



**Annual General Meeting
Minutes
June 17, 2023
Lac la Biche**

Housekeeping Items

The meeting room (MacArthur Centre) was opened to members at 9:30 am with the coffee on and time for networking. Petra gave a 2-minute warning to the room at 9:58 am. At 10:00 am, she pointed out health and safety before identifying Dan as the AWC President and meeting Chair.

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Dan Moore, welcomed everyone and called the 2023 Athabasca Watershed Council's Annual General Meeting to order. He thanked everyone for joining us today – appreciating that we are all here together in person!

TREATY LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Dan acknowledged that we are meeting today in Lac La Biche, which is in Treaty 6 Territory. However, the Athabasca Watershed Council works across the entire Athabasca watershed, which underlays portions of Treaty 6, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territories and is home to many First Nation and Métis communities. The Athabasca Watershed Council respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all Indigenous people, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant watershed. We make this acknowledgment as an act of Truth and Reconciliation, and in recognition and appreciation of those Indigenous ancestors who came before us and the Indigenous voices who continue to guide our efforts today.

The Chair then invited everyone to a round of introductions.

2. Confirm Quorum, Review and Approve Agenda

Petra confirmed that we had quorum (>10 members present). Dan then asked, to facilitate decision-making today, that for the remaining items, rather than asking for all in favor, he will ask if there are any opposing. Those opposing can raise their hands; or speak to their issue when called on. He asked for a motion to that effect. Janice made a motion that the Chair, when seeking to approve a motion, ask for "those opposing", rather than all in favor. Paula seconded the motion, the Chair asked for discussion (there was none) and all were in favor of the motion (approved by consensus).

Dan noted that the meeting agenda was circulated thirty days prior to today. He asked if there were any addition, deletions or other edits. Hearing none, he asked if anyone was opposed to approving the agenda. None were opposed and the agenda as presented was approved by consensus.

3. Approve 2022 AGM Minutes

Dan noted the minutes from the 2022 AGM were circulated with the agenda 30 days prior to today. He asked if there were any errors or omissions or any other discussion points? Hearing none, Dan asked if there was anyone opposed to approving the 2022 AGM meeting minutes. There was none and the minutes as presented were approved by consensus.

4. 2022-23 Year in Review: Project Updates

Dan noted that the AWC had an incredible busy year in 2022-23 and as always, it takes a lot of people to make that happen! He thanked fellow board members for meeting quarterly and adapting as we moved from virtual to hybrid and finally in November, back to in-person meetings. It was also good to see board level discussions on policy items such as our vision and mission, strategic plan and budget, and staff salaries and board remuneration. Although these topics may not be the most gripping, they are important to ensure we continue to function smoothly and effectively.

He also thanked Executive, Technical, and Communication, Education and Community Engagement committee members, who met throughout the year. These committees help guide the work of the AWC by providing advice and feedback to staff, who appreciate having these folks to lean on as we work together to advance our technical and communication projects and activities across the watershed.

Dan also thanked Alberta Environment and Protected Areas for providing core support and other AWC funders and supporters, including the many other agencies we work with, which staff will provide more information on shortly as we hear project updates and the financial reports. Truly, we would not exist if a number of government, industry, non-government agencies, communities and individuals didn't support and collaborate with us and for that, we are truly grateful.

Dan then handed it over to Petra Rowell, AWC Executive Director, to provide staff updates as follows:

- Petra provided an overview of staffing, which in 2022-23 grew to 3 full time staff, as well as a mix of summer students and interns. She noted that staff projects could be basin-wide or targeted at a specific sub-basin or region.
- Ashley provided an overview of education and outreach initiatives in 2022-23.
- Caity provided an overview of the Drinking Water and Community Resiliency project.
- Sarah provided an overview of the East Slopes benthic monitoring project and the Healthy Shorelines Initiative in the Pembina and Tawatinaw sub-basins.

Dan thanked staff for the updates and introduced Treasurer Paula Evans to provide a financial report.

5. 2022-23 Financial Report (Treasurer Paula Evans)

Paula started by thanking her predecessor, Cleo Reece, for doing a great job of supporting the AWC accounting function and continuing to support and advise the board as a Director. She also thanked Petra Rowell for maintaining the AWC accounting records and for providing the year-end documents to the accountants. And finally, she thanked Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP Chartered Professional Accountants for conducting this year's review and providing the financial statements in time to share with AGM attendees today. She then provided an overview of 2022-23 financial highlights as follows:

Starting on the revenue side, for the fiscal year of 2022-23, core operational funding of \$200,000 was again provided by Alberta Environment and Protected Areas. This was the 4th and final year of a four year grant agreement. A new 4 grant agreement has been negotiated starting in 2023-24. Despite the financial security this four year grant provides, as always, we need to diversify our funding so that we are never reliant on only one funding source. If you are thinking about becoming involved in the work of the AWC, we could use more volunteers on the Finance and Fundraising Committee. Or even if you have an idea about a funding opportunity, please contact me or Petra.

As you heard from Sarah, on the project side, we are very fortunate over the past few years to have received GOA Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program funding, as well as corporate donations from Trans Mountain and Plains Midstream for our Pembina and Tawatinaw riparian projects. The last of these funds will be expended this summer. Going forward, a new 2 year WRRP contribution and a donation from Pembina Pipelines will see this work continued and expanded to include a 2 year comprehensive water quality initiative in the Pembina. You can read about these projects on our webpage, where you will also find the riparian assessment reports which these dollars have funded.

Also covered by Sarah, we received \$12,000 from Alberta Conservation Association in 2022-23 to be used in the Upper Athabasca Biomonitoring benthic invertebrate sampling project. These funds were fully expended in the fiscal year and new funds have been secured for the current year. Again, you can read more about the Biomonitoring project on our project webpage.

For education and outreach activities for youth, we received a \$3500 grant from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, which is funding a new program for the AWC called X-Stream Science. I also want to thank Suncor and Big Horn Mining for donations that were used to offset costs of the Water in Alberta's Boreal conference held in Grande Prairie last February.

In-kind contributions of time are a big part of our budget. In 2022-23 we conservatively estimated this to be valued at about \$140,000. This includes the time of board and committee members, speakers who gave their time to events like the Water in Alberta's Boreal conference and World Water Day, and Working Group members on the Wildhay-Berland and Pembina Riparian working groups. It also includes the work of interns provided through the SAIT Integrated Water Management Program and UofA Sustainability Council's ART program.

On the expense side, staffing is our biggest expense but of course, without staff, we would not get as much done! The remainder of our core operational funds go towards the cost of board and committee meetings and administrative items like insurance, office rent, etc. Project funds are generally used to fund consultants, equipment and travel associated with each project.

At the end of the year (i.e., on March 31, 2023) as per the balance sheet, we had remaining savings (not dedicated to grants and project deliverables) of approximately \$80,000. With that quick overview, I will finish by noting that KRP, in undertaking their review, found no significant findings..." and the financial statements, as presented "accurately reflect AWC position at March 31, 2023.

Paula then handed it over to Petra who went through the financial statements as prepared by KRP accounting firm. Paula then asked if there were any questions or discussion about the financial report. Hearing none, as Treasurer, she made a motion to approve the 2022-23 financial report as presented. Kendra seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The chair asked if there were any opposed to the motion; hearing no objections the motion was approved by consensus.

As Treasurer, Paula made a motion that Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP Chartered Professional Accountants (KRP) be retained as Athabasca Watershed Councils accountants for the year 2023-24. Kendra seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any questions or discussion. There was none. He then asked if any were opposed to approving the motion. Hearing none, the motion to retain KRP was approved by consensus.

6. Elections

Before moving to the election of Directors, Dan acknowledged outgoing directors. On behalf of the board, he offered heartfelt thanks to Brigitte Lemieux, Yellowhead County, who resigned from the board last November. Also, Kennedy Deregts-Taschuk has just indicated her term with West Central Forage has ended. We wish both ladies well in their future endeavors. He then turned it over to Petra to act as Presiding Officer of board elections.

Petra noted that as per the Board Terms of Reference, which was approved in 2016 and renewed this year, nomination papers must be received by Administration seven (7) days prior to the AGM and that nominations will not be accepted from the floor. Thank you to all that have put your name forward as per the slate of nominees on the slide. The following board seats that are up for election have received a single nomination, and hence the nominees can be accepted as a single slate and through a motion for acclamation. This slate of nominations includes:

- Forestry: Dan Moore
- Oil and Gas: Janice Linehan
- Mining or Utilities: Amanda Buchanan
- Indigenous: Cleo Reece
- Environment: Brian Deheer
- Stewardship: Paula Evans
- Member at Large: Ida Edwards

Petra then asked for a motion to accept by acclamation the slate of Directors as presented. Kendra made a motion that the slate of nominees be accepted by acclamation. Petra: Any Discussion? There was none. Any opposed? Hearing none opposed, the motion was carried by consensus. Petra then returned the chair to Dan.

Dan reminded everyone, there are still several board vacancies which the board can fill between AGMs via appointments. if you are interested, please do not hesitate to contact Petra. Also, a reminder that you do not have to be a board member to join a committee.

Before breaking for lunch, staff drew the door prize and Petra encouraged everyone to view and respond to the survey questions on the walls around the room.

LUNCH BREAK (12:15 – 1:00)

SLIDE 14 DAN. Celebration and Recognition!

Dan: Before we get going again and hear from our guest speaker, we would like to take a few moments to appreciate where we've been, some of the achievements of the last year, and some of the folks who have helped us get to where we are today. I'm going to let Petra start with recognizing several staff achievements over the past year.

Petra noted that although we are always looking at the long list of things to do in front of us, or things we would like to add to our organization, its really important that we take a little bit of time to celebrate our achievements. As they say, it takes a village, or in our case, a watershed! And I sincerely thank everyone who has in some way, large or small, been a part of our successful past year. But I also want to recognize a couple of individuals and some particular achievements this past year.

Sarah, our Watershed Science Coordinator, with four years makes her our longest employee to date (in almost 15 years). Sarah is always looking for new opportunities, and ways to expand her leadership experience. We were very proud that she was accepted to the national Roberta Bondar STEM Career Leadership program, and congratulate her on finishing the year long program, a significant portion of her time, in addition to all her other projects.

Ashley, our Education and Outreach Coordinator, has been with us for 2 years, and is the face of our school programs. Ashley reached out to several schools during covid, doing video watershed talks in several classrooms. She continues to build out and be more intentional with our youth program and took the lead in connecting with other WPACs doing the X-stream science program. Ashley, congratulations on delivering the program to your first school in Hinton – 30 grade 8s and a grade 12 class. We look forward to seeing this program grow across the watershed (and if any funders are here today, also looking for funding!)

And finally, we'd like to recognize Caity, who just completed her 8 month ART internship, which moved the AWC forward significantly in the Water for Life goal of safe, secure drinking water.

We would also like to start a new AWC tradition of recognizing an outstanding volunteer every year at our AGM – for this, I'm going to ask our President Dan, to do the honours.

Dan: As Petra mentioned, we thank and are grateful for everyone that is a part of the AWC but this year, we would like to begin a new tradition of annually recognizing an Outstanding Volunteer of the Year. This year, we acknowledge Paula Evans as the Outstanding Volunteer of 2022-23. Some of Paula's contributions include:

- Paula was a member of the original Athabasca WPAC Initiator's Group back in 2008.
- She was elected a director at the First Annual General Meeting in 2009.

- She has served on the board as director, as well as a number of officer positions, including President, Secretary and Treasurer..
- She brings a stewardship focus to the AWC through her representation of local stewardship groups including Baptiste Lake and the Crooked Creek Conservancy.
- She also brings her education background and teaching experience to the AWC, which has really benefited the AWC Communications Education and Community Engagement Committee, which she has supported for several years.
- For the past two years, with her past training in the CABIN protocol, Paula has been an integral part of our field crew when we conduct our benthic monitoring in the McLeod sub-basin.
- She is also an active volunteer on the Athabasca Heritage Society which has put countless hours into restoring the Athabasca Train Station, which is where our offices are located. She has also connected us to other initiatives around Athabasca, such as the Community Reads and Community Paddle projects.

I could probably go on and on, but instead I will just say, Paula, thank you for everything you do, and have done, to make the AWC what it is today. Please accept this small token of our appreciation

7. Guest Speaker

Moving on to our next agenda item, Dan introduced our Guest speaker. He noted that the Athabasca is a very large basin; hence it is really important that we have strong sub-basin and lake stewardship groups working to multiply our efforts across the entire basin. In many ways, the Lac La Biche sub-basin provides a great model for other communities. This region has had a watershed management plan for more than a decade. This document was recently renewed, and is now being implemented through a unique partnership between the County, an active stewardship group, several Indigenous communities and other partners. If we had this in each of the Athabasca's 10 sub-basins, we would be in really good shape indeed. Here, to tell us more about the activities in the Lac La Biche sub-basin is Brian Deheer. Brian is a man who wears many hats! As well as being a representative on our board, he is also involved with the Alberta Environmental Network, and the Alberta Water Council. Closer to home, he is a member of Healthy Waters Lac La Biche and the current co-chair of the LLB WMP Implementation Committee, which I'm really looking forward to hearing more about. Take it away Brian!

Brian noted some of the issues in the Lac La Biche watershed; gave an overview of Healthy Waters Lac La Biche including some of the projects they have done; described how Lac La Biche County has been working to protect and improve lake health on a number of fronts including updating and implementing a watershed management plan, incorporating plan elements into local municipal planning documents and carrying out activities like improvements to wastewater and stormwater, wetlands, shorelines, etc.

Dan: Thank you, Brian! It's really great to hear that there is such a dedicated group of people working for a healthy watershed in the Lac La Biche sub-basin.

8. Question Period

Dan: A requirement of the bylaws is that we include a section for members to ask questions at the AGM. So, I will now invite any questions you may have about today's proceedings or about the work of the AWC.

Q. How do we engage more people? Some ideas included:

- Host a stewardship conference, partner with the Alberta Water Council
- Connect to history
- Engage schools
- Attend Water North Coalition meetings and Rural Municipalities of Alberta conferences

9. Closing Comments / Acknowledgements

Dan: Before asking for a motion to adjourn, I'd just like to thank everyone for taking the time on a Saturday to join us. The AWC is large and diverse, reflecting the diversity of the Athabasca River watershed – from its headwaters in the Rocky Mountains to its outflow in the Canadian Shield. Despite this diversity, we are all working towards a shared vision of a watershed and we each embrace our motto of “our watershed, our responsibility”. With a committed board, active committees, dedicated staff and a strong membership, we look forward to continuing to move the Athabasca Watershed Council forward and achieving our vision and mission. And once again, many thanks to everyone who supported the work of the AWC in 2021-22 including our financial supporters, the organizations supporting the participation of board and committee members, and our many partners and collaborators.

After one last draw for a door prize, the Chair called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. *Paula: I make a motion to adjourn. Kendra: I second the motion. With no discussion, and none opposed, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.*

Appendix 1. Attendees

Colin Cote
Gary Cromwell
Brian Deheer
Ida Edwards
Paula Evans
Kailyn Gibbons
Kendra Gilbert
Julie Hink
Ashley Johnson
Janice Linehan
Sarah MacDonald
Dan Moore
Laura Pekkola
Walter Preugschas
Petra Rowell
Danna Schock
Caity Seifert
Abdi Siad-Omar