



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. 67

Date: May 4, 2021

(9:30 to 12:30 PDST; 10:30 to 13:30 MDST; 11:30 to 14:30 CDST)

Attendees

Nadine Stiller (chair)	Government Member	ECCC
Nicholas Mitchell	Alternate Member	CIRNAC
Carmen de la Chevrotière	Alternate Member	Alberta
Andrew Wilson	Government Member	Alberta
Corrine Porter	Indigenous Member	Yukon
Ted Zimmerman	Government Member	British Columbia
Lana Lowe	Indigenous Member	British Columbia
John Fahlman	Government Member	Saskatchewan
Jonah Mitchell	Government Member	Parks Canada Agency
Heather Jirousek	Government Member	Yukon
Leon Andrew	Indigenous Member	Northwest Territories
Vice Chief Tsannie	Indigenous Member	Saskatchewan
Nathen Richea	Alternate Member	Northwest Territories
John Macdonald	Government Member	Northwest Territories
Laurie Wein	Alternate Member	Parks Canada Agency
Patrick Cherneski	Alternate Member	ECCC

Secretariat

Paula Siwik	Executive Director	ECCC
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Welcome – N Stiller

67.1 – Approval of Agenda (Goal 9)

Motion to approve the agenda – (J. Fahlman; T Zimmerman; passed)

67.2 - Membership (Goal 9)

- J. Macdonald, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Environment and Natural Resources has been appointed as member for the Government of Northwest Territories. J. MacDonald previously served as ADM for education, and worked for the Nunavut Government.
- N. Richea, interim alternate member, has been formally appointed as alternate member.

67.3 Approval of Minutes (Goal 9)

- Minutes from meeting #65 have been circulated previously. Minutes from meeting #66 were shared as part of the material for this meeting.
- Minute for meeting # 65: The Government of Alberta shared some changes intended to clarify the section of the minutes that pertains to the ALPAC incident.
- Meeting #66 –Edits and changes shared in the complete version of the minutes will also be applied to the reduced version.

67.4 Action Items not Addressed Elsewhere in Meeting 67 (Goal 9)

- Notification summary: P. Siwik will reach out to government members to validate the draft assessment.
- The 2019 student intern project on long-term flow trends is included with the materials for this meeting.
- Draft SOAER Communication Plan attached and will be reviewed/discussed later in this meeting.
- First learning session: successful event with some good feedback and connections.

67.5 Annual Report Update (Goal 9 and 7)

- Final draft of the 2019/20 annual report is included in the meeting package.
- Final changes will be sent to P. Siwik.

Motion to approve 2019/20 annual report with minor revisions and final verification and support from the governments of BC and NWT. (C de la Chevrotière; J Fahlman; passed)

- Work on the 2020/21 annual report will begin mid-May.

67.6 – Communications Plan for the SOAER (Goal 4 and 7)

- At meeting #65, MRBB members agreed to use their networks to promote the SOAER. The posts will be designed to broadcast the message that the SOAER website is live and direct people to send feedback via email to the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat will draft the messages for approval by MRBB members. Members will decide if they share posts and what they post. Formal media releases are not part of the plan.

67.7 Administrative Items (Goal 9)

MRBB Financial update for 2020-21

- The MRBB is in good financial position and can consider contracts and expenditures for priority work.
- P Siwik noted that 2022 is the 25th anniversary of the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement.

Motion: Approve the notional 2020-21 budget (T Zimmerman; A. Wilson; passed)

67.8 Round Table Updates (Goal 6)

- VC Tsannie acknowledged all the work that has been done and the extra challenge of dealing with Covid. He supports the development of creative, user friendly, interactive maps. He encouraged members to share examples for consideration.
- Looking forward to discussing the plan to update and renew the SOAER. It will provide the committee with a better understanding of where we are going.
- Covid numbers are down in Northern Saskatchewan. It is very dry and there are concerns about forest fire. Currently revising evacuation plans to account for Covid. Still ice on the lake in some places. Appreciates the progress of this group and the meetings. Looking forward to face-to-face meetings again. There is value in gatherings and time together.
- T. Zimmerman shared that the government of British Columbia is working toward developing a watershed security strategy for BC. This will be an opportunity to accelerate core elements of the Water Sustainability Act (2016) and to advance reconciliation with Indigenous partners on water.
- C. Porter noted that people are doing well and that everyone is on lock down. Vaccine uptake been well received. Focussing on new engagement tools in absence of face-to-face meetings.
- H. Jirousek shared that consultations on the Peel and Liard BWMA's closed in the middle of April.
- Finalizing guidance pieces such as adaptive management for quartz mines and effluent standards for mine sites.
- There is a record high snow pack (200% above normal in some locations). Colder spring and slow melt is welcome.
- J. Fahlman: SK NWT BWMA discussions are ongoing. Focussed on finalizing the agreement and working through the appendices. Attention will turn to the SK AB BWMA next.
- J. MacDonald noted that the government of NWT continues working with agencies to report and monitor the high water levels in many places in NWT. Ice break up on the Hay River could affect the community.
- Consultation and engagement on the next version of the water stewardship action plan is almost complete.
- Work on various BWMA's has been noted by others.
- L. Wein discussed recent developments on the WBNP Action Plan. \$60 million over 3 years was announced in the recent federal budget for continued implementation of the WBNP Action Plan. Commitment to develop indicators and trends around what makes that Park and world heritage site and to strengthen relationships and collaboration with Indigenous partners.
- C. de la Chevrotière: as a part of the WBNP Action Plan, Environmental Flows and Hydrology Working Group, a Strategic Flow Release Task Team is doing background technical work regarding ice hydraulics, required to enable a strategic flow release from BC Hydro's dam sites on the Peace River. Collaborators include BC Hydro, ECCC, AEP, NWT, Parks Canada and technical representation from Indigenous groups.

- For 2021 and 2020 this group also met regarding operational spring forecasts for ice jams and related flooding. This group met weekly in the last 2 weeks of April and first week of May, to share information on ice break up and progression on the rivers, across BC, Alberta, and in WBNP. Not currently projecting significant ice jams or ice jam flooding.
- AEP's River Forecast section provides forecast information and advisories on its rivers.alberta.ca website. Recently Parks data from the PAD has also been added to the AEP site, an effective way for Parks to leverage what AEP already had available.
- This collaboration enabled through networks established for the WBNP Action Plan has been very positive.
- A. Wilson: AEP continues to look at filling in for WQ monitoring, where ECCC has suspended monitoring (including ECCC analysis labs) due to COVID. These internal discussions are ongoing.

67.9 Meeting 68 – N Stiller

- The next meeting of the MRBB is June 2 and 3 2021.

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.