to all members for final comments.	Water Strategy Renewal Steering Committee	April 13
15.6: The Secretariat will arrange the May 29 meeting and advise members.	Secretariat	April 16
15.7: The GOA members will discuss what role it should play with respect to First Nations engagement and advise the Strategy Renewal Steering Committee.	GOA Members	April 5
15.8: The secretariat will assemble the communication committee to lead the implementation of the communications plan.	Secretariat	April 13

Attachment 3: Meeting #15 Decision Log

Decision 15.1: Council agreed that a committee to look at opportunities for collaboration with CASA is not needed at the present time. The secretariats for the two organizations will be asked to watch for potential collaborative opportunities and if a joint project or discussions arise, the executive committee should be engaged.

Decision 15.2: Council approved the 2007 Operational Plan.

Decision 15.3: Council agreed in principle to the revised terms of reference for the Water Strategy Renewal project team, with the executive to have final signoff on any further changes.

Decision 15.4: Council approved the draft terms of reference for and establishment of a Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Project Team.

Decision 15.5: Council approved in principle the draft annual report and authorized the executive to approve the final draft for publication after comments from Council members have been incorporated.

Decision 15.6: Council agreed to:

- 1. Accept the communications plan from the Communication Strategy Subcommittee;*
- 2. Disband the Communication Strategy Subcommittee; and*
- 3. Establish a Communications Committee to oversee the implementation of the communications plan.*

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL
AGENDA, MEETING #15

March 27, 2007
Government House, Edmonton
12845 – 102 Avenue

GENERAL BUSINESS OF COUNCIL

- 9:00 1.0 Administration – Chair 45 mins**
1.1 Welcome, introductions and approve agenda
1.2 Approve Summary Report from January 30, 2007 meeting
1.3 Review of actions from last meeting
1.4 Executive Committee Report
- 9:45 2.0 Alberta Environment’s Water Initiatives: How Alberta Water Council Initiatives Fit 60 mins**
Provide an update on Alberta Environment’s key water related activities.
- 10:45 Break**
- 11:00 3.0 Business Plan Subcommittee 30 mins**
Approve the operational plan for 2007
- 11:30 4.0 Renewal of Water for Life 60 mins**
Approve the terms of reference for a project that will see the Council leading the renewal of *Water for Life*.
- 12:30 Lunch (to be provided in the room) 45 mins**
- 1:15 5.0 Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Working Group 30 mins**
Approve the terms of reference for a Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Project Team.
- 1:45 6.0 Annual Report 30 mins**
Approve in principle the annual report for October 2005-December 2006
- 2:15 7.0 Communication Strategy Subcommittee 30 mins**
Approve the communications plan for 2007.
- 2:45 8.0 Alberta Water Research Institute 15 mins**
Provide an update on the establishment of the two committees to oversee water research related to *Water for Life*.
- 3:00 9.0 New or Other Business 15 min**
New items of business or other items of information for Council
- 3:15 Adjournment**

NOTE: Up to an hour and half has been allotted for Broad Category caucusing – 7:30 to 9:00 am.