



Board of Directors Meeting September 15, 2022 Approved Meeting Minutes

Meeting Summary:

The Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC) Board of Directors held its second hybrid virtual / in-person meeting on September 15, 2022. Several board members and staff met in the Train Station upstairs Board Room in Athabasca and remaining directors joined virtually via zoom. New IT equipment made the meeting audio and video quality much better than previous meetings.

After a round circle of introductions, the board approved by consensus the meeting agenda, the previous (June, 2022) meeting minutes, and the Executive Directors activity and financial report. They also approved a new Mandate and Roles Document (a 4-year agreement with Alberta Environment and Parks); began a discussion to refresh the AWC's vision, mission and board terms of reference; and had an *in camera* session to discuss staff salaries before breaking for lunch. After a quick walk along the Athabasca River, the meeting re-convened, with a presentation from Healthy Waters Lac La Biche, and a round table of sharing and announcements before the meeting adjourned shortly after 2:00 pm. The next board meeting will be held November 22, 2022.



New Actions:

Action:	To be completed by:
Ashley to post the approved June 23 2022 board meeting minutes to the website.	Next meeting
Petra to circulate the revised strategic plan for review before the next meeting.	November board meeting
Petra to provide an opportunity for the board to workshop the vision and mission and review the board terms of reference in person.	November board meeting

Meeting Attendees:

SEAT	DIRECTOR	ALTERNATE	Quorum
AEP Representative	Abdi Siad-Omar		√
Provincial/Federal Government	Vacant		
Municipal (Upper Basin)	Brigette Lemieux (v)		√
Municipal (Middle Basin)		Rob Minns (ip)	√
Municipal (Lower Basin)	Lorin Tkachuk (v)		√
Forestry	Dan Moore (ip)	Jennifer Knievel (ip)	√
Oil & Gas	Janice Linehan (v)		√
Small Agricultural Producer	Vacant		
Agriculture	Kennedy Deregt (v)		√
Mining/Utilities	Vacant		
Indigenous			
Indigenous			
Indigenous	Vacant		
Health or Environment	Julie Hink (v)		√
Health or Environment	Brian Deheer		√
Stewardship	Kendra Gilbert (v)		√
Stewardship	Paula Evans (v)		√
Research and Academia			
Member-at-Large	Vacant		
Member-at-Large	Laura Pekkola (v)		√
Past President	vacant		
Quorum = >50% filled seats (15) = 8			12
Staff present: Petra Rowell, AWC Executive Director Sarah MacDonald, Watershed Science Coordinator Ashley Johnson, Science and Outreach Coordinator			

Call to Order, Welcome, and Acknowledgements

AWC President and Chair Dan Moore opened the meeting with a treaty land acknowledgement and noted that the office will be closed on September 30th as staff recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:

The Athabasca Watershed Council acknowledges that our watershed is located on Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 territories. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant watershed. We make this acknowledgment as an act of Truth and Reconciliation, recognizing those who came before us.

1. Administration

a. Introductions, health and safety, quorum

With board members joining in person or online, quorum was confirmed, followed by a round of introductions, with a highlight of everyone's best summer adventure as an icebreaker.

b. Approval of Agenda

- a. The agenda was approved by consensus as presented (previously circulated).

c. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

- a. Petra went through the June 23, 2022 meeting's action log, after which the minutes were approved by consensus as presented.

Action: Post the June 23 2022 meeting minutes to the website.

Actions from June 23, 2022 board meeting:	Status:
Petra to post the approved Feb. 9, 2022 meeting minutes to the website.	Completed.
Petra to send out a new board contact sheet and other revisions agreed to in the review of Tabs 1 and 2 of the Board Member's Information Binder and continue to work with the Board to review remaining binder Tabs at future meetings.	Ongoing
Staff to continue to investigate and upgrade IT meeting equipment: Staff purchased a new laptop, TV screen and Meeting Owl (audio and camera tool) and so far, have been happy with the improvement for hybrid meetings.	Sept. 15

2. Reports

a. ED's Q2 Activity and Financial Report

Petra presented her Q2 (July – Sept) report, which will be added to the board meeting minutes. This report, including a financial update, was approved by consensus.

b. Re-activating the Finance Committee

Petra proposed we resurrect the finance committee, and suggested it have five to six members to update our spending policies and processes and come up with a fundraising strategy to bring in more funds to the Council. Petra will recruit members later in the fall.

3. Ongoing Business

a. AEP Mandate and Roles Document & Strategic Plan Update

We are negotiating with AEP for our next 4-year grant agreement. Petra asked the board to approve the AEP Mandate and Roles Document (MRD), although it would be difficult to propose any changes at this stage. The document was approved by consensus. However, in the discussion it was noted that we need to be clear about our relationship and support of watershed stewardship groups (not a hierarchical relationship). This is a goal of our Integrated Watershed Management Plan. It was also noted that AEP provides in-kind and financial support to stewardship groups.

Petra let the board know that we are moving forward with a strategic plan update earlier than normal because we are working on the AEP grant renewal process. Petra reviewed the updated strategic plan, going through the document and our goals. The plan is to approve the strategic plan at the November board meeting.

Action: Circulate the revised strategic plan to the board prior to the Nov. 22 meeting.

b. Director's Information Binder Review

Petra is working on ensuring that we have comprehensive information binders to facilitate staff transition and board members joining. Last meeting, we reviewed introductory material in Tab 1. There are parts of our vision and mission that don't really reflect who we are and what we do. Staff proposed some slight changes however the board would like to have an opportunity to discuss potential changes in more detail (and preferable in person) at the next board meeting.

Proposed Changes:

Our Vision

~~The AWC strives to keep the Athabasca River watershed~~ **is ecologically healthy, supporting socially responsible well-being (or resilient communities), and economically sustainability.**

Rationale: Ecologically healthy watersheds are the heart of our society. They provide our drinking water, which is essential to our physical health, but also provide opportunities for recreation and work. Communities with healthy watersheds are resilient to floods, droughts and other natural disasters. They have natural areas that benefit the mental and physical health of people across the watershed. Ecological goods and services are facilitated by healthy watersheds; these goods and services are entwined with our economy through our various industries.

Our Mission

~~To demonstrate leadership and facilitate informed decision-making in the Athabasca River watershed by bringing stakeholders and Indigenous peoples together to promote, foster respect, and plan for an ecologically healthy watershed that supports social responsibility and economic sustainability~~ **achieve our shared vision.**

Values (summarized)

Integrity, trust, and transparency. Being purpose driven. Consensus decision-making. A high standard of achievement and conduct. Timely responses to the issues. Creativity, innovation, and organizational risk taking. Ecological health as foundational to all life. Water as a blessing and a gift, essential for the environment, economy, society and the spirit. Inclusivity. Respect for all points of view. The communities, cultures and knowledge of Indigenous peoples. Being responsible and accountable to all.

Continuing through the Board members information binder, Petra noted that the AWC has several documents that outline *how* it will work (bylaws, Board Terms of Reference, various policies, etc.) as well as several documents that describe what we will work on (strategic plan, IWMP, workplans, etc.). In particular, she noted:

Tab 3 – bylaws: These were updated in 2020 so won’t be opened again for a couple of years. But if any one has any questions about, they should talk to Petra or bring it up in the next board meeting.

Tab 4 - Board of directors’ terms of reference: Describes the purpose of the board as well as its sector makeup. Petra noted that the sector model was rooted in the early days of the Water for Life strategy and commits the WFL partners to including four broad sectors - provincial government; industry; non-government organizations (NGOs); and other governments. The AWC also strives to include all sectors that regulate, use, affect or are affected by the water resource as well as all authorities required for implementation of our integrated watershed management plan. Looking at the current structure of the board, Petra proposed some changes to several currently vacant seats. Board members asked to defer this to the next meeting in November.

Vacant Seat:	Proposed actions or changes.
Federal/provincial	Recruit a federal rep (PC, DFO, ECCC)
Indigenous (1 of 3)	Recruit a Treaty 6 or Metis rep
Small Ag producer	Remove (already have an Ag seat)
Mining/ Utility	Make 2 separate seats and recruit: - Mining (Coal, peat or aggregate) - Utility (a regional drinking water or wastewater operator)
Member at large	Retain but make it a requirement that this person must be affiliated with some aspect of recreation or tourism.

Action: Provide an opportunity to the board to discuss the Board terms of reference in person at the next meeting.

c. AWC Salary Review (in camera session)

Staff left the room, leaving the board and Executive Director to go *in camera* to discuss a staff pay scale and plan to make AWC salaries more attractive. Coming out of the session, Dan made a motion to approve the plan (with revisions discussed in camera). The motion was approved by consensus and will be implemented by the Executive Director, as funds and capacity allow.

Lunch Break and a lovely walk along the Athabasca River mainstem to the mouth of the Tawatinaw.

4. New Business

- a. Brian gave a presentation on what Healthy Waters Lac La Biche has been up to lately with their wetland and other projects.
- b. Ashley gave a quick presentation on the AWC social media accounts and encouraged board members with social media accounts to follow the AWC on at least one of the various social media platforms. She also invited board members to write blog posts for the website.
- c. Other initiatives and updates:
 - i. Dan shared that the 2023 voyageur canoe brigade will be in Fort Assiniboine for its bicentennial. The tentative plan is to begin in Whitecourt and go to the town of Athabasca. Dan requested that the AWC be involved with the brigade, including paddling, re-enactments, and other community events. The organizing committee will be meeting on September 27th.
 - ii. Abdi provided an update on the 10-year review of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan. The information is available online, and there will be in-person and online engagement opportunities.
 - iii. Kendra gave an update about BAILS, and Laura mentioned a field trip coming up with Inside Education.
 - iv. The Alberta Water Council is reviewing the Water for Life Action Plan, so Dan gave a brief update, as forestry and WPACs are some of the sectors involved in the process.
 - v. Petra noted that a group for the North Saskatchewan has applied for Heritage River status, something we might revisit for the Athabasca at a later date.

5. Next Steps

Petra mentioned some upcoming important dates:

- Friday Sept. 30 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Friday Oct. 14 – Technical Committee Meeting
- Tuesday Nov. 8 – virtual Working Well Workshop
- Thursday Nov. 10 – Technical Committee Meeting
- Tuesday Nov. 22 – AWC Board Meeting
- Thursday Feb. 9 – AWC Board Meeting

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:09pm.



Executive Director's Q2 (Summer) Activity & Financial Report: July 1 – September 30, 2022

Overview:

- Not sure where the summer went! 😊 Staff were busy with a combination of office and field work, and fitting in annual vacation time.

Admin, HR, Office, etc.:

- We continue to hold staff meetings most Monday mornings (virtually or in-person). This quarter saw Ashley Johnson celebrate her one year anniversary with the AWC on July 4th.
- Our summer student, Aneilia Ayotte, completed her 16 weeks with the AWC and returned to school the end of August. Check out some of her summer blogs [here](#).
- Sarah continues to participate in the [Roberta Bondar STEM Career Development](#) program.
- We are excited to be advertising for an 8-month Intern funded through the University of Alberta Sustainability Council's Adaptation and Resiliency Training program. This position will continue work started on the AWC [Community Resilience and Drinking Water](#) program started by SAIT Capstone student Laura Nethery.

Board/Governance:

- After the June 23 hybrid board meeting was held at the office in the Athabasca, we invested in a new Meeting Owl (audio-visual tool), TV screen and laptop which should improve our virtual meeting experience in the future.
- The June 23, 2022 board meeting included an overview of the new Board Members Information Binder, in particular reviewing the first section of introductory material, as well as the AWC vision, mission and values. Staff will bring proposed changes to the board at its Sept. 15 meeting and will continue binder review, looking at Tab 3 (bylaws) and Tab 4 (Board Terms of Reference).

Committee Updates:

Executive Committee, Chair Dan Moore

- The AWC Executive Committee took a break from meetings over the summer but continued to work by emails and phone calls when needed.
- With the guidance of the Executive Committee, Petra is working on creating an AWC Pay Scale, as well as firming up job descriptions, qualifications, staff benefits, etc. to make the AWC more competitive in recruiting and retaining staff.

Finance Committee, Chair vacant

- This committee has been dormant for a while and is currently lacking a chair. Petra will be asking for volunteers to reinvigorate this important committee in the fall.
- A lot of time has been put into the new AEP grant application process (for the 4 year period starting 2023-24). AEP has worked with all 11 WPACs to develop a Mandate and Roles Document that both parties will sign and which includes a list of projects/activities that both the AWC and AEP commit to. This new process also requires us to update the AWC Strategic Plan somewhat (retaining our original 5 goals but fleshing out the next 4 years of activities a bit more).

Communications, Education and Community Engagement (CECE) Committee, Chair Paula Evans

- The CECE Committee met July 5 to discuss key messages and CECE performance indicators. They also continue to work by emails to provide oversight on the activities of the Education and Outreach Coordinator and projects related to achieving Goals 1 and 2 of the Strategic Plan.

Education and Outreach Projects

- Ashley continues to organize the monthly e-newsletter, social media posts, blog and website updates. She is also working on the next Athabasca Dispatch which will focus on point source discharges.
- Throughout the summer, staff participated in several outreach events including the Canada Day / River Rat Days in Athabasca, an Inside Education Teacher Training Day in Lac La Biche (where Ashley joined board members Laura Pekkola and Brian Deheer), Jasper Park Day in Jasper (Ashley), the AGM of the SV of Nakamun Park (Petra), the Baptiste and Island Lakes Stewardship Society (BAILs) August 27 virtual AGM, and a couple of pond leveler installations with Westlock County.

Technical Committee, Chair Dan Moore

- The Technical Committee will hold a virtual meeting October 14 and will review a Terms of Reference for the next iteration of an Athabasca state of the watershed assessment report. The committee is also working with Athabasca University to repair and update the SOW Interactive Atlas.
- The Committee also continues to work by emails to provide oversight on the activities of the Watershed Science Coordinator and projects related to achieving Goals 3 and 4 of the Strategic Plan.

Science projects:

- Ashley has completed her CABIN benthic invertebrate sampling technician training and Sarah has taken a refresher course. Staff did a preliminary trip to the McLeod River headwaters in late August to confirm the location and suitability of several sampling sites. Sampling will be completed in a second trip in September.

- Sarah continues to facilitate the Pembina Technical Working Group (representing 12 different organizations) who are developing a Pembina state of the watershed report and initiating a two-year water quality monitoring project funded by a generous (\$80k) donation from Pembina Pipelines.
- Sarah is a member of the ALUS Partnership Advisory Council for Athabasca County, County of Barrhead, Westlock County, and Thorhild County, which just approved 12 riparian and wetland conservation and restoration projects in these counties. The AWC also continues to partner with Highway2Conservation on a planting project at French Creek, a small tributary of the Pembina River. We are also partnering with West Central Forage Association to add educational signage to a riparian area best practices demonstration site on the Pembina River at Sangudo.
- To improve AWC knowledge about riparian restoration, Ashley attended a riparian health assessment workshop in Grande Prairie hosted by Cows and Fish.
- The Berland-Wildhay Watershed Connectivity [Planning initiative](#), a stakeholder group looking at waterbody crossing mitigation in this East Slopes watershed, took a break from meetings over the summer field season but will be convening again this fall to complete the plan.
- Staff are in discussion with AEP's Lisa Schaubel regarding an East Slopes Stream Temperature project.
- Staff are in discussion with Alberta WaterSmart about the Athabasca River Basin Phase II project.
- Petra met with the Office of the Chief Scientist to discuss common initiatives.

Other Partnerships / Sector and Community Engagement:

- We continue to provide input to Steve Meadows, the WPAC rep on the Alberta Water Council Project Team developing advice on a new Water for Life 10 Year Action Plan to be completed by the fall of 2022.
- AWC Director Laura Pekkola continues to support a WPAC project team developing a watershed 101 series of videos.
- Director Dan Moore went on the Peace Canoe Brigade in July (see [video](#)) and is looking forward to participating in the 2023 brigade on the Athabasca.
- Petra meets and/or corresponds with the other WPAC managers regularly and represents all 11 WPACs on the Alberta Energy Regulators Multi-stakeholder Engagement Advisory Committee which meets Sept. 27-28.
- A contingent of board and staff are attending the Alberta Lake Management Society conference on Sept 28-29.

Things to Look Forward to Next Quarter (Oct – Dec):

- AEP WPAC Forum Oct. 6-7
- AB WPACs Technical Workshop Oct. 25
- AWC Tech Comm Oct. 14
- Fall Board of Directors Meeting Nov. 22
- Don't Forget Giving Tuesday Nov. 29!

Communications Report:

Measure	March 31, 2021	March 31, 2022	June 30, 2022	Sept 30, 2022	Dec 30, 2022	Mar 30, 2022
Membership:						
# individuals	120	173	187	188		
# organizations	34	40	40	40		
Monthly Newsletter:						
# of subscribers	368	455	340	376		
Website:						
website users	468	711		525		
# of Page Views	1116	15350	4686	1770		
Sessions / length	4742 / 2 m0s	7755 / 1m35s	2557 / 1m28s	943 / 1m 18s		
Bounce Rate	54.43	61.68	58.39	70.2		
Facebook:						
Facebook Followers	468	608	623	632		
Facebook Likes	406	502	513	518		
Twitter:						
Twitter followers	404	479	497	499		
Instagram:						
Instagram Followers	405	573	596	603		
Publications:						
- E-Newsletters			3			
- Reports			-			
- Media articles			-			
- other						

Q2 Engagement (Key Meetings and Events) Report:

Date	Event	AWC Staff	Total # of non-staff attendees		Length (hrs)	Location
			We hosted	Other hosted		
2022-23			We hosted	Other hosted		
July 1	Open House – River Rat Canada Day	Petra, Ashley	12		6	Athabasca
July 2	Display Table – River Rat Days	Ashley and mom!	20		6	Athabasca
July 5	CECE Committee virtual meeting	Ashley	6		2	Virtual
July 5	Mtg. with Janice Linehan re: wastewater article for newsletter	Petra, Ashley	1		1.0	virtual
July 6	Mtg with AB WaterSmart	Petra		4	1	Virtual
July 6	Inside Education Teacher Training	Ashley		12	3	LLB
July 8	AEP and WPAC managers	Petra		12	1	virtual
July 13	HWLLB Wetlands project	Petra		10	2	virtual
July 13-14	Cows and Fish riparian workshop	Ashley		12	14	Grande Prairie
July 15	WPAC managers and Doug Thrussell	Petra		6	1	virtual
July 16	Jasper Park Day – display table	Ashley		50	6	Jasper
July 20	Mtg with Zoey Wang, AEP	Petra	1		1	virtual
July 20-21	CABIN benthic monitoring training	Ashley		12	14	Pincher Creek
July 23	SV of Nakamun Park AGM	Petra		50	1.5	L. Nakamun
July 27	Mtg with Kara, Trans Mountain	Petra, Sarah	1		0.5	virtual
Aug. 9	Pond Leveler installation	Sarah, Ash, Aneilia		6	6	Westlock Co.
Aug. 11	WPAC managers meeting	Petra		10	2.0	virtual
Aug. 12	Athabasca Library youth event	Petra, Sarah		4	2.0	Athabasca
Aug. 25-26	Upper McLeod Benthic site selection	Petra, Sarah, Ashley			16	Yellowhead Co.
Aug. 27	BAILS AGM	Pet, Sarah, Ash		12	2.0	virtual
Sep. 6	Sangudo WCFA site visit	Sarah		2	6	Sangudo
Sep. 8	WPAC mgrs. Mtg with Doug T.	Petra		12	1.0	virtual
Sep. 12	Mtg with Office of the Chief Scientist	Petra		2	1.0	Edmonton
Sep. 15	AWC board meeting	all	12		3.0	Athabasca
Sep. 21-23	Benthic sampling	all	1			Yellowhead
Sep. 27-28	MSEAC mtg	Petra		15	14	Calgary
Sep. 28-29	ALMS conference	Sarah, Ashley		100	12	St. Albert
Sep. 30	Tech Comm	all		10	2	virtual

Financial Report: AWC Revenues and Expenditures to July 31, 2022

	Budget - Core Operations	Actuals - Core Operation	TOTAL Ops + Projects
Grants carried forward			
REVENUE:			
Donations - website	\$ 500.00	\$ 28.41	\$ 28.41
Donations - Other	\$ 2,000.00		
Grants (amts rec'd this year)			\$ 27,540.00
AEP Grant	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Misc. Revenue		\$ 1,322.19	\$ 1,322.19
Interest Revenue	\$ 200.00	\$ 139.28	\$ 139.28
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 202,700.00	\$ 201,489.88	\$ 229,029.88
Admin Expense:			
Rent/Utilities / internet	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
Telephone / Video	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 242.02	\$ 509.62
Website (domain, hosting)	\$ 250.00		
Computers & Software	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 614.85	\$ 1,337.25
Bank Fees	\$ 150.00	\$ 50.50	\$ 50.50
Insurance	\$ 2,700.00		
Printing		\$ 35.45	\$ 35.45
Courier & Postage	\$ 250.00	\$ 329.74	\$ 329.74
Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ 329.50	\$ 329.50
Advertising & Promotions	\$ 500.00	\$ 170.61	\$ 170.61
Gifts of Appreciation	\$ 250.00		
Accounting Expense (Audit)	\$ 5,000.00		
memberships, fees	\$ 100.00		
GST Expense (not reclaimable)	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 94.76	\$ 94.76
Meeting Expenses:			
Honorariums	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Travel - Mileage	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,464.97	\$ 2,869.38
Travel - Accommodation	\$ 500.00	\$ 175.44	\$ 272.57
Travel - Meal Allowance	\$ 500.00	\$ 145.45	\$ 295.70
hosting	\$ 2,000.00		
Staffing Expenses:			
Staff dev, training, etc.	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 186.68	\$ 1,053.82
Executive Director	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 23,333.32	\$ 23,333.32
Watershed Science	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 20,333.32	\$ 20,333.32
Education & Outreach	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 13,823.32	\$ 13,823.32
Summer Student	\$ 6,500.00		\$ 8,841.60
EI Expense	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 1,467.41	\$ 1,467.41
CPP Expense	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 3,531.86	\$ 3,531.86

CRA over-under		\$ 143.69	\$ 143.69
Staff Benefits Program	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00
WCB Expense	\$ 400.00		
Projects:			
Professional (Consulting) Fees			
Field and general supplies		\$ 52.03	\$ 338.14
riparian site project grants			
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 202,500.00	\$ 68,924.92	\$ 81,561.56
NET INCOME	\$ 200.00	\$ 132,564.96	\$ 147,468.32

Cash on Hand July 31, 2022:

Core Operations Acct	\$ 242,254.40
T-Bill (interest bearing) Acct	\$ 71,314.04
GIC	<u>\$ 10,000.00</u>
sub-total	\$ 323,568.44
less \$ rec'd and committed	<u>\$ 246,704.31</u>
Unallocated	\$ 76,864.13