



Board of Directors Meeting
Sept. 16, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Summary:

The Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC) Board of Directors met on September 16, 2021. In anticipation of fall strategic planning, the board heard presentations on several initiatives in the Athabasca watershed and elsewhere including:

- An overview of several recently released reports from Andre Asselin, Alberta Water Council
- An overview of several monitoring initiatives in the oil sands area by Janice Linehan, Suncor
- An update on several land use planning initiatives by Abdi Siad-Omar, Alberta Environment and Parks
- And an overview of summer fieldwork by AWC staff members Sarah MacDonald and Ashley Johnson.

The meeting also included taking care of several administrative items. Petra Rowell, Executive Director, noted that a quarterly report on activities with financial statements was included in the meeting package. She also asked for consensus to approve the June 24, 2021 board meeting minutes and several changes to AWC signatories to accommodate incoming and outgoing Executive members including new Treasurer Cleo Reece. The next board meeting is November 22, 2021.

ACTION LOG:

	Action	Completed by:
	Petra to keep the Board apprised of progress planning the WPAC Summit.	In progress
	Petra to provide the motion regarding accountants to KRP LLP for their records.	October 30
	Petra to post the approved June 24 meeting minutes on the website.	September 30
	Petra to work with all involved to change banking signatories.	September 30
	Petra to send out calendar meeting invites for the next 2 board meetings.	September 30

Meeting Attendees:

SEAT	DIRECTOR	ALTERNATE	Quorum
AEP Representative	Abdi Siad-Omar	Nathan Ballard for Curtis Brock	√
Provincial/Federal Government	Vacant	Vacant	
Municipal (Upper Basin)	Lavone Olson		√
Municipal (Middle Basin)		Colleen Powell	√
Municipal (Lower Basin)	Sterling Johnson		√
Forestry	Dan Moore		√
Oil & Gas	Janice Linehan		√
Small Agricultural Producer	Marv Fyten		√
Agriculture	Vacant		
Mining/Utilities	Vacant		
Indigenous	Cleo Reece		√
Indigenous	Vacant		
Indigenous	Vacant		
Health or Environment	Morris Nesdole	Julie Hink	√
Health or Environment	Brian Deheer		√
Stewardship	Kendra Gilbert		√
Stewardship	Paula Evans	Alia Schamehorn	√
Research and Academia		Robert Holmberg	√
Member-at-Large	Tim Polzin		√
Member-at-Large	Laura Pekkola		√
Quorum = >50% filled seats (15) = 8			15
Guests and Staff present: Andre Asselin, Alberta Water Council Kyle Schole, Smoky Lake County Petra Rowell, AWC Executive Director Sarah MacDonald, Watershed Science Coordinator Ashley Johnson, Science and Outreach Coordinator			

Call to Order

1. Administration

a. Introductions, health and safety, quorum met.

As AWC President and meeting Chair, Dan Moore called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. welcoming everyone, encouraging everyone to follow health and safety guidelines, confirming that quorum has been met and giving the following Treaty Lands acknowledgement:

Athabasca Watershed Council acknowledges that the Athabasca watershed is located on Treaty 6, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territories. The Athabasca Watershed Council respects the histories,

languages, and cultures of First Nations, Metis, Inuit people whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant watershed.

This acknowledgement was followed by a prayer in English and Cree provided by Cleo Reece. Everyone enjoyed a round table of introductions along with sharing some of the favorite places we visited this summer.

b. Review and Approval of Agenda

Paula moved to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor. Approved by consensus.

2. New Business: Policy, Monitoring and Restoration Initiatives in the Athabasca Watershed

Petra noted that the Board will undertake strategic planning in the fall. The purpose of today's presentations is to gain a better understanding of some of the other initiatives in the basin and elsewhere that might inform us of our own work plans going forward.

a. Update from the Alberta Water Council, Andre Asselin

Andre provided a quick introduction of the Alberta Water Council, explaining its mandate and key tasks. One of these tasks is periodic review of *Water for Life* strategy implementation, and the Alberta Water Council has just released a [report](#) reviewing the period 2016-2019. Andre reviewed several recommendations coming out of this report. He also noted that the Project Team undertaking the review also made minor revisions to update the review process. They also initiated work on a set of initial *Water for Life* performance indicators that will be further refined in the future.

Andre also quickly reviewed the findings of the [Alberta Water Futures](#) and the [Wetland Policy Implementation Review](#) reports. Both of these projects were expedited, proving the Council's ability to provide advice on a particular topic in a timely manner. Finally, Andre noted that work on source water protection and drought planning continues. Project teams in these two areas have released reports previously, but are now focusing on tools to support these activities including a [drought simulation](#) and a [one-window access](#) point for source water risk assessment tools and data. Andre summed up his presentation by noting that the Board meets next in November, at which time they will be discussing workplans for the coming year.

b. Overview of Oil Sands Monitoring Initiatives, Janice Linehan, Suncor

Janice provided some history on the [Joint Federal-Provincial Oil Sands Monitoring](#) agreement, the [Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance](#) (COSIA) and several aspects of the current Oil Sands Monitoring (OSM) program. COSIA strives to achieve and reports on a number of [water performance goals](#). When asked questions about Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Janice noted the work of the Indigenous Community Based Monitoring (ICBM) Advisory Committee, that has produced an [ICBM framework](#). The number of ICBM programs that incorporate Traditional Knowledge are increasing in many northern communities (e.g., see this [fish camp story](#) map and this Environment Canada [video series](#)) and are being facilitated by the Athabasca University ICBM Facilitation Centre in Fort McMurray. Janice was also asked about the eventual treatment and release of oil sands tailings waters, which is currently being

researched, and will be guided by a federal [Oil Sands Effluent Regulation](#) currently in development. Finally, Janice noted that the OSM program will be releasing state of reports in the near future and continues to look for ways to collaborate and share information.

c. Alberta Environment and Parks Update, Abdi Siad-Omar

Abdi provided an update on several AEP initiatives including regional and [sub-regional planning](#) (including the Berland and Wandering River sub-regional plans in the Athabasca watershed), water quality management frameworks and bilateral water agreements. He also noted that the [Lower Athabasca Regional Plan](#) will be up for review in 2022 and this review will include an engagement process. A written summary of his updates is provided in Appendix 1 of these minutes. Cleo noted that Treaty 8 is also developing a land use framework and the AWC should compare the two documents. Dan noted that there is a great deal of opportunity for the AWC and its sector partners to contribute to AEP water management frameworks.

d. Staff Summer Update

Sarah MacDonald, AWC Watershed Science Coordinator, and Ashley Johnson, AWC Education and Outreach Coordinator, provided an overview of their summer including work on the Pembina riparian and East Slopes benthic projects. They also noted several field days and partner events. Many of these activities have been shared via the AWC's new blog, the [Athabasca Outflow](#).

3. Reports and Outstanding Business:

a. Staff and Committee Activities Update

b. Executive Director's Report

Petra pointed out that a quarterly report on staff and committee activities was circulated with the meeting agenda package, which also included financial statements. She asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Petra gave a very quick overview of the components of the AWC's finances including financial policies, accounting practices, balance sheet and income statement, project and cash flow spreadsheets and fundraising plans. She offered to do a more in-depth presentation to board members if there is any interest. She also encouraged all board members to think about fundraising ideas. She then asked for consensus on several administrative items as follows:

- Administrative Motions:
 - *Paula motioned and Marv seconded that the AWC Board of Directors approve by consensus the appointment of Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP as the Council's accountants retroactively for 2020-21, and again for the coming year of 2021-22. With none opposed, the motion was approved by consensus.*

Action: Petra to provide the above motion to KRP LLP for their records.

- Dan Moore circulated a motion by email July 5, 2021 and asked that it be ratified today. With none opposed, the motion was ratified / approved by consensus as follows:
 - *“I so move that Paula Evans, of the Town of Athabasca and as Secretary of the Athabasca Watershed Council, be authorized as a signatory for the Council, and that the required paperwork be completed such that Paula is recognized as an approved signatory by the Council’s banking institutions.”*
- Petra asked that the June 24, 2021 board meeting minutes as circulated in the September 16, 2021 board meeting package be approved. With no amendments and none opposed, the minutes were approved by consensus.

Action: Petra to post the approved June 24 meeting minutes on the website.

- With the resignation of Morris Nesdole as Interim Treasurer and the request of Larry Armfelt to be removed as AWC signatory, Paula motioned and Kendra seconded that Cleo Reece be approved as Treasurer and that AWC signatories be changed to include all AWC Officers as follows:
 - making Petra Rowell, AWC Executive Director, the ATB online main controller (i.e., account “administrator”)
 - making all AWC Executive Officers AWC authorized signatories including Dan Moore, President; Kendra Gilbert, Vice-President; Paula Evans, Secretary; and Cleo Reece, Treasurer
 - removing Morris Nesdole (past Interim President and Treasurer) and Larry Armfelt (AWC Director) from the list of AWC signatories.
- With none opposed, the above motion was approved by consensus.

Action: Petra to work with all involved to change banking signatories.

4. Round Table Sharing

Several members shared news as follows:

- Robert Holmberg noted, working with Science Outreach – Athabasca, he has completed a series of YouTube videos on lakes and rivers, accessible from a link on our [Education and Outreach](#) resources page.
- Kendra noted the uptick in water-related newspaper articles and suggested the AWC think about supplying a weekly water article to local papers.

5. Upcoming Meeting Dates

- WPAC Summit – October Oct. 8, 15, 22, 29
- Board meeting November 22, 1-3
- Board meeting February 9, 1-3

Action: Petra will send out calendar meeting invites for the next 2 board meetings.

6. Meeting Adjourned

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:46 pm.

Appendix 1. Alberta Environment and Parks Update submitted by Abdi Siad-Omar

AEP Updates

<p>Sub-regional Plan</p>	<p>Under the land use framework, there are three levels of land use plan planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Plans • Sub-regional plan • Issue-based plans <p>Sub-regional plans are Alberta’s approach to support caribou recovery through careful land use planning which recognizes and maintains working landscape, supporting variety social, economic, environmental, and traditional uses. The department plans to develop 11 sub-regional plans in the next four years.</p> <p>Plans completed or in progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold Lake Sub-regional plan (completed) • Bistcho Lake Sub-regional plan (completed) • Upper Smoky Sub-regional plan (in progress) <p>Next Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berland Sub-regional plan • Wandering River Sub-regional plan • Chinchaga sub-regional plan <p>Sub-regional plans within Athabasca River Basin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Berland sub-regional Task Force held its first meeting in July 2021. - The Task Force will be working together over the next 6-8 months to develop recommendation that will inform the development of a sub-regional plan. - Task forces leverage local knowledge and experience as part of the sub-regional planning process. People who live, work and play in this sub-region will be able to work together to make recommendations to government regarding land use planning, including caribou recovery - Alberta is developing sub-regional plans that can maintain working landscapes and support other objectives related to indigenous use, recreation, and responsible environmental management including approaches to support caribou recovery - Following the Task force work to draft recommendations, a Draft plan will be developed for broader stakeholder and Indigenous review
<p>Surface Water Quality</p>	<p>Surface water quality management frameworks establish objectives for surface water quality and consider the impacts of all development in the watershed on water quality.</p>

<p>Management Framework</p>	<p>The frameworks include a management response process to be taken if monitoring data show that thresholds, limits and triggers are exceeded.</p> <p>SWQF s completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower Athabasca Region - South Saskatchewan Region <p>Plans announced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upper Athabasca Region - North Sask. Region <p>AEP planning team met with the AWC on September 10 to discuss about the proposed framework and the opportunities for AWC to participate and provide input.</p>
<p>Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of Alberta remains committed to implementation of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) by working together with stakeholders and Indigenous Peoples. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Alberta Land Stewardship Act requires the LARP review to be started before September 2022. Alberta will meet this deadline and the scope of the review is still being determined.
<p>Transboundary Waters–Update</p>	<p>Action Plan for Wood Buffalo National Park</p> <p>The Transboundary Waters Team at Alberta Environment and Parks is involved in the Environmental Flows and Hydrology Working Group, led by Environment and Climate Change Canada. The last meeting was on June 23, 2021. The actions of the Working Group cover about half of the Action Plan. Alberta Environment and Parks continues to provide in-kind support and expertise to several task teams under the working group. Newsletter updates can be found here: Wood Buffalo Action Plan Newsletters - Wood Buffalo National Park (pc.gc.ca).</p> <p>Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement</p> <p>The Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement was signed by the governments of Canada, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon and the Northwest Territories in 1997. The board has 13 members, three representing the federal government and ten representing the provinces and territories. Each of the provinces and territories has a member representing their government and a member representing an Indigenous perspective.</p> <p>State of Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER)</p> <p>The Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement commits the Mackenzie River Basin Board to report on aquatic ecosystem health every few years. The SOAER Steering Committee and Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee, with Alberta’s representatives, have released the 2021 SOAER report, which is a web-based report that braids western science and traditional knowledge. The report can be viewed at https://soaer.ca/</p> <p>Bilateral Agreements:</p> <p>The agreement commits all six governments to work together to manage the water resources of the Mackenzie River Basin and makes provision for neighboring jurisdictions to negotiate bilateral water management agreements to address water issues at jurisdictional boundaries. Alberta is committed to developing three bilateral agreements.</p>

	<p>BC-Alberta Bilateral Water Management Agreement Alberta and BC continue to work toward completing the draft BC-Alberta Bilateral Water Management Agreement.</p> <p>SK-Alberta Bilateral Water Management Agreement Progress by Alberta and Saskatchewan toward completing the draft SK-Alberta Bilateral Water Management Agreement has been delayed due to staffing and resource challenges.</p> <p>Alberta-NWT bilateral water management In April 2015, Alberta and NWT signed the AB-NWT Bilateral Water Management Agreement. The jurisdictions work cooperatively to implement the commitments of the agreement. The agreement includes commitments for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality – Alberta and NWT technical specialists analyze interim triggers and trends for a variety of parameters. • Water quantity – Alberta and NWT technical specialists analyze interim water quantity triggers for aquatic ecosystem health. • Biology – Currently two biological programs are being explored. A large- and small-bodied fish monitoring program on the Slave River and sampling for benthic macroinvertebrates on the Hay and Slave rivers. These programs will help to develop biological objectives. • Groundwater – Alberta groundwater specialists work with NWT and BC counterparts to map and monitor groundwater at common boundaries. Priority activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mapping of buried channels ▪ Mapping of permafrost based on remote sensing methods ▪ Data analysis (quality and quantity) for all monitoring wells in the Mackenzie River Basin. • Traditional Knowledge – A Traditional Knowledge Working Group has been established and will work toward developing a framework to braid traditional knowledge and western science. The intent is to include traditional knowledge in implementing the AB-NWT bilateral water management agreement. • Climate change – The jurisdictions have begun work to understand the effects of climate change. <p>Pertinent reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2016-17 annual report is available at: https://open.alberta.ca/publications/working-together-to-manage-our-shared-waters-bmc-annual-report-to-ministers . • The 2017-18 annual report is available at: https://open.alberta.ca/publications/working-together-to-manage-our-shared-waters-bmc-annual-report-to-ministers . • The 2018-2020 annual report will be available later this year. <p>Mackenzie River Basin Board Agency Reports Alberta, along with the other Mackenzie River Basin jurisdictions, produce an annual Fall Agency Report highlighting projects and work of interest to share with the Mackenzie River Basin Board. The 2020 report is available here: https://www.mrbb.ca/uploads/media/5fd10fcad1aa4/607f3ca6ac67c.pdf?v1</p>
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