

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

MEETING #57

June 17, 2021

Remote – Zoom Conferencing

Executive Summary

The Alberta Water Futures Project Team and the Wetland Policy Implementation Review Project Team had provided their final deliverables to the board for off-line approval prior to the board meeting. The board decisions to approve both project reports were ratified.

The board received a presentation on the lessons learned from the two expedited groups, including a comparison of resource costs between expedited groups and standard projects. Survey results from expedited team members on the expedited process were also shared, along with recommendations for future expedited teams.

AEP announced that they would like to pursue next steps, building on the work of the *Water for Life* Implementation Review and the Water Futures project, among other AWC work, and that a statement of opportunity should be expected in the coming weeks.

The meeting ended with a discussion of the information reports and a round table for announcements from each sector. Several links were provided for recent work that may be of interest to the AWC membership.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 4, in Calgary.

Summary of Discussion

Board meeting convened at 9:36 a.m.

1 Administration

1.1 Approve the meeting agenda

The chair reviewed the agenda. There were no blocks to adopting the agenda.

Decision 57.1: The board approved the agenda by consensus.

1.2 Review actions from last meeting

There were two actions from the previous meeting and an update was provided in the meeting package. The action for staff was complete, and the action for GoA was addressed in their written update.

1.3 Approve the summary report from the February 25, 2021 meeting

No edits were submitted following the meeting.

Decision 57.2: The board approved the February 2021 meeting summary by consensus, and it will be posted to the website.

1.4 Approve a process for the next iteration of business planning

Business planning occurs on a three-year cycle, and it serves as the foundation for annual operational plans. The current business plan expires at the end of 2021, and as such the process for reviewing and revising the business plan should be initiated. The executive committee is proposing to use a survey to test board member support for the business plan and use the responses to determine if the plan requires minor or major changes. The level of change required to the business plan will determine the process required to review and revise it.

Decision 57.3: The board approved the executive committee's proposed approach for the next iteration of business planning by consensus.

1.5 Approve a process for updating the process guidelines

The process guidelines are a companion document to the bylaws and include the roles and responsibilities of the board, teams, and staff. They outline the practices and procedures that AWC participants are expected to follow. The guidelines are reviewed on a three-year cycle.

The executive committee proposed the following review process to update the process guidelines:

- First draft to the board for review – June 30
- Feedback from the board on the first draft – July 30

- Second draft to the board for review – August 13
- Feedback from the board on the second draft – September 17
- Executive committee review and approval of the final draft – October 6
- Board decision on the final draft – November 4

Decision 57.4: The board approved the proposed approach to reviewing the process guidelines by consensus.

1.6 Ratify the electronic decisions made regarding Alberta Water Futures Project Team

The board previously approved making decisions by electronic vote to move priority work expeditiously. The board reviewed and approved the final deliverables for the Alberta Water Futures Project with quorum electronically on June 3. The decision should be ratified by the board and formally documented for posterity.

Decision 57.5: The board ratified the electronic consensus decision to approve the Alberta Water Future Project Team deliverables.

The board will be given one week notice prior to public release of the report.

1.7 Ratify the electronic decisions made regarding the Wetland Policy Implementation Review Project Team

Again, the board previously approved making decisions by electronic vote to move priority work expeditiously. The board reviewed and approved the final deliverables for the Wetland Policy Implementation Review Project with quorum electronically on June 3. The decision should be ratified by the board and formally documented for posterity.

Decision 57.6: The board ratified the electronic consensus decision to approve the Wetland Policy Implementation Review Project Team deliverables.

The board will be given one week notice prior to the public release of the report.

2 AWC Accelerated Project Team Process

Scott Millar provided a presentation on lessons learned from the piloted expedited process used for the Alberta Water Futures Project Team and the Wetland Policy Implementation Review Project Team. It included time and resource requirements and a comparison to more typical project schedules, along with recommendations for future expedited projects based on survey results.

Discussion

- The cost breakdown included facilitator and staff support time but did not account for reductions in travel expenses resulting from the virtual format for the meetings. A more meaningful comparison of costs of accelerated versus standard projects should include this information.

- Expectations for expedited process should be clear from the outset. The process has some drawbacks, but they were outweighed by the fact that we can address issues while they are relevant.
- For one of the projects, there was a significant change to the report towards the end of the process. There wasn't adequate time to re-engage the sector. For future expedited processes, there should be an option to exit the expedited process and take a longer period to review if a sector would like more time.
- Expedited processes are more suited to projects aimed at gathering a collection of perspectives, rather than policy decisions that are seeking broad consensus.
- Large teams can make the expedited process more difficult, but there are concerns about capping team sizes. The expedited process means there are few board meetings while the project is ongoing to check in along the way, along with the opportunity to provide updates to all of the sectors. Team members will have to work hard to ensure their sector is up to date on discussions.
- Capping project team size also goes against the AWC values of being inclusive and giving everyone the opportunity to participate in projects. However, some sectors had multiple representatives on the teams. It may be possible to reduce group size by limited the number of representatives each sector can provide.
- This process can be used for urgent projects, but it did require some extraordinary effort and isn't necessarily appropriate for all projects.
- The process was incredibly resource intensive for staff and was costly. If these expedited pieces of work come forward in the future and had not been budgeted for, there is likely a need for additional funding to come with these requests.

3 Building on Our Successes

The AWC has recently approved the work of a number of significant project teams and is preparing to release them in the coming weeks. There is an opportunity to consider the path forward to build on these recent successes. Andre invited board members to share their perspective on how they would like to move forward.

The GoA is very interested in taking the next steps to build on some of the work in the WFLIR and Water Futures reports, once they are released. Those projects serve as a strong base and a statement of opportunity (SOO) is being considered to be brought to the AWC for consideration in the near future. While the SOO is not yet final, it may be looking for a project to start well in advance of the next AWC meeting in November, which may require electronic approval to start the work. Board members expressed an interest in exploring various aspects of the work of the WFLIR and Water Futures projects, as well as building on other AWC reports. Andre will work with GoA to coordinate the process, and keep the board informed.

4 Information Reports and Opportunity for Questions

4.1 Executive Director's report

No discussion.

4.2 SWP Phase 1: Risk Assessment and Data Project Team

No discussion

4.3 Improving Resilience to Drought in Alberta through a Simulation Project Team

No discussion

4.4 Watershed Governance Ad Hoc Group

- If the AWC starts projects that include land-use planning, as the Watershed Governance and Capacity Ad Hoc Group has suggested in their update, the membership may not be appropriate as land-use isn't represented.
 - Including land-use is critical if the intent is to have an integrated land and water management system.
 - The ad hoc group is also including federal initiatives in the statement of opportunity in terms of their scope and jurisdiction.

4.5 Government of Alberta's Update

- The funding path in the Wetland Replacement Program is unclear; how is it accessed for projects that would warrant funding from it?
- The GoA update contains limited information on SWP; that would be valuable to include in a future update.

Action 57.1: Government of Alberta to provide clarity on the funding for the Wetland Replacement Program along with any SWP updates in the GoA update for the next board meeting.

- Applications are moving to the DRAS, however there seems to be a lack of training or information on it.
 - There have been four training sessions scheduled, including one on Friday, June 25. The link for the training session is:
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/digital-regulatory-assurance-system-dras-training-session-tickets-159667436601?aff=erelexpmlt>.
 - There are more sessions scheduled up until July 6, and depending on need more may be scheduled.

4.6 Other Sector Updates

Discussion

- The IPIECA recently updated a water management framework with a risk-based cyclical process. It is focused on oil and gas, but is applicable to other sectors. The link for this framework is: <https://www.ipieca.org/resources/good-practice/water-management-framework/>.
- The SWP Phase 1: Risk Assessment Data and Tools Project Team is looking at a THREATS platform developed by Greenland. This pulls data available through datastream and allows users to look at public data. For more information on datastream, visit: <https://gordonfoundation.ca/initiatives/datastream/>.
- CAPP has been using the Alberta Water Tool, which is open to the public. There is an opportunity to expand the tool to cover more of Alberta, which would be relevant to AWC stakeholders. A demonstration of the tool can be arranged either for the next board meeting or through a webinar.

Action 57.2: Staff to work with Deanna to arrange a demonstration of the Alberta Water Tool.

- The Canada One Project has been announced, which is a modelling project for major watersheds in Canada. More information can be found at the following links: <https://cosia.ca/research/water> and <https://www.canadawater.ca/>.
- The Environmental Law Centre has been collaborating with the Centre of Constitutional Studies on “Rivers as legal persons.” The first two webinars are available at the following links: <https://www.constitutionalstudies.ca/2021/06/magpie-river-as-person/> and <https://www.constitutionalstudies.ca/2021/06/indigenous-jurisdiction-the-environment/>.
- The environmental sector is concerned with trust and governance, particularly around significant infrastructure spending that can have an impact on the environment. This is potentially a topic or consideration in the WFL action plan discussions.
- The irrigation sector involved in infrastructure modernization, and these projects are now at the point where they can be publicly discussed. The AIDA will be representing the districts involved as they work towards releasing more detailed information. A link will be provided once available.
- The Canada Water Agency report “What We Heard” has been released and is available at the following link: <https://www.placespeak.com/en/topic/6321-protecting-canadas-fresh-water/>

The next board meeting is tentatively scheduled as an in-person meeting on November 4, in Calgary.

The board meeting adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

Attachment 1: Meeting #57 Attendees

In Attendance

AWC Directors and Alternates

Rawnauld Axelson, Industry (Livestock)
Maureen Bell, NGO (Environmental)
Fiona Briody, Industry (Crop Sector Working Group)
Mark Brostrom, Government (Large Urban)
Deanna Cottrell, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Tom Davis, GoA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment and Parks)
Brian Deheer, NGO (Environmental)
James Guthrie, Industry (Mining)
Jim Hackett, Industry (Power Generation)
Jason Hale, Industry (Livestock)
Paul McLauchlin, Government (Rural)
Steve Meadows, NGO (WPACs)
Dan Moore, Industry (Forestry)
Keith Murray, Industry (Forestry)
Morris Nesdole, NGO (WPACs)

Steph Neufeld, NGO (Lake Environment Conservation)
Brett Purdy, GoA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Innovates)
Margo Jarvis Redelback, Industry (Irrigation)
Alain Richard, NGO (Wetland Conservation)
Tracy Scott, NGO (Wetland Conservation)
Tanya Thorn, Government (Small Urban)
Jason Unger, NGO (Environmental)
Jay White, NGO (Lake Environment Conservation)
Jamie Wuite, GoA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Forestry)
Andre Asselin, Executive Director (ex-officio)

Guests:

Brian Free, Marilea Pattison Perry, Nicole Pysh, Martina Krieger, and Cam Lane; AEP
Kaylyn Buffalo, Samson Cree First Nation
Paula Siwik, Environment and Climate Change Canada

AWC Staff and Contractors:

Alec Carrigy, Katie Duffett, Lauren Hall, Anuja Hoddinott, Scott Millar

Absent with Regrets:

Darren Calliou, Government (Métis Settlements)
Silvia D'Amelio, NGO (Fisheries Habitat Conservation)
Rob Hoffman, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)
Bev Yee, GoA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment and Parks)

Attachment 2: Meeting #54 Decision Log and Action Items

Decisions

Decision 57.1: The board approved the agenda by consensus.

Decision 57.2: The board approved the February 2021 meeting summary by consensus, and it will be posted to the website.

Decision 57.3: The board approved the e proposed approach for the next iteration of business planning by consensus.

Decision 57.4: The board approved the executive committee's proposed approach to reviewing the process guidelines by consensus.

Decision 57.5: The board ratified the electronic consensus decision to approve the Alberta Water Future Project Team deliverables.

Decision 57.6: The board ratified the electronic consensus decision to approve the Wetland Policy Implementation Review Project Team deliverables.

Action Items

Action 57.1: Government of Alberta to provide clarity on the funding for the Wetland Replacement Program along with any SWP updates in the GoA update for the next board meeting.

Action 57.2: Staff to work with Deanna to arrange a demonstration of the Alberta Water Tool.