



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. 79

May 10 2024

Virtual Meeting

11:00 to 2:30 Central DST; 10:00 to 1:30 pm Mountain DST, 9:00 to 12:30 Pacific DST

Attendees

Leon Andrew	Indigenous Member	Northwest Territories
Meghan Beveridge	Government Alternate	Northwest Territories
Julian Kanigan	Government Member	Northwest Territories
Stan Njootli	Indigenous Member	Yukon
Heather Jirousek	Government Member	Yukon
Morna Hussey	Government Member	Alberta
Alden Armstrong	Indigenous Member	Alberta
Nadine Stiller	Government Member	ECCC
Laurie Wein	Government Alternate	Parks
Ted Zimmerman	Government Member	British Columbia
Vice Chief Tsannie	Indigenous Member	Saskatchewan
Thon Phommavong	Government Member	Saskatchewan

Secretariat

Paula Siwik	Executive Director
Nicole Pysh	MRBB Secretariat

Guests

Bradley Summerfield	ECCC
Megan Peloso	Government of British Columbia
Natasha Overduin	Compass Resources

79.1 Welcome Roundtable

- N. Stiller noted that Lana Lowe's appointment period has ended. The province of British Columbia is working on identifying a new Indigenous MRBB member for B.C.

79.2 Agenda

- The agenda was approved.

79.3 Approval of Minutes

- Minutes for Meetings 76 and 77 were approved.

79.4 Water Governance Contract

- The discussion and approval for a report on water governance in the basin was first raised at Meeting 72 (June 2022). The SoW was developed by the Secretariat with support from the Government of Yukon and Government of Northwest Territories.
- Contract was awarded to Compass Resource Management, an independent third-party with expertise in water governance in October 2023.
- The draft report includes an overview of definitions, the vision of the MRBB, the changing federal, provincial and territorial legislative landscape, Indigenous governance, recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
- It also reflects what Compass heard during interviews with MRBB members and raises strategic themes and questions for the MRBB consider moving forward.
- MRBB members were generally supportive of the draft report and will send detailed comments to N. Overduin.
- It was acknowledged that this is a complex topic with many moving parts, and that there has been a lot of change both on the land and in how governance is approached. This report and graphic (to be developed) could support an understanding of the governance landscape in the Mackenzie River basin.

79.5 Strategic Plan Development

- N. Stiller: The purpose of this agenda item is to take stock of where things are and for MRBB members to share expectations so that the MRBB Secretariat can scope and plan next steps. Work to date has covered a lot of ground. Key elements and direction have been captured and there was notional support to enter into a contract to complete the work.
- P. Siwik asked MRBB members to consider a) content: specifically, if members feel that there are aspects of the Collaborative Leadership Initiative (CLI) that could be influential and b) final products: specifically intended audience and thoughts on translation.
- The Water Governance contract and the CLI process both bring an external lens to work of MRBB.
- MRBB members identified the final report from the Water Governance contract, the Collaborative Leadership Initiative, the Canada Water Agency and Water Act modernization as important considerations going forward.
- Suggestions included: framing recommendations to be inclusive and flexible enough to consider the outcomes of the pieces noted above, planning for a 10-year timeline and revisiting the plan every 2 to 3 years, investing appropriately in SP development, and potentially aligning discussion and review of planning with members tenure.
- The mandate of the Canada Water Agency (CWA) is to facilitate coordination. The mandate of MRBB is fully aligned with the Mackenzie River Basin Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative (Mackenzie FEI). The Mackenzie FEI is in the formative stages and not ready to bring forward at this time. Water Act modernization discussions to date have been clear that jurisdictional authorities will be respected.

- There is not enough focus on reporting timely events and information. The MRBB could report on what is happening now. All jurisdictions hold water. Facts should be shared and shared quicker than they used to. The Government of Northwest Territories has been sending out information about water since wintertime. It is important to know what is happening in real time. People need to know that the government is monitoring the situation. Monitoring the whole basin is important.
- Residents of the basin are seeing and experiencing things, and the rest of the country has no idea. Timely and important information needs to be sent out so decision makers can understand the implications of their decision. The MRBB may need to consider a “just in time” resource to consolidate and post/share information about the basin.
- Feedback on the September workshop report was shared.
- One point to consider is that there is a difference between jurisdictional reporting and the information that we do under BWMAAs.
- It is important to ensure that MRBB members are all on the same page. This will move the MRBB toward a new place. Shared governance and working together is the path forward, and if we are uncertain then it makes it harder. The MRBB could consider a score card – how are we doing and how do we measure success?
- A recommendation was made to look at what the MRBB could do with information that is available. Observations need to be shared to help understand how things have changed.
- Water is life.
- Have there been recommendations made to other groups that the MRBB can learn from, and can the MRBB make recommendations to other groups?

79.6 Secretariat Update

- The 2023-24 expenses were shared as was a budget for consideration. The MRBB has a healthy carry-over buffer that will support the SOAER update and other priority work. Meeting 80 will include a motion to approve the budget.
- The MRBB Secretariat developed a member orientation PowerPoint presentation that has been adapted to a video.
- The 2022-23 annual report text was approved by email. A draft of the 2023-24 annual report text will be circulated soon.

79.7 MRBB video

- This video was developed by ECCC in 2023. A former MRBB member asked that his content be removed as he hoped it would be a more comprehensive piece. That work is now complete
- The video will be posted on the MRBB website.

79.8 MRBB Honoraria Policy

- MRBB honoraria aligns with ECCC policy. That policy has not changed in many years and the result is that the MRBB honoraria policy is the same as it was in 2006. ECCC recently changed its policy and has increased the amount that can be paid for time spent preparing for and at meetings.
- The MRBB policy was updated to align with ECCC policy.

79.9 Updated TOR for SOAER and Water Quality Committees

- MRBB members approve Terms of Reference (ToR) for committees. The ToRs for all three committees had not been reviewed in a long time and some were outdated.
- An updated ToR for the SOAER committee was shared at the December meeting. It is being shared again along with the Operations document as the two pieces work together. Comments or questions can be sent to the MRBB Secretariat.

79.10 Upcoming Meetings

- Meeting 80 – June 11 and 12; virtual
- Meeting 81 – November 19 to 21 in Saskatchewan.

79.11 Meeting Close

Activity Table: Appended to Agenda.

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 Indigenous Peoples in MRBB activities

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

Goal 7. Ministers, Indigenous 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.