



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

**Mackenzie River Basin Board Meeting No. 64**

**Date: May 13, 2020**

**9:00 am to 12:00 pm Pacific DST; 10 to 1 pm Mountain DST; 11 to 2 Central DST**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**Attendees**

Meghan Beveridge	Alternate Member	Northwest Territories
Carmen de la Chevrotière	Alternate Member	Alberta
Andrew Wilson	Interim Government Member	Alberta
Lana Lowe	Indigenous Member	British Columbia
Ted Zimmerman	Government Member	British Columbia
Heather Jirousek	Government Member	Yukon
Emma Seward	Alternate Member	Yukon
Corrine Porter	Indigenous Member	Yukon
Nadine Stiller	Government Member	ECCC
Patrick Cherneski	Alternate Member	ECCC
Laurie Wein	Government Member	Parks Canada Agency
Nicholas Mitchell	Alternate Member	CIRNAC

**Secretariat:**

Paula Siwik	Executive Director	ECCC
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**Guest:**

Bradley Summerfield	JSC chair	ECCC
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**64.1 Welcome**

- Meeting #64 of the Mackenzie River Basin Board was called to order at 10:00 MDST. There was quorum. Members reviewed the agenda and no additions or amendments were proposed.

***Decision: Agenda was approved.***

**64.2 Membership**

- A Wilson will sit as interim Board member for Alberta, C de la Chevrotière will continue as alternate.
- The confirmation process for the AB Indigenous member continues.
- C Porter is appointed as the Indigenous member for Yukon for 3 years

- SOAER Committee membership changes include Emma Seward participating as the Yukon representative and Lucie Thomson representing the province of British Columbia.

#### **64.3 Minutes of Meeting #63**

- No feedback received to date. Please send comments by end of May
- Minutes will be approved at the fall teleconference

#### **64.4 Action Items not Addressed Elsewhere in #64 (Information / Discussion)**

- Honoraria Policy: The honoraria policy will be reviewed. The following topics will be discussed/clarified at the fall meeting:
  - Indigenous alternate members – do not currently have alternates
  - Federal Travel Rates – when do standard rates apply
- The policy will be revised to clarify per diem rates (meetings less than 4 hours long)
- Information package for new members: minor edits noted including reference to “water quality” on page 5.
- Board members to send final revisions to the information package to Paula by the end of June after which point it will be considered final.
- Draft text for 2019-20 annual report was shared. Please make edits/revisions in the word document. Once revisions have been received and integrated, Paula will issue a contract to have someone do the layout. The document will be available for a final review.

#### **64.5 Administrative Items**

##### Budget Discussion

- Explanation of the “Other” category will be expanded going forward.
- Budget updates will note the exceptional circumstances of Covid 19.

***Decision to approve 20/21 budget with removal of note 1 and with addition another note that clarifies the “other categories” row. Notes 2-4 will be assigned to appropriate expenditures where applicable. (H Jirousek, C de la Chevrotière, passed)***

- The Board revisited past discussion around spending authority and guidance for what expenses require the Secretariat to seek approval from the Board.
- The Executive Director needs approval to move forward with work and a degree of flexibility to respond to unforeseen expenses. Some discussion on whether \$10,000.00 is an appropriate threshold. It was noted that Board business rarely exceeds \$10,000.00.
- The Executive Director is empowered to make the decisions necessary once budget is approved

***Decision: If any one item exceeds \$10,000 within the \$40,000 “other” category P. Siwik will come back to the board.***

#### **64.6 SOAER Update (Information/Discussion)**

B. Summerfield presented an update of the SOAER that included draft text and web site mock-ups for the Great Bear sub-basin.

- Members are encouraged to connect with committee members for regular updates; moving into a busy phase and specific sub-basin content will be shared.

- Decision makers will apply their own lens and determine how to use data to make meaningful decisions and implement management strategies.
- This report will not make management recommendations.

#### **64.7 Water Quality Task team Update (information/Discussion)**

- Water Quality task team is under the umbrella of strategic science committee.
- Task team has agreed upon a Terms of Reference and engaged a consultant to support the development of a work plan.
- The consultant identified different approaches to water quality assessment across jurisdictions, and some key issues that need to be addressed before a work plan can be finalized. These include: capacity, consensus based process and consideration of Traditional Knowledge. Ideas and options provided for consideration.
- The consultant has shared work to date in a presentation.

#### **64.8 MRBB and the Wood Buffalo Environmental Flows and Hydrology group**

- N Stiller and L Wein spoke to this agenda item
- UNECSO world heritage committee tasked governments to address concerns around Wood Buffalo National Park world heritage site.
- Have developed a multi-jurisdictional Action Plan
- ECCC engaged with the Environmental Flows and Hydrology (EFH) network for the Peace Athabasca Delta (PAD). Action Plan for the PAD was approved in 2019. The Action Plan represents collective effort in science/modelling and management.
- About half of the recommendations in the Action Plan fall to the EFH group; complex multi-lateral table.
- Focus is on cumulative impacts and better incorporation of traditional knowledge.
- Work to implement has taken the form of various task teams.
- Undertook some feasibility work to look at control structures; results of that work was presented at end of March.
- Work around improved modelling of flow in the PAD
- Indigenous Knowledge committee working to establish data sharing agreements; plans that were in place have shifted due to Covid.
- Clear linkages with the MRBB; communities in the PAD are interested in establishing an agreement under the Canada Water Act. Potential to have an in-depth and meaningful discussion about those linkages.
- C de la Chevrotière: agree that there are lots of linkages between board and the action plan. The process for providing recommendations to relevant government authorities is being discussed in drafting a Terms of Reference. SOAER will play a role in tracking outcomes.
- Additional information will be shared at future meetings.
- T Zimmerman: this touches on the broader Strategic Policy discussion in the fall. Envision a role for the MRBB in interpreting information, and advocating for change and management actions from governments. MRBB could interpret results and provided unified voice.

#### **64.9 Roundtable Updates**

- L. Lowe: Dealing with the response to Covid 19. Attention being placed on security checkpoints, self isolation assistance and making sure people are safe and healthy. Turning attention to how to return to normal

- T. Zimmerman: Also focussed on response to Covid 19. The province is looking to gradually open the economy. Two significant departmental changes; Kevin Jardine is the new DM, and James Mack is the new ADM.
- H. Jirousek: Covid 19 has changed the consultation process. Currently trying to find other ways to meet and consult on the Peel bi-lateral agreement and Water Quality Objectives and Effluent Quality Standards given Covid 19. Documents have been shared (outside of a consultation process) on the latter with a commitment to follow up. May develop engagement videos. Record snowpacks and some concerns about flooding and access to rural communities during Covid.
- C. Porter: The focus is on Covid 19 and future recovery. Guardians are supporting the Covid task team. The community is strategizing on how to maintain community engagement.
- M. Beveridge: It has been four weeks since the last case of Covid 19 in the Northwest Territories so moving toward a phased recovery approach. Staff are monitoring the flood potential in the Peel River. Flood risk in the Hay and Liard has passed. AB-NT BWMA established a TK WG that are working on a Terms of Reference and work plan. A contract was completed to look at existing TK frameworks, best practises, and literature. The resulting work will inform development of a TK framework for the BWMA's. The commitment to create a framework is a part of multiple BWMA's so some degree of consistency would be helpful. Work to date has referenced some TKSP material.
- Q: are there key linkages between the BWMA groups?
- A: In terms of the process to develop a framework, too early in the process. Appendix C of the agreement has a list of best practises.
- Plan to bring this forward to the TKSP committee and ask for help/guidance.
- Once the report is finalized, will share it with board members.
- C de la Chevrotière /AWilson: Ice jam conditions on both the Peace and the Athabasca moving into the PAD and we are working with partners and multi-jurisdictional working groups to monitor the situation. Considering future collation of information on the Alberta Rivers app. Work continues on engagement for AB BC bilateral agreement. Starting to look at flood potential in the south of the province. Current restructuring still going on. Stephanie Clarke is the ADM.
- N Mitchell: no significant updates from the agency report from December. The Yellowknife office focussed on supporting the Federal response to Covid. Some of the implementation work on Arctic and Northern Policy Framework and the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is ongoing.
- L Wein: involved in monitoring the flooding in the PAD. PCA sites are closed to the public but trying to be creative in keeping essential work ongoing. Continuing virtual work when possible.
- Reminder: agency reports presented at the fall meeting

#### **64.10 Strategic and Operational Review (Information/Discussion)**

- P Siwik confirmed that there was support to work on a Strategic Plan. The goal is to spend some time at the fall meeting and develop high level aspirational plan. Needs to be a clearer link

between MRBB duties and goals. Proposal on next steps included in the binder (Tab 10).  
Envisions full day to work through this plan at fall meeting.

- Initial work will be informed by the December 5 workshop report. Hoping to address vulnerabilities and reinforce strengths in a deliberate manner. Would like a few volunteers to run pieces by for early feedback and brain storming. T Zimmerman, H Jirousek and N Mitchell volunteered. Paula will do some independent work and connect as required.

#### **64.11 Fall meeting: September in Fort St. John; discuss plan B**

- Current indicators suggest that the Board should plan for later in the fall. Travel to northern communities may not be wise as Covid 19 will likely still be a factor. P Siwik will plan for both a face to face a remote meeting.
- Fall meeting: November 25 and 26 in Vancouver or by virtual means. Postpone meeting in Fort St. John and Site C tour until spring 2021.
- Adjournment at 12:22

**Goal 1: Evaluate the health of the whole basin**

**Goal 2: Investigate matters concerning the ecological health of the whole basin**

**Goal 3: Advocate for the maintenance and improvement of the ecological health of the whole basin**

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

**Goal 5. Support and facilitate the increased participation of Aboriginal Peoples in MRBB activities**

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

**Goal 7. Ministers, Aboriginal leaders and appropriate staff of jurisdictions are informed of and engaged in MRBB activities**

**Goal 8. Information, knowledge and research are shared among jurisdictions – written reports**

**Goal 9. MRBB affairs are administered effectively.**