

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

MEETING #11

May 18, 2006

Rafter Six Resort, Exshaw, Alberta

Summary Report

Key Points:

- The Council toured TransAlta hydroelectric facilities as part of continuing efforts to increase members' knowledge and awareness of water issues and challenges.
- Council approved its Operational Plan for April 1, 2006 – March 31, 2007.
- Terms of reference for the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definitions Project Team were amended to include three industry representatives. The proposed work plan and budget for this team were approved.
- Council approved terms of reference for a Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team.
- Council heard a presentation about how the Town of Okotoks is addressing sustainability issues and the pressures that municipalities are facing in dealing with land use and limited water supplies in the face of Alberta's rapid growth.
- Members heard a presentation on the details of the Cows and Fish program and factors that have contributed to its success in Alberta.

Attachments to the Meeting Summary:

1. Attendees
2. Action Item Log
3. Decision Log
4. Meeting Agenda

Summary of Discussion

Lisa King convened the business meeting at 8:30 am, welcoming everyone and introducing the alternate members in attendance.

1 Administration

1.1 Review of Agenda

There were no changes or additions to the agenda, which was approved by consensus.

1.2 Approval of Summary Report from March 23, 2006 Meeting

The summary report for the March 23, 2006 meeting was approved by consensus and will be posted on the Council's website.

1.3 Action Items from March 23, 2006 Meeting

Terry Sly reviewed the action items from the last meeting. All action items have been completed or are in progress. Terry advised that Alberta Environment would be hiring a consultant to work with the Communications Committee to develop a communications strategy; the Department will manage the contract with the consultant (item 10.3). The business plan (item 10.4) was released on May 4 at the conference on Alberta's Environment and copies are available for members. The transition committee (item 10.5) met once and will meet again on June 1; they will present a comprehensive transition proposal to Council at the September meeting.

1.4 Media, Communications and Outreach Activities

The following activities were noted:

- David Hill made a presentation to the Milk River Watershed Council Canada on March 31st in Milk River.
- David Hill, Lisa King, Les Wetter and Bill Berzins participated in a Watershed Management Planning Forum at the recent "Alberta's Environment" conference.
- Terry Sly made a presentation at the recent "Alberta's Environment" conference, updating delegates on the AWC's work. He also unveiled the Council's three-year business plan.
- Lisa King reported at the Assembly of Chiefs of Treaties 6, 7 & 8 on the Council's work. She asked the chiefs for feedback on key issues, with the following items noted:
 - Treaty rights must be recognized and respected.
 - Consultation by the province and by industry with First Nations continues to be very lacking.
 - Water management plans are being developed without consultation and are infringing on treaty rights.
 - First Nations are considering forming separate Aboriginal organizations (a water council, board, etc.).
 - An Aboriginal process for water management should be established.
 - Education needs to go two ways; it's important to educate First Nations about water management and to educate non-Aboriginals about the water spirit.
- Kim Sturgess will be featured in an article in the June issue of *Alberta Venture*. Kim noted that the May 11th *Globe and Mail* had an item on building awareness of water issues.

1.5 Executive Committee Report

Minutes from the April 28 executive committee meeting were included in the briefing package. Terry Sly highlighted several items from this meeting, noting that all alternates will be invited to attend the November Council meeting, to be held at Government House in Edmonton. The meeting will include time for social interaction, and members were asked to provide suggestions on their meeting evaluation form. The first part of the systems-thinking workshop is being planned for June, with a follow-up session in the fall. It was suggested that two introductory sessions should be held to ensure that as many members and alternates as possible can attend.

2 Hydro Tour Recap

Council members thanked Mike Kelly and other TransAlta staff for the excellent tour they organized. It was a very good learning opportunity with a detailed presentation and a great deal of information. Members acknowledged the complexity of managing water to meet the demands of various users.

3 Operational Plan

Al Kennedy reviewed the operational plan, with reference to a version that was slightly modified from the draft in the briefing package. The committee incorporated comments from members after the last meeting, and has reviewed all actions, deliverables, results, and start and due dates. Members commended the team for its work, noting that the time frame for the operational plan is April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007; these dates will be added to the plan. It was also suggested that the committee consider saying “expected completion date” rather than “due” date in the tables.

Members recognized that the operational plan is very aggressive and that Council needs to ensure it stays up to date on the work of the project teams. Several actions were proposed and agreed to, as a way to help with this process.

Action 11.1: The secretariat will compile, update and distribute a list of project team members to the Council with the minutes of this meeting.

Action 11.2: The secretariat will insert in the operational plan a chart listing the Council’s working groups, project teams and subcommittees.

Action 11.3: Project teams will provide a short one-page status report to be included in the Council briefing materials for each meeting.

Action 11.4: The executive committee will discuss at its next meeting a process for updating the Council’s business and operational plans.

Decision 11.1: The Alberta Water Council approved the April 1, 2006 - March 31, 2007 operational plan.

4 Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team

David Hill reviewed the work plan, budget and membership of the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team. Their first face-to-face meeting is planned for May 25. The team is aware that other agencies, including the CCME, have already done a lot of work in this area, and they are relying on Alberta Environment to bring this information forward to help avoid duplication and provide a solid base for the team's work. Team members realize that they will need to caucus regularly with their sector and the broad category to which they belong to keep them apprised of the team's work, and if additional funds are needed to facilitate this process, the team may need to request a larger budget. AWC members are encouraged to raise any concerns with their sector representatives on the team rather than leave major issues to the September AWC meeting.

Action 11.5: The secretariat will circulate the meeting minutes for the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team to the AWC, following approval of the minutes by the team.

Action 11.6: The secretariat will arrange for a presentation on the three CCME reports at the Council's September meeting.

The team expects that its final report will provide standardized definitions that all sectors can use in defining where they are on the water use continuum; the report will also include measures that enable the Council and sectors to track progress. The intent is to identify and use the measures that already exist and not to develop a whole new set of indicators. One challenge will be to determine how aquatic ecosystems fit; are they a sector or an underlying foundational principle, and how will performance measures be determined?

Council members also discussed how to ensure that all sectors that need to be involved are involved in the work of project teams, while recognizing concerns about team size and effectiveness. Specifically, the oil and gas sector strongly feels that as a major water user, they need a representative on this team and they have a volunteer who is willing to participate. Members agreed that the caucusing process for sectors needs to be clarified and team members must understand their obligations to communicate regularly with their sector to ensure their input to the team reflects the views of the stakeholders they represent.

Decision 11.2: The Alberta Water Council amended the terms of reference for the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team to include three industry members.

Decision 11.3: The Alberta Water Council directed the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team to develop a process for effectively engaging all sectors and ensuring that team members undertake outreach to their stakeholders.

Decision 11.4: The Alberta Water Council approved the draft work plan and budget for the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team.

5 Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plans

Bev Yee noted the short-term actions identified in the Water for Life strategy are due to be completed in the current fiscal year; one of the mid-term actions is to prepare water conservation and productivity plans for all sectors. She presented the proposal for establishing a new working group to develop terms of reference for a project team to work on water conservation, efficiency and productivity sector plans, concurrent with the completion of the work of the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team. AENV would like to get a head start on this task by thinking about what sector plans mean, what they could include, how they might be developed, and so on.

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- The definitions and performance measures work will be key to the sector plans, and completing this work will ensure a smoother transition to work on sector plans.
- It will be a challenge to start a new group over the summer, and it may be more efficient for the existing Definitions Team to finish its initial tasks, then pick up the work for the sector plans in the fall.
- As WPACs develop their watershed management plans, they need to work with sectors in their basins.
- The Value of Water study has developed a good methodology for identifying all the values of water and any data gaps; the methodology is being tested in the South Saskatchewan River Basin, and Council and/or the Definitions project team may wish to hear more about this work.

Decision 11.5: The Alberta Water Council agreed that developing sector plans is an important task, but will defer forming a working group until the fall when the status of the definitions work is clearer.

6 Wetlands Policy

Judy Smith provided a short update on the Wetlands Policy Project Team (WPPT). The draft policy will provide provincial direction for wetlands conservation, and will apply to all areas of the province, although the team still needs to discuss the policy's application to federal lands. She noted that consultations to date have taken a little longer than anticipated. As well, the next round of consultations will be planned for late fall to ensure that crop harvests are completed and the agriculture sector can participate fully. This means the timelines will be extended slightly, with the team reporting back to Council in early 2007.

During discussion with Council members, the following points were raised, which Judy will take back to the WPPT:

- The WPPT needs to consider how broad its fall consultation should be. Generally, the AWC was of the view that the public should be involved, including the WPACs.
- The consultation timelines are very tight, which may be a constraint for some stakeholders.
- It is important to do the consultations right rather than meet an artificial deadline, and that might mean extending until March 2007. This could also provide an opportunity for some media work around the draft policy.
- At some point, various trade-offs and the overall context need to be considered; MLAs in particular are likely to want information on costing and impacts. However, it may be possible to address these things in watershed plans.

- The provincial government’s cross-ministry team should look at the draft materials before the consultations occur.
- It is essential for all members of the AWC to be thoroughly briefed before being asked to provide comments and make a decision. The WPPT should ensure that caucusing occurs and that members understand the rationale, etc. for the policy and implementation plan. Government members of the WPPT, possibly in conjunction with AWC government members, need to ensure their ministers are briefed.

Action 11.7: The WPPT will forward the draft wetlands policy, draft implementation plan and the consultation plan to the secretariat for distribution to the AWC by mid-July so members can circulate to their sectors and provide feedback at the September AWC meeting.

Action 11.8: The WPPT will provide the executive summaries of the two reports from the two consultations done to date (public consultation and Aboriginal consultations) to the secretariat for distribution to AWC members.

7 Presentation: Leave a Legacy – Sustainable Okotoks

Rick Quail made a presentation about how the Town of Okotoks is managing growth issues with the goal of achieving a sustainable community. The Town was one of the first in the world to establish growth targets linked to infrastructure development and environmental carrying capacity, with a focus on the Sheep River and how many people it could support. More than 70 initiatives have been undertaken under the umbrella of “Sustainable Okotoks.” However, the Town is facing growing pressure from development on its outskirts that could compromise water supply for the Town. Rick noted that many of the issues facing Okotoks are also issues for other municipalities, particularly in light of the current growth pressures in the province.

Council members raised the following points during discussion of Rick’s presentation:

- Country residential development is a major issue for many municipalities, as they try to decide if this is the best use of land.
- A lot of infrastructure is being funded by increases in property values. There may be a crisis in 30-40 years when growth has tapered off but extensive infrastructure needs maintenance and replacement.
- The provincial government has started a process on sustainable resource and environmental management (SREM) that could affect land use planning for municipalities. The Council may wish to hear a presentation on SREM at a future meeting.

8 Presentation: Cows and Fish Program

Lorne Fitch made a presentation on the Cows and Fish program, which has achieved considerable success in working with communities and landowners to protect riparian habitat. Cows and Fish staff respond to invitations from landowners and community groups, and raising awareness is a critical component of their work to help people understand what the management choices and options are.

9 Water Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team

Bill Berzins presented the draft terms of reference for the proposed Water Policy Issues and Gaps project team, which was identified as a priority in the Council's business plan. The team will develop an inventory of existing policies and legislation, identify gaps, and develop criteria and a process for assessing and addressing priority items. The team plans to report back to the Council in the fall of 2006, with a final report in spring 2007. Team members are expected to engage their sectors to ensure they are bringing a broader perspective to the table.

Decision 11.6: The Alberta Water Council approved the terms of reference for a Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team.

With the formation of this team, and others, it is important that stakeholder groups determine how their representatives will be selected. The Government of Alberta has a process for identifying its members but this is not the case for all sectors. An interim process should be developed, with an opportunity for revision as part of the transition process.

Action 11.9: The executive committee will work with the secretariat to propose an interim process for sectors to identify members for AWC project teams.

10 Request for External Presentations

From time to time, stakeholders external to the Council ask to make a presentation about their water-related work. Such requests are expected to increase and, if Council wishes to continue with presentations, members need to consider how to respond. Terry Sly provided additional background on this issue, raising several questions and options for members to consider. He also noted that the webex presentations will soon be in place and will provide an ongoing opportunity for Council and its teams to hear information on various issues. It was noted that the CASA board does not hear presentations, but does hold conferences on specific topics and that project teams invite speakers on topics that are related to their work, as needed.

Members noted the following points during discussion:

- Council should hear presentations related to issues that it is, or expects to be, working on, and should invite speakers on that basis. Members could use their own networks to identify potential presenters.
- As project team activity picks up, Council meetings will need more time for these reports and discussion. If members identify and agree that they want more information on a specific topic, Council can organize and host a forum featuring a range of perspectives.
- Council did compile a draft list of potential presentations earlier, and there has been some consideration given to doing these using webex. Additional topics identified at this meeting include the work being done by CCME, the SREM, Value of Water study, and the potential role of Alberta Economic Development in contributing to Water for Life.

Members agreed that Council would select topics for potential presentations to ensure that the information is relevant and timely in terms of Council's work, and that presentations would be by invitation only. Depending on the topic, a forum might be organized from time to time. Project teams are encouraged to arrange presentations as appropriate to advance their work.

Action 11.10: The executive and secretariat will develop a process for arranging presentations to Council.

11 Key Messages and Preparation for the Next Meeting

The following key points were proposed and accepted:

- The Council toured TransAlta hydroelectric facilities as part of continuing efforts to increase members' knowledge and awareness of water issues and challenges.
- Council approved its Operational Plan for April 1, 2006 – March 31, 2007.
- Terms of reference for the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definitions Project Team were amended to include three industry representatives. The proposed work plan and budget for this team were approved.
- Council approved terms of reference for a Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team.
- Council heard a presentation about how the Town of Okotoks is addressing sustainability issues and the pressures that municipalities are facing in dealing with land use and limited water supplies in the face of Alberta's rapid growth.
- Members heard a presentation on the details of the Cows and Fish program and factors that have contributed to its success in Alberta.

The next meeting will be in High Prairie, with a field trip on September 13 and the regular Council business meeting on September 14.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Attachment 1: Meeting #11 Attendees

Council Members and Alternates:

Bob Barss, Government (Rural)
Bill Berzins, Non-government Organization (Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils)
Cheryl Bradley, Non-government Organization (Environmental)
David Hill, Industry (Irrigation)
Joyce Ingram, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Gloria Keys, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)
Mike Kelly, Industry (Power Generation)
Al Kennedy, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)
Lisa King, Government (First Nations)
Al Maurer, Government (Large Urban)
Joe Miller, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)
Keith Murray, Industry (Forestry)
Larry Nolan, Industry (Livestock)
Ron Pearson, Non-government Organization (Fishery Habitat Conservation)
Richard Quail, Government (Small Urban)
Margaret Reine, Non-government Organization (Environmental)
Judy Smith, Industry (Mining)
Kevin Stashin, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Kim Sturgess, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Economic Development Authority)
Jim Vollmershausen, Government (Environment Canada)
Les Wetter, Non-government Organization (Wetland Habitat Conservation)
Bev Yee, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)

Guest Presenter:

Lorne Fitch, Cows and Fish Program

Observers:

Grant MacIntyre, Alberta Innovation and Science
Kevin Wirtanen, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Support Staff:

Terry Sly Kim Sanderson
Tim Toth

Absent with Regrets:

Nick Bayliss, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)
Gerald Cunningham, Government (Métis Settlements General Council)
Rick Denton, Industry (Forestry)
John Donner, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural
Development)
Brad Pickering, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Jonathan Thompson, Non-government Organization (Wetland Habitat Conservation)
Linda Van Gastel, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Science and Research Authority)
Peter Watson, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)
Jay White, Non-government Organization (Lake Environment Conservation)

Attachment 2: Meeting #11 Action Item Log

Action	Who	By when
11.1: Compile, update and distribute a list of project team members to the Council with the minutes of this meeting.	Secretariat	June 2, 2006
11.2: Insert in the operational plan a chart listing the Council's working groups, project teams and subcommittees.	Secretariat	June 2, 2006
11.3: Provide a short one-page status report to be included in the Council briefing materials for each meeting.	Project team co-chairs and project managers	ongoing
11.4: Discuss at its next meeting a process for updating the Council's operational plan.	Executive committee	June executive meeting
11.5: Circulate the meeting minutes for the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team to the AWC, following approval of the minutes by the team.	Secretariat	ongoing
11.6: Arrange for a presentation on the three CCME reports at the Council's September meeting.	Secretariat	June 30, 2006
11.7: Forward the draft wetlands policy, draft implementation plan and the consultation plan to the secretariat for distribution to the AWC by mid-July so members can circulate to their sectors and provide feedback at the September AWC meeting.	Wetlands Policy Project Team; Secretariat; All AWC members	July 14, 2006 Sept. 14, 2006
11.8: Provide the executive summaries of the two reports from the two consultations done to date (public consultation and Aboriginal consultations) to the secretariat for distribution to AWC members.	Wetlands Policy Project Team; Secretariat;	June 30, 2006
11.9: Propose an interim process for sectors to identify members for AWC project teams.	Executive committee and secretariat	Sept. 14, 2006
11.10: Develop a process for arranging presentations to Council.	Executive committee and secretariat	Sept. 14, 2006

Attachment 3: Meeting #11 Decision Log

At this meeting, the Alberta Water Council made the following decisions:

Decision 11.1: Council approved the April 1, 2006 - March 31, 2007 operational plan.

Decision 11.2: Council amended the terms of reference for the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team to include three industry members.

Decision 11.3: Council directed the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team to develop a process for effectively engaging all sectors and ensuring that team members undertake outreach to their stakeholders.

Decision 11.4: Council approved the draft work plan and budget for the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team

Decision 11.5: Council agreed that developing sector plans is an important task, but will defer forming a working group until the fall when the status of the definitions work is clearer.

Decision 11.6: Council approved the terms of reference for a Policy Issues and Gaps Project Team.

Attachment 4: Meeting #11 Agenda
Alberta Water Council
Agenda, Meeting #11, May 18, 2006
Rafter Six Guest Ranch, Exshaw, Alberta

- 8:30 1.0 Administration – Chair 30 min**
1.1 Welcome and approve agenda
1.2 Approve Summary Report (March 23, 2006 meeting)
1.3 Review of actions from last meeting
1.4 Media, Communication and Outreach Activities
1.5 Executive Committee Report
- 9:00 2.0 Hydro Tour 15 min**
Mike Kelly will provide a brief recap of the hydro tour and answer questions.
- 9:15 3.0 Operational Plan 1 hr 15 min**
Al Kennedy will review the draft operational plan for the 2006-07 year.
- 10:30 Coffee Break 15 min**
- 10:45 4.0 Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Definition Project Team 45 min**
David Hill will present a detailed work plan with clear timelines and budget for the team to fulfill its mandate.
- 11:30 5.0 Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan 15 min**
Bev Yee will present a proposal for Council to consider for establishing a working group to develop terms of reference for engaging stakeholders (sectors) in developing their water conservation efficiency and productivity plans.
- 11:45 6.0 Wetland Policy 15 min**
Judy Smith will provide an update on the work of the project team.
- 12:00 Lunch 1hr**
- 12:45 7.0 Presentation: Leave a Legacy – Sustainable Okotoks 30 min**
Rick Quail will provide an overview of current water initiatives in Okotoks and put into provincial context the issues facing municipal water managers.
- 1:15 8.0 Presentation: Cows and Fish Program 1 hr**
Lorne Fitch, Provincial Riparian Specialist, Alberta Cows and Fish program will discuss how the Cows and Fish program works.
- 2:15 9.0 Policy Identification Working Group 45 min**
Bill Berzins will review draft terms of reference for a Policy Identification Project Team.
- 3:00 10.0 Request for External Presentations 30 min**
Terry Sly will lead discussion on options for hearing presentations.
- 3:30 11.0 Other Business 5 min**
New items of business or other items of information for Council
- 3:35 12.0 Key Messages and Preparation for Next Meeting (Chair) 10 min**
Confirmation of the key messages from this meeting will be requested.
- 3:45 Adjournment**
-