



MACKENZIE RIVER BASIN BOARD

The Board's Vision: A healthy and diverse aquatic ecosystem for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mackenzie River Basin Board Secretariat

Mackenzie River Basin Board Meeting No. 60

June 5th, 2019 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, June 6th, 2019 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Sandstone Boardroom
4th floor, Gallery Building 4923 – 52nd Street
Yellowknife, NWT

Board Members and Alternates:

Nadine Stiller	Chair	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Carmen de la Chevrotière	Government Member	Alberta
Vera Nicholson	Indigenous Member	British Columbia
Lynn Kriwoken	Government Member	British Columbia
Leon Andrew	Indigenous Member	Northwest Territories
Nathen Richea ¹ (June 5)	Alternate Member	Northwest Territories
Robert Jenkins (June 6)	Government Member	Northwest Territories
Joseph Tsannie	Indigenous Member	Saskatchewan
John Fahlman	Government Member	Saskatchewan
Corrine Porter	Indigenous Member	Yukon
Heather Jirousek	Government Member	Yukon
Emma Seward	Alternate Member	Yukon
Mike Renouf	Alternate Member	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Nicholas Mitchell	Alternate Member	Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)

Secretariat:

Jenny Ferone		Environment and Climate Change Canada
Paula Siwik		Environment and Climate Change Canada

Guests June 5:

Lynne Quinnett-Abbott	Chair, SOAER SC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
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Guests June 5 and 6:

Cristiana Seixas		University of Alberta (visiting scholar)
Wayne Dybvig	Contractor	Strategic Review

Regrets:

Chantale Roberege	Member	Health Canada
Darren Calliou	Indigenous Member	Alberta

¹ Attending for Robert Jenkins

60.1 Call to Order

The 60th MRBB Meeting convened at 9:00 am CST. The MRBB had quorum.

Goal 9. MRBB affairs are administered effectively**60.2 Approval of Agenda**

Approved with the addition of a roundtable orientation for the new Executive Director.

60.3 Membership

Chantal Roberge (Health Canada) and Emma Seward (Yukon) are new members. Corrine Porter's membership is extended until April 2020.

60.4 Approval of Minutes, MRBB Meeting 59

Decision: the minutes from Meeting #59, held November 21 and 22, 2018 are approved with minor edits.

Decision: for this and future meetings, will strive for minutes to be captured at a level acceptable for all agencies to post on the website.

60.5 Action Items not Addressed Elsewhere on the Agenda

Many items listed on the action item-tracking table are complete and important contracts that will allow for progress on others are in place.

Goal 1. Evaluate the ecological health of the whole basin**60.6 SOAER Update – L. Quinnett-Abbott**

L. Quinnett-Abbott informed the board that the review committee was successful in selecting a contractor and work will begin this week. The timeline was adjusted to reflect a March 2021 end date.

Goal 5. Support and facilitate the increased participation of Aboriginal Peoples in MRBB activities**60.7 Update from the Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee - V Nicholson, and J Tsannie**Tracking Change Project - Years 1 to 3

The focus of years 1 to 3 was on community events; land based gathering of traditional knowledge such as culture camps and fish camps, and interviews with elders. The original intent was to support 10 communities but the project has exceeded that goal. Other highlights include participation at COP 24, and the UN Global Knowledge Summit. Literature review of local and traditional knowledge in the basin have been posted on the Tracking Changes website

Tracking Change Project- Looking ahead

Remaining resources will be dedicated primarily toward documenting activity and reporting on findings via grants to support communities in this work. Propose to wrap up the project in 2021 with a global knowledge symposium. It was proposed that the MRBB spring meeting be held in conjunction with symposium.

Decision: to accept the appointment of Karin Smith-Fargey to the TKSP committee.

Joint Steering Committee (SOAER-TKSP)

MRBB information letters and MRBB Annual Reports were sent to 165 communities in the basin and they inspired some follow up, questions and outreach.

Goal 4. Educate the public, share information, and learn from others about matters concerning the ecological health of the whole basin

60.8 Communications Update

Website update (C Power/J Ferone)

The MRBB website content management system was overhauled to address problems and glitches of former aging system. The look and layout are similar, with some reorganization to increase usefulness for members and the public.

Story mapping (C Power/J Ferone):

This pilot project was undertaken to explore potential for enhanced, interactive communication relating to the basin. Overall board members liked this tool and saw a lot of potential for it going forward.

Goal 8. Information, knowledge and research are shared amongst jurisdictions

60.9 Agency and indigenous Member Reports (Member Updates)

Indigenous Member Updates

NT: L. Andrew shared that last year snow was shallow and a rain in mid March washed the snow away. The area used to get more snow (3 to 4 feet). The road was closed in March because of warm weather. The ice was not thick on the Mackenzie River and vanished quickly following an unusual break-up. The trees usually leaf out in June but this year they were much earlier. A youth forum was held in Yellowknife and topics related to the environment were discussed. Innovative projects that supported water stewardship and youth engagement were piloted this year. The projects will be evaluated and may be supported in the future.

SK: J Tsannie Climate change and the decline of the caribou is huge concern. There is support for grassroots management plans for caribou, discussion around hunt for sport vs hunt for sustenance, and preservation of calving grounds. People raised on caribou need caribou. Cost of living is high so people rely on local foods and support. Fishers see cysts in fish and increase in invasive species including zebra mussels in Wollaston Lake. Important to make decisions that will support future generations. Working with SRC to look at energy efficiency.

BC: V Nicholson Fort Nelson is engaged in bi-lateral agreements with the province. The area is very dry. Water shortages predicted to be an issue. Using the FireSmart program to improve resistance to fire. Mackenzie River is low right now.

YK: C Porter The guardian program has expanded and there are currently nine guardians in the Mackenzie River watershed. Community members will do the river sampling and working with BC to do benthic sampling in the Liard River. Six community members are certified in the CABIN protocol. Data will be shared on the Mackenzie data stream.

Jurisdiction Updates:

NT: N Richea shared that ENR is currently focusing on the recently developed climate change strategic framework and action plan. In addition, ENR is promoting the idea of a northern centre of excellence to support a knowledge economy focused on permafrost research and mine site reclamation. Work has begun to modernize and update the Water Act to include Traditional Knowledge, and language around water stewardship. A draft may be available by 2020. ENR is planning a groundwater well drilling and monitoring program targeting the Dunvegan formation near Fort Liard this fall. Sustainable Livelihood and Traditional Knowledge action plans are currently in development.

BC: L Kriwoken was invited to a workshop on *Adaptive management for an international river basin: the future of the Columbia River Treaty*, at the University of California Berkeley, May 9-11 where she shared her experience and perspective on the Mackenzie River Basin water agreements and associated governance. The

workshop participants examined a number of examples of where adaptive management is being applied in a transboundary setting and concluded that adaptive management and governance be considered as a promising approach to implement in the Columbia River Basin.

CIRNAC: N Mitchell stated that the enabling legislation to formally create the two new Federal Departments (CIRNAC and ISC) has been tabled in Parliament, and that FNIHB has been transferred from Health Canada into Indigenous Services Canada.

Regarding two key CIRNAC policy initiatives, the Indigenous rights recognition framework (RRF) referred to last meeting is on hold, and the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF) is still in development awaiting Cabinet approval.

YK: H Jirousek The territory is concluding a 5-year review on the water strategy. There are plans for a 2019 Water Forum that could include presentations on MRBB linked work. There is a current focus on groundwater and discussion about a potential groundwater regulation. The Yukon will launch a water well database that shares submitted water well logs. It was noted that some Indigenous communities have names for certain groundwater deposits. Community monitoring has been expanded to include snow pack monitoring and partnerships with some First Nation governments/organizations.

AB: C de la Chevrotière: Alberta is piloting a new agency update template that will be shared at the fall meeting. Currently working to confirm process to transfer funds for the MRBB MA. Have lost contact with D Calliou, the indigenous member for Alberta. C de la Chevrotière will continue to try and contact him, and look into a new appointment if required.

SK: J Fahlman Mining activity in the basin has been affected by the low price of Uranium. Dennison mine (Wheeler River) is moving to an Environmental Assessment and the Gunner Mine clean up is ongoing. The province is assuming responsibility for federal dams in the south of the province. Water management (drainage) discussions ongoing.

60.10 Giant Mine Tour – 3-5 pm
Adjourn Day 1 5 pm

Day 2 – June 6, 2019

60.11 Call to order – 8:35. AM

Discussion of other federal partners with interest in basin (discussion continued from meeting 59)

Parks Canada may be interested in participating on the board, as they are responsible for water management within National Parks of which there are four in the Mackenzie River Basin (Jasper, Nahanni, Nááts'ihch'oh, Wood Buffalo).

Goal 6. Encourage the development and implementation of bilateral water management agreements

60.12 Bilateral Water Management Updates - Round Table

British Columbia: Work on the BWMA between BC and AB is on hold. Work to build relationships and gather information to support the implementation of the BWMA between BC/YK and BC/NT are ongoing.

Yukon: Actively recruiting Indigenous members and reviewing draft TOR to support implementation of the BC/YK BWMA. Will hold a face-to-face meeting in Watson Lake during the month of October. Updates to

the BWMA between YK and NT focus on the Peel River sub-Basin, and a potential new agreement for Liard River sub- Basin will be discussed.

Northwest Territories: NT is in a position to start consultation on Peel and Liard agreements with YK. Investing time into development of a BWMA between NT and SK, and NT continues to report as per the BWMA with AB.

Saskatchewan: The legal advice and technical expertise are in place to advance discussions on the development of a BWMA between NT and SK, and SK and AB.

Alberta: Preparing for upcoming meetings with SK and BC

Goal 9. MRBB affairs are administered effectively.

A draft 2017-2019 Annual Report was prepared for this meeting. Members are asked to provide comments and feedback by the end of June.

60.14 Administrative Items (Information) – M. Renouf

2018/19: Final numbers are expected by the end of July, 2019.

Decision: Proceed for regular invoicing for the jurisdictions as in past years.

Goal 2. Investigate matters concerning the ecological health of the whole basin

60.15 Wood Buffalo Action Plan/ Environmental Flows and Hydrology group update – Chair (N. Stiller)

A task team is working on a Terms of Reference for the Environmental Flow Needs sub-committee. Alberta Environment and Parks and Parks Canada are collaborating on an evaluation of current weir structures.

Goal 2. Investigate matters concerning the ecological health of the whole basin

60.16 Science/Technical Committee Update

The discussion focussed on the proposed water quality sub-committee. This sub-committee would encourage consistency in water quality reporting in BWMA's.

DECISION: The MRBB members agree to strike, for strategic purposes, a committee under the science group that is tasked with exploring common water quality practises and procedures. This group will be guided by Indigenous members and a shared perspective on the value of water. The secretariat will support with logistics.

Goal 9. MRBB affairs are administered effectively.

60.17 Update on MRBB Strategic Review Contract (Information)

W Dybvig reviewed the team members, some key documents and decisions that has guided the current state of water governance in Canada, and noted that while there are lessons to be learned from the PPWB, the MRBB is much more complex.

Emphasis is on how to better implement the agreement but there is no desire to change the agreement.

Minutes and annual reports will be reviewed for pertinent information and board members will be interviewed.

60.18 Public material identified

60.20 Next Meeting

Decision: The next meeting will be December 3 to 5, 2019 in Edmonton.