

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

MEETING #30
March 24, 2011
Calgary, Alberta

Executive Summary

The 30th meeting of the Alberta Water Council (AWC) immediately followed the 2011 Annual General Meeting of Members.

Two important administrative items were addressed – approval of the Council’s 2011 Operational Plan and approval of the revised Performance Measures and Targets. The performance measures will be added to the 2010-2013 Business Plan, which will receive final signoff by the executive committee prior to publication and posting on the AWC website.

The Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) Project Team proposed several changes to its terms of reference to better align them with the previous Framework report. The board approved these changes. The team expects that all sector CEP plans will be completed by March 2012.

The board was pleased to be presented with the third completed sector CEP plan. The upstream oil and gas sector’s plan covers two sub-sectors: the upstream component of the oil and gas sector and the oil sands component of the mining and oil sands sector. The plan will be posted on the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers’ website and will be shared with members, accompanied by training workshops. The board commended the sector for its work in delivering the plan.

The board also heard a presentation on Alberta’s Wet Areas Mapping Initiative, an innovative project being led by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development using software developed by the University of New Brunswick. The project is assembling new types of data in the boreal forest to better reflect the water and wet areas on the ground. The modeling allows companies to work around wet features that would not otherwise be apparent. The results are being used by other Government of Alberta departments including Energy; Environment; Parks, Tourism and Recreation; and Culture and Community Spirit. The intent is to get the information into a form that is available to a wider audience.

Brief updates on several important topics, including wetlands, water allocation and aquatic environmentally sensitive areas, were informally presented by the GOA.

Summary of Discussion

Jay White convened the regular business meeting immediately after the AGM, at 9:28 am.

1 Administration

1.1 Welcome and Approve Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved by consensus.

1.2 Summary Report from October 28, 2010 meeting

Decision 30.1: The summary report for the October 28, 2010 meeting was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.

1.3 Action Items from October 28, 2010 Meeting

Gord Edwards reported that the two action items from the October 2010 meeting have been completed.

1.4 Executive Director's Report and Update from GOA

Gord Edwards directed the board to his executive director's report in the briefing book. More details on specific project activity are in the status reports, and the Water CEP team will be reporting later in the meeting. All project managers have completed consensus decision-making training, and staff continue to receive invitations to participate in conferences and workshops and to share information about the Council.

GOA representatives were asked to provide updates on the wetlands policy, water allocation and aquatic ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs).

Bev Yee noted that the policy intent for wetlands was released last fall, describing at a high level what the policy would address. Minister Renner hopes that a policy will come forward this fall for GOA approval. At that time, the expectation is that enough work will have been done on implementation so that the details of the policy's intent will be clear. Additional dialogue with stakeholders between now and the fall will also help to clarify the policy intent. The GOA will also work with stakeholders on wetland valuation; in preparation for the North Saskatchewan regional planning process, background work is underway to, among other things, improve baseline assessments. The wetland policy will be designed to meet overall provincial outcomes. The GOA is working to clarify how regional objectives might be set in the context of provincial policy.

Bev also updated the board on the water allocation review. Building on the initial work done by the Council and others to gather information, the next step will be broader public consultation and engagement along with a significant education effort to help people understand the current water management system and what it could evolve to. A wide range of groups is likely to be part of the consultation. One challenge is that the GOA has a number of consultation activities underway at present. Consultation is important, the GOA wants to ensure it is done right, and this requires significant resources.

When asked about the relevance of the Council work with respect to the changing landscape of GOA priorities, Bev acknowledged that the Council's recommendations are highly valued; however, there is an opportunity for the Council to re-evaluate its direction to ensure it

continues to align with GOA priorities. It may be time to consider whether the roles envisioned for the three *Water for Life* partners are still the right ones.

Scott Millar noted that the Council work on aquatic ESAs was done to fill a knowledge gap in ecosystem surveys. This work was to be combined with other work to get a complete picture. This process has been started, but there have been some challenges in meshing the data, especially related to thresholds. Discussions are underway to address this.

Action 30.1: The executive committee will build on the GOA advice regarding enhanced alignment of Council work to provincial priorities and direction and will propose a path forward to the board.

2 Operational Planning

Gord Edwards presented the AWC 2011 operational plan. The operational plan is guided by the business plan and directs work for the current year. Gord briefly summarized work underway by the working groups, project teams and the executive committee and how these activities contribute to the goals in the new business plan.

The following points were noted in board discussion of the operational plan:

- GOA members want to examine the timeframe for the riparian project to ensure they have the capacity to participate and contribute effectively. The working group may need to consider a more phased approach for its tasks. GOA staff will discuss and then engage with the working group.
- As the Council identifies new projects, it would be very helpful if the GOA could share details about its water priorities. The GOA indicated it would want to contribute its best information to help the AWC decide on future work.
- There is uncertainty in some sectors about exactly what the riparian issues are in Alberta and what the GOA perspective is on these issues. Having this information would help the working group. The GOA responded that riparian issues are important and need attention but a provincial policy may not be the best way to address them. The working group may need to look at existing tools and management gaps as a first step. Developing a suite of key definitions, as was done initially for water conservation, efficiency and productivity would also bring clarity to the issue and establish common terminology.

Decision 30.2: The board approved the Alberta Water Council's 2011 Operational Plan v2, as presented.

3 Business Planning – Performance Measures

At the June 2010 meeting, the board approved the draft business plan mission, values, challenges and opportunities, core businesses, goals, and strategies. Draft performance measures were also tabled for discussion by the executive committee, then revised in response to input at subsequent board meetings. Gord Edwards presented the revisions as well as those components that had already been approved. The intent is to add the performance measures to the business plan, which will receive a final review by executive committee prior to publication and posting on the AWC website.

The following comments were noted in the board's discussion of the performance measures:

- Re: Goal 2, PM 1: Teams have requested extensions to their terms of reference, so any changes to the original TOR will need to be considered as the measure is calculated.
- There is still no formal measure of the Council's effectiveness in terms of recommendations that have been implemented. In the absence of a performance measure, the matrix used to track the state of implementation of recommendations should be available and accessible to board members so progress can be monitored.
- It is important to track recommendations and determine why some may not be moving ahead in a timely manner. However, many things within the GOA process can affect implementation, which should not be seen as a reflection on the Council or its performance; sometimes it is simply a matter of many competing priorities for the GOA. Also, the GOA is not the only recipient of Council recommendations.
- The board needs to have a better understanding of areas in which the GOA wants its advice and how this advice is handled once it is transmitted to the minister. This insight will be particularly important when selecting new areas of work to ensure the results are timely and relevant. The GOA develops policy and it is the role of bodies like the AWC and CASA to provide recommendations for policy.

Decision 30.3: The board approved the AWC 2010-2013 Business Plan Performance Measures Report v4, as presented.

Action 30.2: The executive committee will develop a method for keeping the board informed of the implementation status of AWC recommendations.

It was suggested that it would be timely for the GOA to provide information to the board in two key areas, as a way to inform board discussions about possible future work:

- The GOA's policy development and approval process
- Current water management in Alberta, including relevant legislation and policy, and directions now under consideration.

Action 30.3: Alberta Environment and the executive committee will consider options for sharing information on GOA policy development and approval and water management in Alberta at the June 2011 meeting.

4 Sector Planning for Water CEP Project Team

Giselle Beaudry provided an update on the work of the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Project Team. She briefly reviewed the team's objectives and other key aspects of the terms of reference (TOR), including the status of the sector plans and what the team has learned to date, concluding with a request to amend the TOR. The aim is to have all the sector plans done by March 2012. She noted the challenges that sectors have faced in developing their plans; the main challenge has been resources as the plans and associated consultation activities have been more work than anticipated. The team continues to discuss several issues, including aligning the timelines in various documents, identifying challenges and opportunities for developing a metric or metrics to aggregate gains from CEP plans across all seven priority sectors, and considerations about the management of water that is conserved as a result of the sector plans.

Board and team members noted the following points in discussion of this item:

- The original WFL goal was a 30% improvement in efficiency and productivity over 2005 by 2015. Although sector plans won't all be done until 2012, other work is underway in support of this goal, so whether the goal is achieved won't depend entirely on activities specified in the sector plans. Because of regional differences, the specific target will vary among watersheds; some may need to achieve more than 30%, others less.
- The question of what happens to conserved water continues to be an issue. In part, this discussion depends on outcomes related to water allocation and licensing, which have not yet been determined. NGOs expressed strong support for using conserved water to improve the environment, especially in areas where aquatic ecosystems have been degraded.
- Each sector plan is high level but provides a suite of options for sector members to consider in their own operations; e.g., the AUMA has prepared resources to help municipalities with their plans, and each irrigation district is doing its own CEP strategy. Each sector plan has a commitment to have a monitoring and reporting component up to 2015 to ensure licensees demonstrate CEP gains. One big challenge has been that the various sectors measure their CEP gains differently. When all the plans are done in the next year and we have a better understanding of how each sector will measure CEP gains, it will help to inform the next AWC team in developing a methodology to aggregate CEP gains.

Decision 30.4: The board approved the amended terms of reference for the Sector Planning for Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Project Team, which includes:

Timelines and Deliverables section

- ***Change the first bullet to read “Status reports on progress of the seven sectors in developing their plans in accordance with the CEP Framework will be provided on an ongoing basis.”***
- ***Remove all other points in the timelines and deliverables section and replace them with “All sector plans will be completed by March 2012 and the team’s final report will be presented to Council at the March 2012 board meeting which will include:***
 - ***Recommendations to address challenges encountered by sectors with respect to the Framework Document; and***
 - ***Recommendations that would assist the next team with the evaluation of the overall CEP process, including identifying challenges and opportunities of developing a metric or metrics for aggregating CEP data from the seven priority plans;”***

Budget section

- ***Remove the budget and replace it with “The team does not anticipate any budget beyond core support will be required.”***

5 Sector Planning for CEP Project Team – CAPP/OSDG Plan

Tara Payment from CAPP presented the Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Plan for the upstream oil and gas sector. This plan covers two sub-sectors: upstream component of the oil and gas sector, and the oil sands component of the mining and oil sands sector. She reviewed the scope of the plan and the historical and forecast use of water by the two sub-sectors for which the plan was prepared. Stakeholder consultation was done through

the WPACs and comments were considered and addressed where appropriate. The plan will be posted on the CAPP website and will be shared with members and accompanied by training workshops.

The following points emerged in the board's discussion of the plan:

- The target for the Athabasca region does not seem as ambitious as it might be.
 - In response, it was noted that water taken from the Athabasca River for oil sands mining is highly dependent on weather; in wet years, more rainwater can be collected from the mine site so less is needed from the river, for example. The targets reflect anticipated changes and improvements in technology. Tailings management in particular is in considerable flux at the present time. Depending on the technology chosen, tailings management could result in reduced or increased water use.
- The Rosenberg forum recommended that Alberta move to the international standard for categorizing saline water; specifically, Alberta classifies water as saline while in other parts of the world the same water might be considered non-saline. Was this considered in the sector plan?
 - The sector has been directed to move toward more use of saline water, and is the only sector that does use it. There is a salinity continuum. As salinity increases so does the amount of other toxic substances that are associated with it; as a result more waste is produced, but the industry is able to handle it. Further, areas of growth where non-saline water is being used are not short of water so there is a place-based aspect to consider. The sector is transitioning from non-saline water use to saline use, which frees up non-saline water for other purposes.
- Does the plan always commit to meeting Instream Flow Needs?
 - Where there are requirements to meet IFNs, industry will meet them. The issue is managing when the water is withdrawn.

The board congratulated CAPP and the Oil Sands Developers Group for completing their CEP sector plan.

6 Alberta's Wet Areas Mapping Initiative

Dr. Barry White, a forest management specialist with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD), provided an overview of the Wet Areas Mapping Initiative developed by researchers at the University of New Brunswick. The project is assembling new types of data in the boreal forest to better reflect the water and wet areas on the ground. The modeling allows companies to work around wet features that would not otherwise be apparent, in locating roads, culverts, etc. The project has been led by SRD but the results are being used by other GOA departments including Energy; Environment; Parks, Tourism and Recreation; and Culture and Community Spirit. The project is in its seventh year. It was developed to help forest companies fighting mountain pine beetle but the intent is to get the information into a form that is available to a wider audience.

The following additional information emerged in discussion with board members:

- The GOA continues to purchase LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) licences for additional areas of Alberta and the project will expand as those licences are secured.

- The focus will continue to be on the Green Area in Alberta rather than the White Area, partly because inventories in the White Area are already more complete.
- The initiative is not very suitable for wetland classification, but is excellent for riparian classifications.
- At present there is no legal requirement for companies to use this tool but it will likely be picked up by a variety of users as it becomes more accessible.
- The tool addresses the surface water table, not groundwater.

7 Status Reports

The Chair directed board members to the status reports in the briefing book. The following comments were made regarding the status reports:

- The Moving from Words to Action team reminded board members of the mid-April deadline for responses.
- The Non-Point Sources team has agreed to undertake the project in phases so that work can begin with the current stakeholders, while waiting for the Innovative Approaches grant. The Riparian working group continues to work on a TOR for a project and expects to bring it forward at the June 2011 board meeting for approval.

8 New or Other Business

There was no new or other business.

The meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

Attachment 1: Meeting #30 Attendees

Council Directors and Alternates

Peter Aku, NGO (Fisheries Habitat Conservation)
Maureen Bell, NGO (Environmental)
Neil Boyd, Industry (Cropping)
Bob Cameron, NGO (Environmental)
Carolyn Campbell, NGO (Environmental)
Deanne Carson, Industry (Power Generation)
Lars DePauw, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Chris Fordham, Industry (Mining)
Lisa Maria Fox, NGO (Environmental)
Les Gammie, NGO (WPACs)
Al Kemmere, Government (Rural)
John Kolk, Industry (Livestock)
Stuart Lunn, Industry (Mining)
Perry McCormick, NGO (Wetland Habitat Conservation)
Ron McMullin, Industry (Irrigation)
Keith Murray, Industry (Forestry)
Louis Pawlowich, Government (Métis Settlements)

Tara Payment, Industry (Oil and Gas)
Rob Pritchard, Government (Large Urban)
Richard Quail, Government (Small Urban)
John Skowronski, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)
Jennifer Steber, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Energy)
Jay White, NGO (Lake Environment Conservation)
Evelynne Wrangler, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Jamie Wuite, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development)
Bev Yee, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)
Gord Edwards, AWC Executive Director

Presenters:

Gord Edwards, *Executive Director's Report; 2011 Operational Plan, Business Planning* (Items 1.4, 2.0, 3.0)
Giselle Beaudry, *Sector Planning for Water CEP* (Item 4.0)
Tara Payment, *Sector Planning for Water CEP – CAPP/OSDG Plan* (Item 5.0)
Dr. Barry White, *Alberta's Wet Areas Mapping Initiative* (Item 6.0)

Guests:

Scott Hillier, ConocoPhillips
Scott Millar, ASRD
Kelly Ness, Alberta Environment
Sharon Willianen, Alberta Environment

AWC Staff and Contractor Support

Andre Asselin, Alesha Hill, Terry Sly, Kim Sanderson, Meredith Walker

Absent with Regrets:

Jim Ellis, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Environment)
David Hill, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Water Research Institute)
Colin Jeffares, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development)
Al Kennedy, Industry (Chemical and Petrochemical)
Alex MacKenzie, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Health and Wellness)
Eric McGhan, GOA and Provincial Authorities (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development)
Jeff Surtees, NGO (Fisheries Habitat Conservation)
Jason Unger, NGO (Environmental)

Attachment 2: Meeting #30 Action Item Log

Action	Who	By when
Action 30.1: The executive committee will build on the GOA advice regarding enhanced alignment of Council work to provincial priorities and direction and will propose a path forward to the Board.	Executive committee	May 19
Action 30.2: The executive committee will develop a method for keeping the Board informed of the implementation status of AWC recommendations.	Executive committee	May 19
Action 30.3: Alberta Environment and the executive committee will consider options for sharing information on GOA policy development and approval and water management in Alberta at the June 2011 meeting.	AENV and executive committee	May 19

Attachment 3: Decision Log

Decision 30.1: The summary report for the October 28, 2010 meeting was adopted by consensus and will be posted on the Council website.

Decision 30.2: The board approved the Alberta Water Council’s 2011 Operational Plan v2, as presented.

Decision 30.3: The board approved the AWC 2010-2013 Business Plan Performance Measures Report v4, as presented.

Decision 30.4: The board approved the amended terms of reference for the Sector Planning for Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Project Team, which includes:

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 - *Recommendations to address challenges encountered by sectors with respect to the Framework Document; and*
 - *Recommendations that would assist the next team with the evaluation of the overall CEP process, including identifying challenges and opportunities of developing a metric or metrics for aggregating CEP data from the seven priority plans;”*

Budget section

- *Remove the budget and replace it with “The team does not anticipate any budget beyond core support will be required.”*

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL
AGENDA, MEETING #30

March 24, 2011
McDougall Centre – Calgary

NOTE: Broad Category caucusing from 8:00 to 9:00 am followed by Members meeting from 9:00 to 9:15 am

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

9:15 1.0 Administration – Chair 30 min

- 1.1 Welcome and approve agenda
- 1.2 Approve Summary Report from October 28, 2010 meeting
- 1.3 Review of actions from last meeting
- 1.4 Executive Director's report

9:45 2.0 Operational Planning 30 min

Assess and approve the Council's 2011 Operational Plan.

10:15 3.0 Business Planning - Performance Measures 30 min

Approve the draft Performance Measures report.

10:45 Break 15 min

11:00 4.0 Sector Planning for CEP Project Team 30 min

Approve the proposed extension to the team's terms of reference to provide more time for all sectors to complete their sector plans and hear a presentation on the team's findings in their "What We've Learned" report.

11:30 5.0 Sector Planning for CEP – CAPP/OSDG Plan 30 min

Hear a presentation on the CEP plan prepared by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the Oil Sands Developers Group.

12:00 Lunch (provided in the room) 60 min

1:00 6.0 Wet Areas Mapping Presentation 30 min

Hear a presentation on the recently developed and use of wet areas maps for the forested landscape.

1:30 7.0 Status Reports 15 min

Refer members to status reports in the board package with brief opportunity for questions or clarification.

1:45 8.0 New or Other Business 15 min

New items of business or other items of information for Council

2:00 Adjournment