



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. 65

Date: October 20, 2020

Attendees

Ted Zimmerman	Government Member	British Columbia
Lana Lowe	Indigenous Member	British Columbia
Chief Gerry Cheezie	Indigenous Member	Alberta
Carmen de la Chevrotière	Alternate Member	Alberta
Andrew Wilson	Interim Government Member	Alberta
John Fahlman	Government Member	Saskatchewan
Vice Chief Joseph Tsannie	Indigenous Member	Saskatchewan
Corrine Porter	Indigenous Member	Yukon
Heather Jirousek	Government Member	Yukon
Emma Seward	Alternate Member	Yukon
Meghan Beveridge	Alternate Member	Northwest Territories
Leon Andrew	Indigenous Member	Northwest Territories
Nadine Stiller	Government Member	ECCC
Patrick Cherneski	Alternate Member	ECCC
Jonah Mitchell	Government Member	Parks Canada Agency
Nicholas Mitchell	Government Member	CIRNAC

61.5 and 65.2 Welcome and Membership Information (Goal 9)

- Welcome Chief G. Cheezie to the Board.
- A discussion on the spill on the Athabasca River in early October will be added to the agenda. This item will be discussed during the roundtable.

Decision: Agenda was approved.

65.3 Approval of Minutes (Decision) (Goal 9)

- Meeting #63 minutes – track change version and clean version has been circulated; no further comments received
- Meeting #64 minutes – updated draft based on changes received to date
- One minor correction on meeting minutes #64.

Decision: Meeting minutes from meeting 63 and 64 were approved.

65.4 Action Items not Addressed Elsewhere in Meeting 63 or 64 (Information and Discussion)

- The Board reviewed relevant rows on the Action Item table; no concerns or questions

Informal communication committee network

- In lieu of a formal communications committee, MRBB messages/updates will be shared through social media accounts of member organizations.

65.5 Annual Report Update (Information) (Goal 9 and 7)

- Will circulate draft for comment.

65.6 Changes to the MRBB website – (Approval) (Goal 4)

- Story map: Board members asked to see the story map one more time.
- Noted that the way meeting material is shared was established for in-person meetings. Will consider ways to improve.

65.7 Round Table Updates - (Information) (Goal 6)

- Spill from a Pulp & Paper mill on the Athabasca River in early October. Downstream communities heard about it 2 weeks later. Communication should be more timely. Questions were raised about the volume and contents of the release.
- Suggested that the MRBB be assigned the responsibility to get this information for the members. Concern about these spills and the health and safety of the communities.
- An emergency response system generates notifications in an emergency event, for those that are expected to be impacted by the emergency. The topic of general notification was raised in relation to high water this summer, where general information was desired, as there were concerns that high water and ice jam conditions in the Athabasca River next to tailings ponds could become an emergency. This is a topic that could be looked at more closely.
- The recent event is currently under investigation. It did not trigger an emergency response. It appears to be a temporary exceedance and the plant is operating normally again. There are no health or safety flags linked to the event. A. Wilson has and will continue to seek information from the Alberta Environment and Parks compliance group, who is dealing directly with the issue.
- Questions were raised about the consequences for companies when these events occur. There is concern about the health of the Athabasca River.
- The government of the Northwest Territories is monitoring at the provincial/territorial border, and will stay in touch with the Government of Alberta about compliance actions.
- Question about the relationship between Indigenous and government members from a jurisdiction. Should the members from a jurisdiction be meeting in advance? Where do we have these conversations?
- Answer: It is up to the members from each jurisdiction to establish the working relationship.
- Is communicating with Indigenous communities in the basin part of the role of the Indigenous member? Would appreciate additional discussion on that topic.
- Board members committed to further work and discussion on the topic of environmental emergency notification in the basin. This item will be included on the agenda for the November meeting.

65.8 Administrative Items (Information and Discussion) (Goal 9)

Learning Sessions

- Virtual meetings have not included invited speakers. The Board will hold separate “Learning sessions” in December and January to profile some of the ongoing work in the basin.

Finances

- The 2019-20 funds were adjusted to include employee benefits, and 2020-21 projections were adjusted to account for the lack of travel.

65.9 November meeting (Information) (Goal 9)

Strategic and Operational Review and Planning Session

- A survey will be shared to further support prioritization of recommendations. Further analysis will draft a set of common goals and priorities.

Communication in challenging times

- Board members will consider turning attention to the Strategic Science Committee. The committee could be a forum for timely discussion. Clearly defining the need and purpose (why are we doing this) is important.
- The advocacy role of the Board was discussed. Suggestion that the Board develop a report on Board advocacy, and whether that work resulted in additional protection for water.

Final Thoughts

- British Columbia has released a scientific review of hydraulic fracking.
- There are additional challenges associated with doing work virtually. Concentrate on the things that are important and share information.
- Members appreciate the practise of holding an administrative meeting prior to the main meeting
- Discussion on the Strategic Science Committee should focus on is trying to fix. Does not believe the Board has had a focussed discussion on advocacy.

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.