

# ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

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MEETING #19

**March 11, 2008**

**Edmonton, Alberta**

## **Executive Summary**

Board members focused much of their time at this meeting on discussing and providing feedback to the Wetland Policy Project Team to move the project forward and give the team direction so it can complete its work. The Board agreed that the overall goal is to maintain wetland function in Alberta and that work is needed both at a high level to set regional plans and objectives, and at the day-to-day regulatory level to ensure regulators can do their job and support the overall goal until the higher level work is done. Additional direction was provided to the team, with the expectation that they will submit a final report at the June meeting.

Work continues to establish a fully operational secretariat. The office will be located in South Petroleum Plaza and the executive director is now hiring staff.

The Operational Plan was revised to incorporate feedback from the February workshop. The Board realized this plan is quite ambitious, but was optimistic that the work can be completed in a timely manner. New items in the Plan included the establishment of two new working groups: one to develop terms of reference for a Water Licence Market project team, and one to prepare terms of reference for a Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems project team. The Board agreed to form these two working groups, both of which are expected to present draft terms of reference at the June meeting. The operational plan will be re-examined as new work comes forward to ensure that timelines are realistic.

The Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework team presented the feedback from its consultations, and the Board agreed the “What We Heard” report should be posted on the Council’s website. The team also put forward some of its thinking in preparation for the April 10<sup>th</sup> workshop, which will be a more fulsome discussion with the Board.

A draft annual report for 2007 was included in the briefing package and a short presentation described the process for completing the document. Following any revisions in response to Board comments, the report will be revised and forwarded to the executive for final approval.

## Summary of Discussion

### 1 Administration

#### 1.1 Welcome, introductions and approve agenda

Peter Watson convened the meeting at 10:50 am. Those present introduced themselves. Peter advised that the Chemical and Petrochemical sector has submitted an application to join the Alberta Water Council Association and has named its representatives, but insufficient notice was provided for a meeting of the Members to accept this application. This will be done at the June meeting. Al Kennedy will represent this sector once the application is accepted. The Board agreed by consensus to this sector's participation at the table even though it is not yet an official member.

An electronic evaluation will be done for this meeting and an email will be sent shortly to Board members with the appropriate directions for completion. One item was added to the agenda as item 9a, on Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems. The revised agenda was approved by consensus.

#### 1.2 Approve Summary Report from November 29, 2007 meeting

*Decision 19.1: The summary report for Meeting 18 was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.*

#### 1.3 Action Items from November 29, 2007 Meeting

All action items are complete or in progress.

#### 1.4 Executive Committee Report

Three executive committee meetings were held since the last board meeting; the chair directed the Board to the meeting minutes and to the communications summary in the briefing package.

### 2 Wetland Policy and Implementation Plan Feedback

At the February workshop, the Wetland Policy Project Team asked the Council's four broad categories to respond to several questions. Broad categories caucused immediately prior to this meeting to consider their feedback. The intent was to create some alignment to help move the project forward so the team can complete its work. Each caucus provided its feedback to the team.

There was general agreement with the intent to maintain wetland function across the province. However, there were different views about what it means to "maintain wetland function," in the absence of a good understanding of how to measure wetland functionality. The need to ensure resiliency in the landscape was noted, along with the importance of having balance and fair criteria to use in making decisions.

Representatives of the four broad categories met over lunch to consolidate feedback and determine a path forward for the team. Board members agreed that the overall goal is to maintain wetland function in Alberta, but action must occur at two levels:

- At the high level, regional scale planning and objectives are needed to guide long-term decision making and ensure landscape resiliency. The Land Use Framework and

other activities now underway are going in this direction but plans and objectives are not expected to be in place for several years.

- In the meantime, regulators must be able to do their job and provide consistency, certainty and clarity in their decisions about wetlands.

Sector representative who participated in the lunchtime discussion will be available to engage with the project team over the next few months to ensure continuity. Summary notes with direction for the team will be prepared and circulated to the Board and the team.

The Wetland Policy Project Team was given the following direction:  
By June 2008, the team will:

- Develop the five scenarios discussed at the February workshop and use them to define wetland function and clarify potential criteria and a proxy.
- Draft a broad policy framework that:
  - Describes the policy's intent,
  - Contains advice and recommendations to advance high level regional planning and setting of objectives at the "large landscape" scale, and
  - Contains advice and recommendations on how the regulatory system should operate in the interim to maintain wetland function, noting the need for a range of choices to which the regulator can turn.
- Endeavor to reach consensus on a draft implementation plan to accompany the policy. If the team is unable to reach consensus, areas of non-consensus will be noted.

### **3 Update on Transition Activities**

Gord Edwards provided an update on transition activities. Efforts continue with the federal government and First Nations regarding membership. Interviews and hiring will be done in the next month or so for four positions: project manager, communications manager, office manager, and administrative assistant. A benefits package has been developed and approved by the executive. Office space on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor of South Petroleum Plaza is being renovated and staff should be in that office shortly.

### **4 Operational Plan**

Al Kennedy reviewed the draft Operational Plan for 2008-09, including the changes in response to direction from the February workshop. Given the scope of work, it was decided to make this a two-year operational plan. The Business Planning Committee will incorporate changes proposed at this meeting, and recommends that the Operational Plan then go to the executive to sign off.

Board members discussed the draft Operational Plan (OP), noting the following comments:

- New activities have been added to the OP and the Board needs to consider if it has the capacity to deliver on everything.
- Rather than label activities as "ongoing," the OP should identify specific activities and put a date next to them to ensure they get done.
- It would be helpful to put the proposed activities on a Gantt chart.
- Several projects are expected to wrap up in June and timelines for others, such as the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystem and the Water Licence Market projects, are not yet known. It may be necessary to revisit the OP later in the year.

- Directors and alternates should seek to identify others in their organization or sector who would be suitable representatives on a project team, to help spread out the workload and build capacity.

*Decision 19.2: The Board authorized the executive committee to give final approval to the 2008-09 Operational Plan, following revisions made in response to comments at this meeting.*

**Action 19.1: The secretariat will work with the Business Planning Committee to revise the 2008-09 Operational Plan, then forward to the executive for final approval.**

## **5 Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team**

Phyllis Kobasiuk, Tracy Scott, David Lloyd and Bob Cameron summarized what the Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework team heard during its consultations and presented a revised schedule for completion of the team's work. Most concerns related to intersecting jurisdictions and existing approval processes. Stakeholders don't want a hierarchy of partnerships, but they do want good functionality. The team feels that watershed management plans should be advisory in nature, rather than require approval. The concern was that those with authority to approve a plan may not be familiar with consensus processes, and stakeholders were leery of having a consensus-based plan altered by someone else. The April 10<sup>th</sup> workshop will focus on the team's conclusions and recommendations and give Board members a chance to discuss the direction of the team's final report.

The following points were raised by Board members during the discussion:

- Watershed management plans are important and will inform regulatory decision makers as well as others in the particular jurisdiction.
- WPACs should not be viewed as only representing ENGOs.
- There are concerns about a non-governmental body making a recommendation and having it embedded in an operating approval.
- Lake planning groups also develop plans and this needs to be recognized.
- The team has acknowledged that a WPAC developing a watershed management plan cannot assert jurisdiction from a responsible authority. But the WPAC can advocate that through the process of developing a plan; the nature of the partnership means the responsible authorities are expected to honour the watershed management plan.

*Decision 19.3: The Board approved:*

- a) The "What We Heard" summary for posting on the Council's website, and*
- b) The revised schedule as presented by the team.*

## **6 Annual Report**

Ron Pearson presented an overview of the draft annual report for 2007, pointing out changes from previous years and reviewing the next steps. Some Board members have provided feedback by email, but no substantive comments were made at the meeting. Final revisions will be made by the secretariat and the executive will approve the report for production.

## **7 Water Licence Market**

The notion of a team to look at options and possibilities for a water licence transfer market arose at the February workshop. Rick Quail presented the background and rationale for a

working group to develop terms of reference for a Water Licence Market Project Team, noting several components that could be included in the terms of reference. The intent is for the working group to bring draft terms of reference to the June Board meeting.

The Board discussed this idea, offering the following comments:

- Care will be needed not to get into a position where particular market mechanisms are disclosed, as this could affect competitiveness.
- The Council needs to move quickly on this issue as things are already happening. The working group should consider if there are some things that could be done in the interim.
- It will be important for the Council to check in with the Minister of Environment in the fall of 2008 to ensure the GOA supports the approach proposed by the Council to address this issue.
- The research community is interested in participating in this project and could bring some resources to the table.

Initial membership for the working group includes representatives from: Alberta Environment, large municipalities, small municipalities, water ENGOs (Carolyn Campbell and Danielle Droitsch), hydro generation (Mike Kelly), intensive livestock working group (Rich Smith and Carrie Selin), Alberta Agriculture and Food, Ducks Unlimited, Alberta Water Research Institute (David Hill), AEDA (Kim Sturgess), mining sector (Alberta Chamber of Resources), rural municipalities (AAMD&C), irrigation districts, WPACs (Bill Berzins), and oil and gas (Kevin Stashin).

*Decision 19.4: The Board approved:*

- a) The creation of a Water Licence Market Working Group,*
- b) The allocation of resources to support the working group, and*
- c) The initial composition of the working group.*

## **8 Status Reports**

Members were directed to the status reports provided in the briefing book for information on other Council projects.

## **9 New or Other Business**

### **a) Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems**

The idea for a working group to develop terms of reference for a Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems project team also arose at the February workshop. Dave Kay provided a short overview of what is envisioned for this work. It will involve developing a working definition for a healthy aquatic ecosystem, doing a strategic level assessment of what the elements are, and recommending potential projects for the Council to consider. The group plans to bring draft terms of reference to the June meeting.

Board members noted that this work needs to be done in concert with the work of WPACs to avoid duplication, and Board members could consider what the Council might do to support WPAC efforts. Every water system will be different.

Initial membership for the working group includes representatives from: Ducks Unlimited, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Scott Millar), forestry (Keith Murray),

agriculture (Doug Sawyer), City of Edmonton, electricity generators (Jim Hackett), lake management (Danielle Cobbaert and/or Jay White), Alberta Environment (Chris Spytz), fisheries habitat conservation (Peter Aku), ENGO (Jason Unger), and irrigation districts (Ron McMullin).

*Decision 19.5: The Board approved:*

- a) The creation of a Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Working Group,*
- b) The allocation of resources to support the working group, and*
- c) The initial composition of the working group.*

**b) Progress Update on implementing the Water for Life strategy.** It was suggested that the Government of Alberta provide an update on work undertaken on Water for Life since the Council's last review report.

**Action 19.2: The secretariat will arrange a progress report on Water for Life for the June meeting.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.

## **Attachment 1: Meeting #19 Attendees**

### **Council Directors and Alternates:**

Peter Aku, NGO (Fishery Habitat Conservation)

Barry Anderson, Government (Large Urban)

Richard Bennett, NGO (WPACs)

Bill Berzins, NGO (WPACs)

Bob Cameron, NGO (Environmental)

Carolyn Campbell, NGO (Environmental)

John Donner, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Food)

Danielle Droitsch, NGO (Environmental)

Jim Hackett, Industry (Power Generation)

David Hill, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Water Research Institute)

Joyce Ingram, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)

David Kay, NGO (Wetland Habitat Conservation)

Al Kennedy, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)

Ron McMullin, Industry (Irrigation)

Joe Miller, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)

Debra Mooney, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)

Keith Murray, Industry (Forestry)

Larry Nolan, Industry (Livestock)

Dwight Oliver, Government (Rural)

Ron Pearson, NGO (Fishery Habitat Conservation)

Brad Pickering, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)

Richard Quail, Government (Small Urban)

J. David Rushford, Industry (Oil and Gas)

Judy Smith, Industry (Mining)

Kevin Stashin, Industry (Oil and Gas)

Kim Sturgess, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Economic Development Authority)

Lindsay Telfer, NGO (Environmental)

Jonathan Thompson, NGO (Wetland Habitat Conservation)

Jason Unger, NGO (Environmental)

Peter Watson, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)

Jay White, NGO (Lake Environment Conservation)

Jamie Wuite, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Food)

Beverly Yee, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)

Gord Edwards, AWC Executive Director

### **Presenters:**

John Donner, Carolyn Campbell, Richard Quail, Judy Smith; *Wetland Policy and Implementation Plan Feedback* (Item 2)

Al Kennedy, *Operational Plan* (Item 4)

Phyllis Kobasiuk, Tracy Scott, David Lloyd, Bob Cameron; *Shared Governance* (Item 5)

Ron Pearson, *Annual Report* (Item 6)

Rick Quail, *Water Licence Market* (Item 7)

Dave Kay, *Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems* (Item 9a)

### **Guests:**

Giselle Beaudry, Alberta Environment

Michael Evans, Torque Communications

Bill McDonald, Alberta Environment

Scott Millar, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

George Murphy, Alberta Environment

Grant Pearsell, City of Edmonton

Kevin Sawyer, Intensive Livestock Working Group

Carrie Selin, Intensive Livestock Working Group

### **Secretariat:**

Petra Rowell, Kim Sanderson, Terry Sly, Tim Toth, Lorie Wagner

**Absent with Regrets:**

Mike Kelly, Industry (Power Generation)

Alex MacKenzie, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)

Rob Pritchard, Government (Large Urban)

Allan Wells, Government (Métis Settlements General Council)

## Attachment 2: Meeting #19 Action Item Log

Action	Who	By when
Action 18.2: The Secretariat will develop a request for proposals for the Council's first audit and work with the executive to prepare a recommendation for the board's consideration.	Secretariat	April 2008
Action 19.1: The secretariat will work with the Business Planning Committee to revise the 2008-09 Operational Plan, then forward to the executive for final approval.	Secretariat, Business Planning Committee	April 2008
Action 19.2: The secretariat will arrange a progress report on Water for Life for the June meeting.	Secretariat	April 2008

## Attachment 3: Meeting #19 Decision Log

*Decision 19.1: The summary report for Meeting 18 was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.*

*Decision 19.2: The Board authorized the executive committee to give final approval to the 2008-09 Operational Plan, following revisions made in response to comments at this meeting.*

*Decision 19.3: The Board approved:*

- a) The "What We Heard" summary for posting on the Council's website, and*
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- c) The initial composition of the working group.*

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- a) The creation of a Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Working Group,*
- b) The allocation of resources to support the working group, and*
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ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL  
AGENDA, MEETING #19  
March 11, 2008  
Government House, Edmonton

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**BROAD CATEGORY CAUCUSING – PRESENTATION PREPARATION**

**8:30 Wetland Policy Discussion 2 hours**

Broad categories will caucus to prepare feedback for the board and project team regarding their interests and solutions to the questions posed by the project team.

**10:30 Break 15 min**

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**GENERAL BUSINESS OF COUNCIL**

**10:45 1.0 Administration –Chair 30 min**

- 1.1 Welcome, introductions and approve agenda
- 1.2 Approve Summary Report from November 29, 2007 meeting
- 1.3 Review of actions from last meeting
- 1.4 Executive Committee Report (Provide an update on Renewal)

**11:00 2.0 Wetland Policy and Implementation Plan Feedback Session**

Broad categories will present their feedback to the board and project team regarding their interests and solutions to the questions posed by the project team.

**12:00 Lunch (provided in the room) 45 min**

**12:45 3.0 Update on Transition Activities 15 mins**

Provide an update on transition activities and review the highlights for each area.

**1:00 4.0 Operational Plan 30 min**

Approve Council's 2008-09 Operational Plan.

**1:30 5.0 Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team 30 min**

Hear a presentation on the "What We Heard" report and provide information about the April 10<sup>th</sup> workshop.

**2:00 6.0 Annual Report 30 min**

Provide any substantive comments on the draft annual report for 2007.

**2:30 7.0 Water Licence Market 30 min**

Establish a working group to develop terms of reference for a Water Licence Market project team.

**2:45 8.0 Status Reports 15 min**

Provide opportunity for questions or clarification on Council initiatives not on the agenda.

**3:00 9.0 New or Other Business 15 min**

- a) Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems

Establish a working group to develop terms of reference for a Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems project team.

**3:15 Adjournment**