



**Mackenzie River Basin Board**  
Report to Ministers  
April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2012



# CONTENTS

- LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL..... i**
- MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR.....ii**
- MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.....iii**
- Introduction..... 1**
- The Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement.....2**
  - Background ..... 2
  - The Master Agreement Principles..... 2
- The Mackenzie River Basin Board..... 3**
  - Roles and Responsibilities of the MRBB ..... 3
  - Finances ..... 4
- MRBB Ministers Meeting.....5**
- MRBB Response to Ministerial Direction .....8**
- MRBB Committees ..... 10**
  - MRBB State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) Steering Committee ..... 11
  - MRBB Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships (TK/P) Steering Committee ..... 12
  - MRBB Communications Committee ..... 13
  - MRBB Operations Committee..... 13
  - MRBB Technical Committee ..... 14
- Appendix I: MRBB Financial Reports, April 1, 2007 – March 31,2012 ..... 16**
- Appendix II: Mackenzie River Basin Board Meetings**
  - April 1, 2007 - March 31, 2012 ..... 21**
- Appendix III: MRBB Membership at Fiscal Year End, 2007-08 to 2011-12..... 26**



## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

March 1, 2013

The Honourable Peter Kent  
Minister of Environment  
Government of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario

The Honourable Bernard Valcourt  
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and  
Northern Development Canada  
Government of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq  
Minister of Health  
Government of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario

The Honourable Ken Cheveldayoff  
Minister responsible for the  
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency  
Government of the Province of  
Saskatchewan  
Regina, Saskatchewan

The Honourable Diana McQueen  
Minister of Environment and  
Sustainable Resource Development  
Government of the Province of Alberta  
Edmonton, Alberta

The Honourable Dr. Terry Lake  
Minister of Environment  
Government of the Province of  
British Columbia  
Victoria, British Columbia

The Honourable Michael Miltenberger  
Minister of Environment and  
Natural Resources  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

The Honourable Currie Dixon  
Minister of Environment  
Government of the Yukon  
Whitehorse, Yukon

Honourable Ministers:

On behalf of the members of the Mackenzie River Basin Board, it is my pleasure to submit this Report to Ministers of the Mackenzie River Basin Board for Fiscal Years 2007-2008 to 2011-2012.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Norton', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mike Norton  
Chair  
Mackenzie River Basin Board

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This Report to Ministers describes the activities initiated by the Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB) to address the direction provided by Ministers to the MRBB in July 2008. Based on these discussions, the MRBB developed the *Mackenzie River Basin Board 2010 - 2013 Business Plan*, which formalized Board priorities during this period.

During the period covered by this report, the MRBB made solid progress on a number of important fronts. The MRBB completed the *Bilateral Water Management Agreements Guidance Document*, which is already assisting jurisdictions negotiate bilateral water management agreements by setting out common expectations for those agreements. Completion of these agreements is a key expectation of the Master Agreement, and the real progress being made by jurisdictions is very encouraging.

The MRBB has continued to place priority on improving its ability to consider the needs and concerns of Aboriginal people. The formation of a steering committee to focus on Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships is an important step forward in recognition of the inherent value of full Aboriginal participation in the Mackenzie River Basin Board activities. The MRBB will continue to encourage and support the meaningful integration of Traditional Knowledge and effective engagement practices into MRBB activities.

The success of the MRBB depends on the work of the Secretariat and MRBB committees. Committee members consist of Board Members, Alternates, or their delegates. Their work helps to ensure that the MRBB and the signatory jurisdictions meet their obligations under the 1997 *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*. The Board appreciates their professional conduct and dedication to the MRBB.



Mike Norton  
Chair, Mackenzie River Basin Board  
March 1, 2013

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In response to direction from Ministers, key MRBB priorities have included drafting the second State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report, supporting the negotiation and completion of bilateral water management agreements, strengthening the engagement of Aboriginal partners, and developing the Mackenzie River Basin Hydrology Model.

The MRBB initiated the second State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER), which examined the effects of oil sands, hydroelectric development, and climate change on aquatic resources in the Mackenzie River Basin, using information derived from both western science and Traditional Knowledge. In light of several expert panel reports that comprehensively described the state of knowledge of oil sands monitoring, the Board decided to focus on key messages, and reduced the size and scope of the SOAER into the *Mackenzie River Basin Board's 2012 Issues Report - Oil sands development, hydroelectric development, and climate change in the Mackenzie River Basin*, which was published in May 2012.

In 2009, the MRBB completed the *Bilateral Water Management Agreements Guidance Document*, which is intended to assist jurisdictions in the Mackenzie River Basin negotiate bilateral water management agreements by setting out common expectations and building on principles established in the *Mackenzie River Basin*

*Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*. Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan are currently engaged in bilateral water management negotiations on the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River watersheds.

The MRBB formed the Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee (TK/P Committee) in 2009 to strengthen the engagement of Aboriginal partners. The TK/P Committee provides oversight on behalf of the MRBB with respect to all MRBB Traditional Knowledge activities.

The MRBB supported the development of the Mackenzie River Basin Hydrology Model. The Model, which is intended to help understand flow in the Basin, will help inform transboundary water management decisions in the Mackenzie River Basin.

2007 to 2012 was a period of transition for the Mackenzie River Basin Board. The period was marked by the restructuring of the Secretariat office and changes in Board committee structures. These changes were made in response to changing Board priorities, and each change affected the Board's operational capacity. As a result, the Board fell behind in its reporting. The MRBB has adjusted to these changes, and has directed me, as the Executive Director, to ensure that future reporting is completed in a timely manner.



Don Pittman  
Executive Director, Mackenzie River Basin Board  
March 1, 2013

## Introduction

This report summarizes the activities of the Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB), its Secretariat and the Committees that supported MRBB activities for the period spanning April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012. This period covers the activities leading up to the June 2008 MRBB Ministers Meeting and the subsequent activities undertaken by the Board based on direction provided by the Ministers.



Figure 1. The Mackenzie River Basin.



Peace Canyon Dam looking downstream along the Peace River, British Columbia. Courtesy of Bob Brown

## **The Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement**

### ***Background***

In order to address the fundamental issue of water management cooperation, the governments of Canada, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Yukon signed the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement* (the Master Agreement). It came into effect on July 24, 1997. The purpose of the Master Agreement is to establish common principles for the cooperative management of the Aquatic Ecosystem of the Mackenzie River Basin, to establish an administrative mechanism to facilitate the application of the principles set forth in the Master Agreement, and to make provisions for bilateral water management agreements.

### ***The Master Agreement Principles***

Under the Master Agreement, the Parties are committed to:

- Managing the Water Resources in a manner consistent with the maintenance of the Ecological Integrity of the Aquatic Ecosystem;
- Managing the use of the Water Resources in a sustainable manner for present and future generations;
- The right of each to use or manage the use of Water Resources within its jurisdiction provided such use does not unreasonably harm the Ecological Integrity of the Aquatic Ecosystem in any other jurisdiction;
- Providing for early and effective consultation, notification and sharing of information on developments and activities that might affect the Ecological Integrity of the Aquatic Ecosystem in another jurisdiction; and
- Resolving issues in a cooperative and harmonious manner.

## The Mackenzie River Basin Board

The Master Agreement established the Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB) with the responsibility to administer the terms of the Agreement and to serve as a forum where all governments can cooperate in an effort to maintain the ecological integrity of the Basin's aquatic ecosystem. A staff arm for the Board, called the Secretariat, was also set-up to carry out the programs, basic administrative duties and any investigations required by the Board. Currently, the MRBB Secretariat consists of one staff member, based in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

The Board has 13 members, three representing the Government of Canada and two from each province and territory. One of the two provincial and territorial members has been appointed to represent Aboriginal organizations in each jurisdiction.

The Board is unique because of this interjurisdictional partnership, the presence of members representing Aboriginal interests alongside representatives of the governments, and the commitment by all parties to maintain the ecological integrity of the aquatic ecosystem.

The MRBB conducts business, shares information, and provides guidance to Board Committees and the Secretariat through a series of formal Board Meetings. Government Board Members typically submit Member agency reports during face to face meetings. These reports provide a mechanism for sharing water-related information amongst the jurisdictions and with Aboriginal Groups, and can support prior notification commitments. Aboriginal Members also share information about First Nation concerns within each jurisdiction.

MRBB Meetings also typically include updates from the Board Committees and the Secretariat. The Board also conducts annual

Business Planning. Board Meetings provide a forum to share information on specific issues or projects.

The Environment Canada Board Member has chaired MRBB Meetings by consensus of the other Board Members since the Board's inception. The MRBB Secretariat is responsible for recording and distributing meeting minutes.

### ***Roles and Responsibilities of the MRBB***

The MRBB has articulated the following vision for the Mackenzie River Basin:

*A healthy and diverse aquatic ecosystem for the benefit of present and future generations.*

The full list of duties of the MRBB is set out in the Master Agreement, but certain key duties, which support this vision, are worth repeating here:

- Provide a forum for communication, coordination, information exchange, notification and consultation among all six jurisdictions and the public;
- Recommend uniform objectives or guidelines for the quality and quantity of the water resources;
- Encourage consistent monitoring programs;
- Monitor the progress of implementing the bilateral water management agreements between neighbouring jurisdictions;
- Submit a report on the state of the aquatic ecosystem every five years to the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers; and,
- Carry out studies and investigations, as required.



The MRBB has translated these and other duties into work plans that focus on:

- **Evaluating** the state of the aquatic ecosystem.
- **Investigating** matters concerning the ecological health of the aquatic ecosystem.
- **Encouraging** meaningful integration of Traditional Knowledge and effective engagement of Aboriginal people in MRBB activities.
- **Learning** from others, sharing information, and **educating** the public about matters concerning the ecological health of the aquatic ecosystem.
- **Facilitating** the development of bilateral water management agreements.

The MRBB is not a regulatory or licensing board, and has no legal or policy basis to regulate resource use in any of the jurisdictions. However, the Board may influence regulatory decisions made in the various jurisdictions by providing factual material, such as the State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Reports, to inform development decision makers, or by participating in and influencing pre- or post-regulatory processes, such as planning, regional or cumulative environmental impact assessment processes.

## ***Finances***

Under the Master Agreement, Environment Canada is responsible for managing the expenditures of the Board, the costs of which are shared equally by the parties. MRBB costs include staffing and operation of a Secretariat office, to provide working-level support for the Board, and ensuring effective Aboriginal participation by paying MRBB-related expenses.

## **MRBB Ministers Meeting**

On July 3, 2008, the MRBB met with Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner, British Columbia Environment Minister Barry Penner, Northwest Territories Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Michael Miltenberger, and representatives of the Saskatchewan and Yukon Ministers of Environment. This was the first meeting of MRBB Ministers since the Master Agreement was signed in 1997. Ministers were advised of MRBB budget and operational limitations. The Board sought specific direction on future Board activities and priorities.

The Ministers directed the Board to:

1. Develop an action plan to support and complete bilateral water management agreements between the jurisdictions;
2. Define options for jurisdiction and/or Board monitoring and reporting on the achievement of bilateral water management agreements;
3. Prepare a work plan and budget for short-term operations of the Board and MRBB Secretariat for the three years that the completion of bilateral negotiations are projected to take;
4. Define multilateral principles and outcomes for water management negotiations based on the principles set out in the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*;
5. Define options for Aboriginal roles in bilateral negotiations;
6. Clarify the Board's advocacy and awareness role to focus on raising awareness for the entire basin, the state of the basin, stresses on the basin, watershed principles and cumulative effects; and

7. Develop long-term options and recommendations on the composition and resource requirements for the Board, Secretariat, and member jurisdictions that address bilateral agreement monitoring and reporting, strategic plan topics, and any new focus areas.

## MRBB Response to Ministerial Direction

1. Develop an action plan to support and complete bilateral water management agreements between the jurisdictions.

The MRBB formed a Bilateral Agreement Framework Team to develop the *Bilateral Water Management Agreements Guidance Document* (Guidance Document). The Guidance Document was intended to assist the jurisdictions to negotiate bilateral or multilateral agreements by setting out common expectations and building on the principles set forth in the Master Agreement.

The MRBB completed the Guidance Document in 2009. The Guidance Document defined basin-wide objectives, the roles of participants, and water management principles. The Guidance Document also included a generic

outline of the anticipated content of bilateral water management agreements, as well as a schedule for completing negotiations and multilateral consultation by 2014. A series of bilateral water management agreements will be negotiated within each major watershed.

In September 2009, the MRBB Chair requested an approval of the process and schedule outlined in the Guidance Document from provincial and territorial jurisdictions. Ministers responded favourably to the process and schedule set out in the document.

Under the timelines set forth in the Guidance Document, the immediate priority for bilateral water management agreements are the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River Watersheds, which are shared by Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and Saskatchewan. These jurisdictions have initiated negotiations. Negotiations on the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River Watershed are not expected to be completed in 2012. As a result, the timelines for the remaining water management negotiations have been pushed back.

2. Define options for jurisdiction and/or Board monitoring and reporting on the achievement of bilateral water management agreements.

Watersheds	Delivery
Peace, Athabasca, Slave	2009-2012*
Hay, Great Slave Lake	2012-2013**
Liard	2013-2014***
Peel	Complete (may be reviewed when remaining agreements have been completed)

\*Peace, Athabasca and Slave River Watershed agreements expected to be completed in 2013.

\*\*Negotiations will be initiated upon completion of Peace, Athabasca and Slave River Watershed agreements.

\*\*\*Negotiations will be initiated upon completion of Hay and Great Slave Lake Watershed agreements.

The *Bilateral Water Management Agreements Guidance Document* identified options for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of bilateral agreements, including the potential roles of the MRBB, jurisdictions, Aboriginal organisations, federal departments, and/or an independent third party.

In addition, the MRBB designated the reporting of progress of bilateral water management negotiation progress as a standing action item during MRBB Meetings.

3. Prepare a work plan and budget for short-term operations of the Board and MRBB Secretariat for the three years that the completion of bilateral negotiations are projected to take.

In 2009, the MRBB developed the Mackenzie River Basin Board 2010 - 2013 Business Plan. The Business Plan outlined nine MRBB priorities and forecasted the roles, responsibilities, budget, and timelines required to address these priorities.

The MRBB identified the following priorities for this period:

1. Evaluate the ecological health of the whole basin.
2. Investigate matters concerning the ecological health of the whole basin.
3. Advocate for the maintenance and improvement of the ecological health of the whole basin.
4. Educate the public, share information, and learn from others about matters concerning the ecological health of the whole basin.
5. Support and facilitate the increased participation of Aboriginal Peoples in MRBB activities.
6. Encourage and facilitate the development of bilateral water management agreements.
7. Ministers, Aboriginal leaders, and appropriate staff of jurisdictions are

informed of and engaged in MRBB activities.

8. Information, knowledge and research are shared among jurisdictions.
9. MRBB affairs are administered effectively.
4. Define multilateral principles and outcomes for water management negotiations based on the principles set out in the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*.

In 2010-2011, Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan implemented a multilateral component to the negotiation process. Although there will not be a multilateral agreement as such, multilateral meetings allow jurisdictions to review and compare negotiation progress from the perspective of the entire Peace, Athabasca and Slave River Watershed, and provide an additional assurance of consistency between agreements.

Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and Saskatchewan asked the MRBB Secretariat to coordinate and manage a multi-year contract to retain a facilitator to help jurisdictions negotiate bilateral water management agreements for the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River Watersheds. The jurisdictions transferred funds to the MRBB to pay for the facilitator. These funds were held separately from the MRBB operating funds and therefore did not affect the funding formula set forth under the Master Agreement. In 2011-2012, a facilitator was retained to guide the negotiation process and help ensure consistency among the agreements.

5. Define options for Aboriginal roles in bilateral negotiations.

As recommended by the *Bilateral Water Management Agreements Guidance Document*, each MRBB jurisdiction will engage its Aboriginal organizations in the development of the bilateral agreements in a



Mackenzie River at N'Dulee Crossing, Northwest Territories.  
Courtesy of Don Pittman

manner consistent with its legal obligations. The MRBB recognises the importance of Aboriginal participation and Traditional Knowledge in transboundary water management.

6. Clarify the Board's advocacy and awareness role to focus on raising awareness for the entire basin, the state of the basin, stresses on the basin, watershed principles and cumulative effects.

The MRBB initiated the second State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER), which focussed on key issues identified in the first SOAER, including the effects of oil sands, hydroelectric development, and climate change on aquatic resources in the Mackenzie River Basin. The Board also emphasized the role of Traditional Knowledge in this report, and hosted a Traditional Knowledge workshop to support the inclusion of Traditional Knowledge. In light of several expert panel reports that comprehensively described the state of knowledge of oil sands monitoring, the Board decided to focus on key messages, and reduced the size and scope of the SOAER into the *Mackenzie River Basin Board's 2012 Issues Report - Oil sands development, hydroelectric development, and climate change in the Mackenzie River Basin*.

The MRBB established the MRBB Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships (TK/P) Steering Committee in 2008-2009 to improve engagement of Aboriginal Peoples and use of Traditional Knowledge in MRBB activities. The Board tasked the TK/P Steering Committee to improve and promote the understanding, consideration, and use of Traditional Knowledge by the MRBB. The Board also tasked the TK/P Steering Committee to provide oversight on behalf of the MRBB with respect to all MRBB Traditional Knowledge activities.

7. Develop long-term options and recommendations on the composition and resource requirements for the Board, Secretariat, and member jurisdictions that address bilateral agreement monitoring and reporting, strategic plan topics, and any new focus areas.

The MRBB has recommended that this discussion be initiated after bilateral water management agreements have been reached for the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River Watersheds. These bilateral agreements will provide the context for the Board to make informed and relevant recommendations about the long term role of the MRBB.

## Status of Bilateral Water Management Agreements

The MRBB identified the completion of bilateral water management agreements as a priority. The completion and implementation of bilateral water agreements is one of the most effective ways to protect the aquatic ecosystem of the Mackenzie River Basin.

The Governments of the Northwest Territories and Yukon completed the *Yukon-Northwest Territories Transboundary Water Management Agreement* for the Peel River Watershed in 2002.

Bilateral water management negotiations for the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River Watersheds are ongoing, and are currently anticipated to conclude in 2013.

### Peel River Watershed:

Northwest Territories/Yukon: The bilateral agreement was completed in 2002. The jurisdictions meet biannually to share information and discuss transboundary water issues in accordance with the bilateral agreement. Planning related to the management of transboundary water resources continued through the development of the Northwest Territories Water Stewardship



Strategy and the Peel River Watershed Planning Commission.

Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River Watersheds:

British Columbia/Alberta: The first Negotiations Workshop took place in March 2007. Monthly meetings took place throughout much of the year. A consultant was employed to facilitate discussions. This work continued through 2008-2009, when discussions were placed on hold pending Ministers' approval of the Guidance Document.

Negotiation meetings resumed in 2011 once the negotiation facilitator had been selected. Alberta and British Columbia met three times up until March 2012. The parties have shared information and discussed their respective interests. Technical teams in each jurisdiction are developing detailed options for a number of water management areas, including Water Quality, Water Allocation, and Groundwater.

Alberta/Northwest Territories: The jurisdictions began to collect background information to support negotiations in 2007-2008. The parties agreed to a three-year Memorandum of Understanding, intending to complete negotiations by 2010. The Northwest Territories then began developing a water stewardship strategy, in collaboration with several interest groups. Negotiations were postponed until the strategy was completed in 2010. Alberta and the Northwest Territories continued to collect and share background information during this time.

Negotiations were initiated in 2011. Alberta and the Northwest Territories met twice up to March 31, 2012. Both jurisdictions shared information and began preparing their interests statements.

Alberta/Saskatchewan: Negotiations were initiated in 2012. Alberta and Saskatchewan began collecting and sharing background information in preparation for bilateral negotiations. Alberta and Saskatchewan met

twice up to March 31, 2012. Both jurisdictions shared information and their respective preliminary interests. The parties began developing options for transboundary water management.

Multilateral: As directed by Ministers, Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan implemented a multilateral component to the negotiation process. Although there will not be a multilateral agreement as such, multilateral meetings allow jurisdictions to review and compare negotiation progress from the perspective of the entire Peace, Athabasca and Slave River Watershed, and provide an additional assurance of consistency between agreements.

The jurisdictions met collectively once up until March 31, 2012. The jurisdictions established working groups to deal with specific issues and developed preliminary options briefing notes for use at all bilateral negotiating tables.

Remaining Bilateral Agreements:

The bilateral agreements between British Columbia and the Northwest Territories, British Columbia and Yukon, and Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories will be developed following completion of the current three bilateral agreements.

## MRBB Committees

In order to administer the Master Agreement, the MRBB created a number of working committees. The committees are comprised of members of the Board, or their appointed delegates, selected to promote and lead these activities and support specialists from jurisdictions and federal agencies to assist with work of the committees. Each committee is tasked with specific responsibilities. The activity level of individual committees varied over time according to need.

Committees	Responsibilities
<b>State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) Steering Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage information</li> <li>• Determine options for format of SOAER</li> <li>• Establish process for report preparation and subsequent updates</li> <li>• Determine recommendations for content of report</li> <li>• Prepare and review SOAER reports</li> </ul>
<b>Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Knowledge oversight</li> <li>• Ensure Traditional Knowledge incorporated into MRBB activities</li> </ul>
<b>Communications Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a communication strategy</li> <li>• Prepare the annual report</li> <li>• Arrange public forums as required</li> <li>• Prepare presentation materials and literature for use at public forums</li> </ul>
<b>Operations Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and review by-laws</li> <li>• Prepare and review budget</li> <li>• Establish policies and procedures</li> <li>• Provide encouragement for the development and signing of the Bilateral Water Agreement</li> <li>• Review the annual report</li> <li>• Manage the dispute resolution process</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage information</li> <li>• Assess existing data</li> <li>• Prepare study reports for consideration by the Board</li> <li>• Develop the Mackenzie River Basin Hydrology Model</li> </ul>



Mackenzie River at Wrigley, Northwest Territories.  
Courtesy of Don Pittman

### ***MRBB State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) Steering Committee***

In 2007-2008, the SOAER Steering Committee identified co-chair leads for a SOAER Working Group. The MRBB directed the Working Group to focus on three priority topics: i) impacts of oil sands, ii) hydro-power development, and iii) climate change. The Working Group prepared a draft outline and a table of contents for the report. The SOAER Steering Committee identified several major challenges that would need to be addressed to complete the SOAER. These included limited MRBB funds and relatively few staff who would be available to work on the report. Due to resource limitations, the Committee delayed work on SOAER until April 2008.

Aboriginal MRBB Members noted that there has been very little Traditional Knowledge available in the SOAER. They were concerned that there was little apparent value placed on Traditional Knowledge by the MRBB. In addition, Aboriginal Members reported that Traditional Knowledge was being lost as the traditional lifestyle disappears. The SOAER 2003 identified a disconnect between Traditional Knowledge and scientific knowledge. The MRBB agreed to ensure that Traditional Knowledge would be incorporated in the SOAER

The SOAER Working Group and MRBB Secretariat prepared a statement of work for the SOAER, under the direction of the Steering Committee. The report focused on the state of knowledge of oil sands, hydroelectric power, and climate change on water and water resources in the Mackenzie River Basin. The



SOAER was structured to examine existing and proposed new projects (oil sands and hydroelectric developments), the state of monitoring, and trend results. The SOAER incorporated both the available western scientific knowledge and available Traditional Knowledge, as gathered by the Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee.

The Board selected a contractor to perform the work, based on a recommendation by the SOAER Working Group and Steering Committee. Work on the SOAER was initiated in 2009-2010. After three rounds of review that extended into 2010-2011, some outstanding issues remained that were beyond the contractor's ability to reconcile. The Steering Committee, on the advice of the Secretariat and the SOAER Working Group, closed the contract, with the remaining work to be completed internally by the MRBB.

The Governments of Canada and Alberta, as well as the Royal Society of Canada, commissioned expert panels to review the state of knowledge of oil sands and oil sands monitoring. The Steering Committee decided to delay the completion of the SOAER until these expert panels had completed their reports. This decision was based on concerns that the expert panel report findings and conclusions would provide a more in-depth assessment than the MRBB was able to provide.

In 2011-2012, following release of the expert panel reports, the MRBB decided that it was not an effective use of resources to update the SOAER text to be consistent with the findings of the expert panel reports. The MRBB instead decided to highlight the key points raised in each chapter. The SOAER became the *Mackenzie River Basin Board's 2012 Issues Report: Oil Sands Development, Hydroelectric Development, and Climate Change in the Mackenzie River Basin*, which is scheduled for publication in May 2012.

## ***MRBB Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships (TK/P) Steering Committee***

The MRBB established the MRBB Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships (TK/P) Steering Committee in 2008-2009. The MRBB formed the TK/P Steering Committee in response to ministerial direction to improve engagement of Aboriginal Peoples and use of Traditional Knowledge in MRBB activities. The Board tasked the TK/P Steering Committee to improve and promote the understanding, consideration, and use of Traditional Knowledge by the MRBB. The Board also tasked the TK/P Steering Committee to provide oversight on behalf of the MRBB with respect to all MRBB Traditional Knowledge activities.

The TK/P Steering Committee developed a Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference confirmed the TK/P Steering Committee's responsibility for building and enhancing understanding and awareness of Traditional Knowledge in all MRBB activities.

The TK/P Steering Committee then examined options through which they could ensure that Traditional Knowledge was available and incorporated in the SOAER. In 2009-2010, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (since renamed as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada) funded a project on behalf of the TK/P Steering Committee to collect and summarize the available Traditional Knowledge information related to oil sands development, hydroelectric development, and climate change in the Mackenzie River Basin.

In support of this work, the TK/P Steering Committee held a Traditional Knowledge Workshop in Edmonton in January 2010. The TK/P Steering Committee then met with the SOAER Steering Committee, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada project management staff and the Traditional Knowledge and SOAER contractors. Participants discussed how Traditional Knowledge gathered at

the workshop would be incorporated into the SOAER. The results of this work were incorporated into the SOAER and informed the Issues Report.

The TK/P Steering Committee next met in November 2011. The Committee reviewed work completed to date and established short- and long-term work planning priorities. The TK/P Steering Committee recommended that the MRBB establish a dedicated Traditional Knowledge page on the MRBB website. The TK/P Steering Committee also discussed how it could help improve the use of Traditional Knowledge in MRBB priorities and activities. Aboriginal Steering Committee Members reported that the question they are most often asked is: "How is the water?" The TK/P Steering Committee suggested that the MRBB could do more to help answer that question.

### ***MRBB Communications Committee***

During Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the MRBB Communications Committee posted English and French versions of the 2004-2006 Report to the Ministers and the 2006 MRBB Strategic Plan on the Board's website. In 2008-2009, the Communications Committee evaluated past communications strategies and recommended that the Board develop a new approach to respond to direction received from the Ministers. The Committee updated the Communications Plan after the evaluation was completed. The MRBB then assumed the role of the Communications Committee due to capacity issues. In 2010-2011, the Board deactivated the MRBB Website because it could not be updated.

In 2010-2011, the Board tasked the Secretariat to create and populate a new MRBB website to replace the previous version. The Secretariat then asked the Board to reinstate the Communications Committee to provide support for the website and other communications initiatives.

In 2011-2012, the Communications Committee developed a communications strategy to support the anticipated release of the MRBB SOAER. When the Board decided to change the SOAER to the MRBB Issues Report, the Communications Committee revised its strategy for the release of the Report and drafted a set of Questions and Answers which were provided to Board Members. The Committee also developed a draft Communications Protocol to guide the MRBB and the MRBB Secretariat to provide timely and accurate responses to inquiries from the public and the media.

### ***MRBB Operations Committee***

In response to direction from the MRBB Ministers, the MRBB Operations Committee developed a strategy intended to seek long-term, incremental funding through the Master Agreement in fiscal year 2007-2008. The MRBB Chair sent a letter on behalf of the MRBB to the Ministers in March 2008 requesting their approval to increase funding for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 by an additional \$25,000 from each funding party. The proposed funding increase was intended to meet resource needs deemed necessary to meet ongoing Board commitments, as directed by the Ministers. The letter described the challenges faced by the MRBB, including the absence of a provision to account for inflationary loss of spending power over time. The letter identified short-term needs and proposed development of a long-term business case. Additional funds were made available for one fiscal year.

In response to Board resource pressures, the MRBB assumed the role of the Operations Committee in 2008-2009. The Board formally dissolved the Operations Committee in 2011-2012.

## ***MRBB Technical Committee***

The Technical Committee undertakes investigations and assesses existing water data on behalf of the MRBB. The Technical Committee oversees the activities of three Sub-Committees.

### a) MRBB Hydrology Sub-Committee

The Hydrology Sub-Committee is responsible for developing the Mackenzie River Basin Hydrology Model. The model can be used to document and explain differences between observed and natural basin flows, and assess impacts of existing and proposed developments. The model is intended to enable consistent and accurate accounting of water moving through the basin, including consumptive uses and reservoir storage. The MRBB supported the development of the

model to provide a tool that could be used to help inform bilateral water management negotiations.

Phase II of the Hydrology Model development began in September 2007 and continued through the fiscal year. The Hydrology Sub-Committee recommended that the full \$150,000 allocated to it by the MRBB would be needed to complete development of the hydrology model study, which at the time was anticipated to extend until at least Fiscal Year 2009-2010. Once the specific requirements for the model were defined, the MRBB allocated funds which were transferred to Partner organizations to support further work on the Model. Partners included the University of Alberta, University of Waterloo, National Research Council, and Environment Canada's Water Survey of Canada.

Louise Falls on the Hay River, Northwest Territories.  
Courtesy of Don Pittman



Modellers submitted the project report to the Sub-Committee in February 2010. The report recommended that additional testing was needed to verify the magnitude of errors in flows caused by flow estimates for un-gauged areas and to evaluate various flow or water-use scenarios. Once the evaluation is complete, the Model would need to be revised for estimates for flows from un-gauged areas to improve quantitative accuracy.

The Technical Committee then developed a workplan to make the Mackenzie River Basin Hydrologic Model operational. The key element was a Modeling Workshop, designed to help model users in the provinces and territories understand how to use the model, as well as its capabilities and limitations. After the Board directed the Technical Committee to organize the workshop, the Committee met to plan aspects of the workshop including workshop objectives, potential participants, and information requirements.

Some members of the Technical Committee and most members of the Hydrology Subcommittee participated in the Mackenzie River Basin Hydrologic Modeling Workshop on December 13 and 14, 2011. The Technical Committee and Hydrology Subcommittee then met to review the modeling workshop results and plan next steps. This process is anticipated to be completed in 2012-2013.

#### b) MRBB Water Quality Protocol/Standards Sub-Committee

The MRBB tasked the Water Quality Protocol/Standards Sub-Committee to develop a plan to harmonize water quality monitoring standards. However, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) undertook a similar national project and some members of the Sub-Committee participated in, or were technical advisors for, the CCME process. In order to avoid duplication, the Sub-Committee recommended that the MRBB wait for the CCME to complete its evaluation before doing additional work.

The MRBB agreed with the Sub-Committee recommendation and dissolved the Sub-Committee until the work of the CCME is completed.

#### c) MRBB Information Sub-Committee

In 2007-2008, the MRBB Information Sub-Committee examined options by which the MRBB could make information on the basin available to MRBB members and the public. The Sub-Committee recommended that enabling a Members-Only Page on the MRBB website and including links to jurisdictions and other water-related sites was a viable solution.

The MRBB dissolved the Sub-Committee upon completion of its task.

## Appendix I: MRBB Financial Reports, April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2012

### Mackenzie River Basin Board Financial Report April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008

		<b>Comments</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$280,000.00</b>	As specified in the Master Agreement
<b>Carry Forward</b>	<b>\$116,066.00</b>	06-07 carry forward
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$392,958.00</b>	
<b>MRBB Expenditures</b>		
Personnel	\$140,783.00	Wages and benefits for the Executive Director and Secretary.
Transportation and Telecommunications	\$ 24,079.00	Travel and Telecommunications
Information Services Costs	\$ 1,830.00	Information, IT/IM
Professional Services	\$ 20,186.00	Honouraria and Expenses For Aboriginal Members
Other Non-Professional Services	\$157,358.00	Hydrology Model and Other
Rentals	\$ 24,380.00	Facilities, Vehicles and Equipment
Utilities, Materials and Supplies	\$ 1,371.00	Purchased Materials Parts and Supplies, Supplies and Stationery
Acquisition of Machinery and Equipment	\$ 829.00	Parts, Tools, Machinery and Equipment
Shipping and Posting	\$ 795.00	Courier and Postage
Other Subsidies and Payments	\$ 597.00	Miscellaneous
<b>Total 07-08 Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$372,208.00</b>	
<b>07-08 Carry Forward:</b>	<b>\$ 23,857.00</b>	

**Mackenzie River Basin Board Financial Report**  
**April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009**

		<b>Comments</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$280,000.00</b>	As specified in the Master Agreement
<b>Carry Forward</b>	<b>\$ 23,857.00</b>	07-08 carry forward
<b>Additional Contributions*</b>	<b>\$118,186.00</b>	SOAER and operational expenses
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$422,043.00</b>	
<b>MRBB Expenditures</b>		
Personnel	\$187,417.00	Wages and benefits for the Executive Director and Secretary
Transportation and Telecommunications	\$ 37,544.00	Travel, postage and Telecommunications
Information Services services, Information IM/IT	\$ 3,634.00	Publishing/Printing
Professional Services	\$ 38,795.00	Honoraria and Expenses for Aboriginal Members and special services
Rentals	\$ 12,441.00	Facilities, Vehicles and Equipment
Acquisition of machinery and equipment, repairs, etc.	\$ 5,000.00	Repair of buildings
Utilities, Materials and Supplies	\$ 3,251.00	Purchased materials, parts and supplies
Transfer to EC for MRB Hydrology Model	\$ 15,000.00	
<b>Total 08-09 Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$303,082.00</b>	
<b>08-09 Carry Forward:</b>	<b>\$118,961.00</b>	

**Note:**

\*Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Governments of Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories contributed an additional \$25,000.00; Environment Canada contributed an additional \$18,186.

**Mackenzie River Basin Board Financial Report**  
**April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010**

		<b>Comments</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$280,000.00</b>	As specified in the Master Agreement
<b>Carry Forward</b>	<b>\$118,960.00</b>	08-09 carry forward
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$398,960.00</b>	
<b>MRBB Expenditures</b>		
Personnel	\$214,173.00	Wages and benefits for the Executive Director and Secretary.
Transportation and Telecommunications	\$ 33,755.00	Travel, transportation, postage and telecommunications
Information Services	\$ 52.00	Publishing/Printing services, information IM/IT
Professional and Special Services	\$ 34,598.00	Honoraria and Expenses for Aboriginal Members and special services
Rentals	\$ 68,373.00	Facilities, vehicles and equipment
Purchased materials, parts and supplies	<u>\$ 3,135.00</u>	Miscellaneous
<b>Total 09-10 Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$354,085.00</b>	
<b>09-10 Carry Forward:</b>	<b>\$ 44,875.00</b>	

**Mackenzie River Basin Board Financial Report**  
**April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011**

		<b>Comments</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$280,000.00</b>	As specified in the Master Agreement
<b>Carry Forward</b>	<b>\$ 44,875.00</b>	09-10 carry forward
<b>Hydrology Model funds Transferred from EC</b>	<b>\$ 7,008.00</b>	\$15,000 transferred from Environment Canada in FY 2008-09
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$296,883.00</b>	
<b>MRBB Expenditures</b>		
Personnel	\$177,880.00	Wages and benefits for the Executive Director and Secretary.
Transportation and Telecommunications	\$ 11,708.00	Travel, transportation, postage and telecommunications
Information Services	\$ 0.00	Publishing/Printing services, information IM/IT
Professional and Special Services	\$ 68,319.00	Honoraria and Expenses for Aboriginal Members and special services
Rentals	\$ 1,470.00	Facilities, vehicles and equipment
Purchased materials, parts and supplies	<u>\$ 1,416.00</u>	Miscellaneous
<b>Total 10-11 Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$ 260,792.00</b>	
<b>10-11 Carry Forward:</b>	<b>\$ 71,090.00</b>	



**Mackenzie River Basin Board Financial Report**  
**April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012**

		<b>Comments</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$280,000.00</b>	As specified in the Master Agreement
<b>Carry Forward</b>	<b>\$ 71,090.00</b>	10-11 carry forward
<b>Additional Contribution</b>	<b>\$8,505.00</b>	From Environment Canada
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$359,595.00</b>	
<b>MRBB Expenditures</b>		
Personnel	\$119,368.00	Wages and benefits for the Executive Director
Transportation and Telecommunications	\$ 7,763.00	Travel, transportation, postage and telecommunications
Information Services services, information IM/IT	\$ 3,113.00	Publishing/Printing
Professional and Special Services	\$ 41,262.00	Honoraria and Expenses for Aboriginal Members and special services
Rentals	\$ 0.00	Facilities, vehicles and equipment
Purchased materials, parts and supplies	<u>\$ 697.00</u>	Miscellaneous
<b>Total 11-12 Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$ 172,203.00</b>	
<b>11-12 Carry Forward:</b>	<b>\$ 187,392.00</b>	

## Appendix II: Mackenzie River Basin Board Meetings April 1, 2007 - March 31, 2012

During the period April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2012, the Board met eighteen times: eight of these meetings were face to face, while the remainder were teleconferences.

MRBB Meeting 23 was held in Whitehorse, Yukon from April 30 to May 2, 2007. Yukon Environment's Deputy Minister, Kevin Leary, addressed the Board Members during the meeting and discussed climate change in the Yukon. The Board also discussed the Athabasca River In-Stream Flow Needs study, and a proposed Ministers Summit, which the Board recommended should occur in the 2008-2009 fiscal year. MRBB Committees provided status updates to the Board. Members presented their respective Member agency reports. Aboriginal Members expressed appreciation for the increased attention being given to the Aboriginal interest by the MRBB during the 10 years of the Board's existence. However, Aboriginal Members noted that more work is still required. Aboriginal Peoples have commented that there are great difficulties in communicating concerns and observations about environmental deterioration to resource managers and decision makers. The MRBB, as well as other forums, need to invest in gathering, cataloguing, and using traditional knowledge to address these concerns by more extensively involving Aboriginal people. Aboriginal Members also commented that Traditional Knowledge was being underused and undervalued in Mackenzie River Basin activities. The Board raised the idea of forming a Traditional Knowledge Committee.

MRBB Meeting 24 was held in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories on November 13, 2007. The Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Government of the Northwest Territories addressed the Board Members. Minister Miltenberger informed the Board

that he intended to engage Ministers to discuss the future of the Board and press for bilateral water management negotiations. The MRBB established an Ad Hoc Ministers Summit Team in response. MRBB Committees provided status updates to the Board. Members presented their respective Member agency reports. Aboriginal Members expressed their appreciation that Traditional Knowledge was included on the meeting agenda, but more effort needed to be taken to recognize the value of Traditional Knowledge. Aboriginal Members reported on Traditional Knowledge projects that were underway in their respective regions.

MRBB Meeting 25 was held in Edmonton, Alberta on February 21, 2008. The Board prepared for a proposed meeting with Mackenzie River Basin Ministers to discuss the Board's operational direction and available resources. In addition, the Board accepted the resignation of Executive Director Jack Van Camp and on the recommendation of Environment Canada, appointed Jesse Jasper as interim Executive Director. Mr. Jasper was based in Yellowknife, NWT.

MRBB Meeting 26 was a teleconference held on April 25, 2008. The Board continued planning for the Mackenzie River Basin Ministers meeting, which would be held in Edmonton. The Board also discussed options for the MRBB Secretariat office in Fort Smith NWT, given that the office space occupied by the Secretariat at this time was not considered satisfactory.

MRBB Meeting 27 was a teleconference held on June 9, 2008. The Board continued planning for the Mackenzie River Basin Ministers meeting.

MRBB Meeting 28 was held in Edmonton, Alberta from July 2 to 4, 2008. This MRBB meeting was held in conjunction with the Mackenzie River Basin Ministers Meeting, held on July 3. On July 2, the Board confirmed final preparations for the Ministers Meeting. In addition, the Board was also briefed on a similar Ministers Meeting with the Prairie Provinces Water Board on June 16, 2008, and the MRBB presentation delivered by the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Member, Don Deranger, on behalf of the Board to the Western Premiers Meeting on May 28, 2008. The Board also discussed water management initiatives under development in the Northwest Territories (NWT Water Strategy) and British Columbia (Living Water Smart).

#### MRBB Ministers Meeting

On July 3, 2008, the MRBB met with Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner, British Columbia Environment Minister Barry Penner, Northwest Territories Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Michael Miltenberger, and representatives of the Saskatchewan and Yukon Ministers of Environment. This was the first meeting of MRBB Ministers since the Master Agreement was signed in 1997. Ministers were advised of MRBB budget and operations limitations, and specific direction was sought on future Board activities and priorities.

The Ministers directed the Board to:

- Develop an action plan to support and complete bilateral water management agreements between the jurisdictions;
- Define options for jurisdiction and/or Board monitoring and reporting on the achievement of bilateral water management agreements;
- Prepare a work plan and budget for short-term operations of the Board and MRBB Secretariat for the three years that the completion of bilateral negotiations were projected to take (part A of a Business Plan);

- Define multilateral principles and outcomes for water management negotiations based on the principles set out in the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*;
- Define options for Aboriginal roles in bilateral negotiations;
- Clarify the Board's advocacy and awareness role to focus on raising awareness for the entire basin, the state of the basin, stresses on the basin, watershed principles and cumulative effects; and
- Develop long-term options and recommendations on the composition and resource requirements for the Board, Secretariat, and member jurisdictions that address bilateral agreement monitoring and reporting, strategic plan topics, and any new focus areas.

On July 4, after the Ministers had met, the MRBB conducted regular Board business. Notably, the interim Executive Director advised the Board that the MRBB had been asked to vacate the office space by Aurora College. Aboriginal members were encouraged to identify opportunities to represent the MRBB at workshops and conferences. MRBB Committees provided status updates to the Board.

MRBB Meeting 29 was held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan from November 25 to 26, 2008. The Board discussed the status of a number of items stemming from the Ministers Meeting, including the development of a three year business plan, and a strategy and timeframe to guide the development of consistent bilateral water management agreements between jurisdictions. The Board agreed that the development of a Traditional Knowledge and Partnerships Team was the highest priority, subject to available funding.

The Board agreed that additional funds would be required to implement the actions that were directed by the Ministers, due in part

to the deliverables expected from the MRBB and in part to the attrition of spending power through inflation. The Board asked the Chair to formally request additional operational funds from the funding partners. The Board also heard a status update on the proposed Slave River Hydro project in Alberta. Board Members reviewed workplan activities for the remainder of the year including the status of the Secretariat Office. The Board also discussed ways to strengthen involvement of Aboriginal Board Members of the Board and Aboriginal people throughout the basin. MRBB Committees provided status updates to the Board.

Plans and funding for completing a second State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) for the Mackenzie River Basin, to meet the requirement in the Master Agreement to report on the state of the aquatic ecosystem, were approved. The Secretariat and SOAER Steering Committee were directed to prepare a statement of work and issue a contract for completion of the report using experienced external sources. Due to the complexity of the topics involved, the anticipated workload, and available resources, a final decision to retain a contractor to work on the SOAER was made in February 2009.

MRBB Meeting 30 was a teleconference held on January 15, 2009. The Board discussed the status of planning for a follow-up meeting of Ministers, which was proposed to occur during the February 2009 CCME Meeting in Whitehorse. The Board decided that there was not enough advance time to complete briefing materials for Ministers, and the follow up meeting was postponed. Board Members also approved a two year lease of office space in Fort Smith for the MRBB Secretariat.

MRBB Meeting 31 was held in Vancouver, British Columbia from April 8 to 9, 2009. The Board debated the nature of the MRBB mandate in the wake of the direction provided by MRBB Ministers. Members agreed that completion of the SOAER, and the collection

and use of Traditional Knowledge were the main MRBB priorities. Completion of consistent bilateral water management agreements was also a major priority, but responsibility for these, including Aboriginal consultation, lay mainly with the Provinces and Territories, and not with the MRBB.

Members also discussed the status of annual Board funding. Members had previously requested an increase in annual funding from \$40,000 to \$65,000. However, Members reported that not all jurisdictions understood that this was intended to be an ongoing commitment.

MRBB Committees provided status updates to the Board. Board Members presented their respective Member agency reports. Aboriginal Members reported that residents living downstream of the proposed Site C reservoir had raised concerns about the effects on water temperature, as it affected their ability to cross river ice. Aboriginal communities that draw drinking water from the Athabasca River were very concerned about the potential cumulative effects of upstream development. The Board was also briefed on the results of a study on the Climate Change Impacts on the Peace-Athabasca Delta and a status update on the development of the Mackenzie Basin Hydrology Model.

MRBB Meeting 32 was a teleconference held on August 6, 2009. The Board concluded that since not all jurisdictions were likely to support an ongoing increase in funding, the funding level needed to remain at \$40,000 per year, with no adjustment for inflation. Other strategies would be employed to ensure the Board expenses did not exceed available funding. The Board also discussed staffing strategies for the Executive Director position. MRBB Committees provided status updates to the Board. Board Members reviewed a draft version of the MRBB Bilateral Agreement Guidance Document.

MRBB Meeting 33 was a teleconference held on October 2, 2009. The Board discussed the option of relocating the MRBB Secretariat office to another location, saving the Board \$43,000 per year in office lease expenses plus isolated post allowance costs. Comments from jurisdictions on the draft Bilateral Guidance document had been generally positive and the idea of having the MRBB retain a negotiation facilitator under contract was raised.

MRBB Meeting 34 was a teleconference held on November 27, 2009. The Board reviewed the long term planned activities and anticipated outcomes of the draft MRBB 2010-2013 Business Plan.

MRBB Meeting 35 was held in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories from December 7 to 8, 2009. The Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Government of the Northwest Territories addressed the Board Members. Minister Miltenberger expressed concern about plans to relocate the Secretariat Office from Fort Smith, given that its location was agreed to by the MRBB Ministers. Minister Miltenberger stressed the need for an independent third party review on the progress achieved by the MRBB since its inception. Minister Miltenberger felt that the review should consider operational structures, governance, adequacy of Aboriginal Member representation, as well as the location of the Secretariat office.

The MRBB reviewed and revised the content of the *Mackenzie River Basin Board 2010-2013 Business Plan* document and workplan. The Business Plan discussion included the draft Bilateral Guidance Document. Aboriginal Members expressed concern that the Guidance Document did not mention a role for Aboriginal Governments in the negotiation process. The MRBB also reviewed the budget and workplan for Fiscal Year 2009-2010, with the intent of ensuring that Board expenditures did not exceed the available budget. This was made possible through in-kind support by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and

Environment Canada, which were dedicated to specific projects. The Board also met with the SOAER Contractor. In addition, the Board decided to staff the Executive Director position in Yellowknife, NWT and relocate the Secretariat office to that location.

MRBB Meeting 36 was a teleconference held on December 18, 2009. The Board reviewed the *Mackenzie River Basin Board 2010-2013 Business Plan* and made plans to finalize the document. The Board also discussed Board funding options and concluded that they would have to manage resources based on the funding formula set forth in the Master Agreement.

MRBB Meeting 37 was a two part teleconference held on July 28 and August 6, 2010. Board Members provided updates on the status of current and upcoming bilateral water management negotiations. Members thanked former interim Executive Director Jesse Jasper for his service to the Board, and were introduced to Don Pittman, who had been selected as Executive Director by a Board Hiring Committee.

The Board also discussed the state of its finances. The *Mackenzie River Basin Board 2010-2013 Business Plan* was developed based on the assumption that annual funding would increase by at least \$25,000 per signatory. Since the Board did not receive unanimous consent to increase funding, allocations remained at \$40,000 per jurisdiction per year. At this time, fixed costs were projected to exceed the available budget for Fiscal Year 2010-2011. Board Members discussed budget management scenarios, based on the temporary transfer of some fixed costs to the jurisdictions, and not acting on any flexible costs. Staff transfer and the end of the office lease in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories during the next fiscal year were anticipated to reduce fixed costs so that the operating budget would be within the annual funding formula.

MRBB Meeting 38 was held in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories from July 12 to 13, 2011. The MRBB reviewed Fiscal Year 2010-2011 activities and expenditures, discussed and approved a work plan and the budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012. The Board also discussed the status of the State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report and the draft Letter of Transmittal to Ministers.

The Board was briefed on the status of the Mackenzie River Basin hydrology model, and, on the advice of the MRBB Technical Committee, allocated funds to support a workshop for model users from the jurisdictions. The Board also reviewed the new MRBB website, and heard about the process to select a facilitator to assist with bilateral water management negotiations on the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave River Watersheds. Members presented their respective Member agency reports. Aboriginal Members expressed concerns about water quality, particularly in communities and around the oil sands in light of anticipated federal government funding cuts. Aboriginal Members also commented that Traditional Knowledge is starting to be considered by decision makers in the Mackenzie River Basin and this momentum needs to be sustained. The Secretariat reported that Public Works and Government Services Canada agreed to assume the cost of the Fort Smith Secretariat Office lease late in the fiscal year, because the lease was set to expire. Public Works and Government Services Canada also retroactively returned funds paid by the Board during Fiscal Year 2010-2011. This helped the Board run a budget surplus, instead of the deficit that was originally projected.

MRBB Meeting 39 was a teleconference held on November 30, 2011. The MRBB charted a path for completing the State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report, and discussed the need for a lessons learned review of the report drafting process. The Board was briefed on the status of bilateral water management negotiations, and the Mackenzie River Basin Hydrologic

Model Users Workshop. The Board was also briefed on the outcomes of the MRBB Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee, which met the previous day.

MRBB Meeting 40 was a teleconference held on January 16, 2012. In light of several expert panel reports that comprehensively described the state of knowledge of oil sands monitoring, the Board decided to focus on key messages, and adapted the SOAER into the *Mackenzie River Basin Board's 2012 Issues Report - Oil sands development, hydroelectric development, and climate change in the Mackenzie River Basin*. The Issues Report was a high level overview of the state of knowledge of the oil sands, hydroelectric development, climate change, and traditional knowledge in the Mackenzie River Basin. The Board approved this approach in principle, pending some outstanding minor edits.

## Appendix III: MRBB Membership at Fiscal Year End, 2007-08 to 2011-12

### March 31, 2008

#### **Alberta**

Member: Robert Harrison  
Alternate: Vacant  
Aboriginal Member: Alden Armstrong

#### **Northwest Territories**

Member: Bob Bailey  
Alternate: Doris Eggers  
Aboriginal Member: Sonny MacDonald

#### **Yukon**

Member: Kevin McDonnell  
Alternate: Robert Truelson  
Aboriginal Member: William Josie

#### **Indian and Northern Affairs Canada**

Member: Vacant  
Alternate: Bob Reid

#### **British Columbia**

Member: Lynn Kriwoken  
Alternate: Bob Brown  
Aboriginal Member: Vera Nicholson

#### **Saskatchewan**

Member: Doug Johnson  
Alternate: Vacant  
Aboriginal Member: Don Deranger

#### **Environment Canada**

Member: Tim Goos  
Alternate: Vacant

#### **Health Canada**

Member: David Muddle  
Alternate: Jagtar Sandhu

### March 31, 2009

#### **Alberta**

Member: Robert Harrison  
Alternate: Sal Figliuzzi  
Aboriginal Member: Alden Armstrong

#### **Northwest Territories**

Member: Gary Bohnet  
Alternate: Mark Warren  
Aboriginal Member: Sonny MacDonald

#### **Yukon**

Member: Kevin McDonnell  
Alternate: Robert Truelson  
Aboriginal Member: William Josie

#### **Indian and Northern Affairs Canada**

Member: Trish Merrithew-Mercredi  
Alternate: Carole Mills

#### **British Columbia**

Member: Lynn Kriwoken  
Alternate: Bob Brown  
Aboriginal Member: Vera Nicholson

#### **Saskatchewan**

Member: Doug Johnson  
Alternate: Vacant  
Aboriginal Member: Don Deranger

#### **Environment Canada**

Member: Randal Cripps  
Alternate: Tim Goos

#### **Health Canada**

Member: Arthur Murphy  
Alternate: Bryan Haggerty

### **March 31, 2010**

#### **Alberta**

Member: Robert Harrison  
Alternate: Sal Figliuzzi  
Aboriginal Member: Alden Armstrong

#### **Northwest Territories**

Member: Mark Warren  
Alternate: Meghan Beveridge  
Aboriginal Member: Sonny MacDonald

#### **Yukon**

Member: Kevin McDonnell  
Alternate: Robert Truelson  
Aboriginal Member: Vacant

#### **Indian and Northern Affairs Canada**

Member: Trish Merrithew-Mercredi  
Alternate: Teresa Joudrie

#### **British Columbia**

Member: Lynn Kriwoken  
Alternate: Pieter Bekker  
Aboriginal Member: Vera Nicholson

#### **Saskatchewan**

Member: Bob Carles  
Alternate: Doug Johnson  
Aboriginal Member: Don Deranger

#### **Environment Canada**

Member: Randal Cripps  
Alternate: Mike Norton

#### **Health Canada**

Member: Arthur Murphy  
Alternate: Bryan Haggerty

### **March 31, 2011**

#### **Alberta**

Member: Robert Harrison  
Alternate: Sal Figliuzzi  
Aboriginal Member: Alden Armstrong

#### **Northwest Territories**

Member: Mark Warren  
Alternate: Aiyana Lajeunesse  
Aboriginal Member: Sonny MacDonald

#### **Yukon**

Member: Jon Bowen  
Alternate: Robert Truelson  
Aboriginal Member: Sharon Peter

#### **Indian and Northern Affairs Canada**

Member: Trish Merrithew-Mercredi  
Alternate: Teresa Joudrie

#### **British Columbia**

Member: Lynn Kriwoken  
Alternate: Pieter Bekker  
Aboriginal Member: Vera Nicholson

#### **Saskatchewan**

Member: Bob Carles  
Alternate: Doug Johnson  
Aboriginal Member: Don Deranger

#### **Environment Canada**

Member: Mike Norton  
Alternate: Mike Renouf

#### **Health Canada**

Member: Arthur Murphy  
Alternate: David Muddle



**March 31, 2012**

**Alberta**

Member: Robert Harrison  
Alternate: Brian Yee  
Aboriginal Member: Vacant

**Northwest Territories**

Member: Ray Case  
Alternate: Meghan Beveridge  
Aboriginal Member: Sonny MacDonald

**Yukon**

Member: Jon Bowen  
Alternate: Robert Truelson  
Aboriginal Member: Sharon Peter

**Indian and Northern Affairs Canada**

Member: Trish Merrithew-Mercredi  
Alternate: Teresa Joudrie

**British Columbia**

Member: Lynn Kriwoken  
Alternate: Pieter Bekker  
Aboriginal Member: Vera Nicholson

**Saskatchewan**

Member: Bob Carles  
Alternate: Gary Neil  
Aboriginal Member: Don Deranger

**Environment Canada**

Member: Mike Norton  
Alternate: Mike Renouf

**Health Canada**

Member: Ward Chickoski  
Alternate: David Muddle



Mackenzie River Basin Board  
P.O. Box 2310 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7  
867 669-4701  
Website: [www.mrbb.ca](http://www.mrbb.ca)