



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

Mackenzie River Basin Board Secretariat

Minutes, Mackenzie River Basin Board Meeting No. 83

Day 1 - May 14, 2025

**10:00 to 1:30 Mountain and Central, 9:00 to 12:00 in Pacific
Virtual Meeting**

Attendees

Thon Phommavong	Government Member	Saskatchewan
Vice Chief Joseph Tsannie	Indigenous Member	Saskatchewan
Patrick Cherneski	Government Alternate	Canada Water Agency
Heather Jirousek	Government Member	Yukon
Ted Zimmerman (day 1)	Government Member	British Columbia
Alden Armstrong	Indigenous Member	Alberta
Cam Lane	Government Alternate	Alberta
Leon Andrew	Indigenous Member	Northwest Territories
Julian Kanigan	Government Member	Northwest Territories
Meghan Beveridge	Government Alternate	Northwest Territories
Nick Mitchell	Government Alternate	CIRNAC

Secretariat

Paula Siwik	MRBB Executive Director
Jeffrey Cederwall	SOAER Committee Chair
Isiri Jayathilake (day 1)	MRBB Student

Guest

Lana Miller	British Columbia
Morna Hussey (day 2)	Canada Water Agency
Merrell-Ann Phare (day 2)	Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER)
Emily Hoppe (day 2)	CIER

83.1 Welcome Roundtable

- No changes to membership

83.2 Agenda

- The agenda was approved with minor changes. The draft Strategic Plan was deferred to a future meeting.

83.3 Meeting Minutes

- Going forward changes made to minutes during summary development will be noted using track changes and highlighting.
- The minutes from Meetings 81 and 82 were approved.

83.4 SOAER – Approach for Update

- There is no decision associated with this agenda item.
- Indicator Assessment: All signs and signals will include science and Indigenous knowledge. Some aspects of “climate” are represented in specific sign and signals. This version of the SOAER will include a standalone climate indicator as climate is a driver of change in aquatic systems in the basin.
- Proposed Basin-Wide Climate Indicator Workshop “Stories of Change”: A hybrid workshop to collect basin-wide change information through expert’s storytelling
- Bilateral Water Management Agreements: The SOAER will summarize the status of the BWMA, highlight the work of the BMCs and rely on previously approved, plain language content from BWMA reports. The SOAER is an opportunity to illustrate that work done under the BWMA informs SOAER indicators and contributes to the basin assessment.
- Significant Basin Features: The SOAER update will include more information on the 3 largest lakes and the deltas in the basin. Indigenous place names will be included where possible. The Mackenzie Great Bear sub-basin will be divided into the “Mackenzie” and Great Bear sub-basins.

83.5 SOAER Update – Outreach in the basin

- Reaching out to people living in the basin and partners working in the basin could strengthen the SOAER update. In 2018, the MRBB Secretariat and TKSP Committee drafted a letter that was signed by the MRBB Indigenous members and sent to Indigenous government in the basin. Draft emails and letters could be tailored and different approaches considered.
 - MRBB members are interested in supporting outreach in the basin. The MRBB Secretariat will draft sample letters and emails for members to send and provide support as required.
 - The SOAER Committee discussed the possibility of an art contest for youth that would generate content for the SOAER. The contest could be trialed in one sub-basin before considering a basin wide approach.
 - Other points raised included the relationship between water quantity and quality especially as it pertains to temperature, and importance of the human connection to water in the basin. The SOAER is a place to acknowledge changes in patterns and wind and heat are key to this aspect.
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Mackenzie River Basin Board Meeting No. 83

Day 2 – May 15 2025

10:00 to 1:30 Mountain and Central, 9:00 to 12:00 in Pacific

83.6 Welcome

- Members of the Mackenzie CLI team joined the meeting to discuss the in-person session in June.

83.7 June Meeting Preparation

- Members of the Mackenzie CLI team reviewed the draft agenda. There are no materials to review in advance. Members should come prepared to spend significant time outdoors.
- MRBB members reinforced their interest in discussing the idea of braiding, how it has been applied in the past and whether it is a good approach going forward. The core of the meeting is to explore how the MRBB functions and what that could look like going forward.
- Members shared how accountability and good working relationships support decision making and achieving shared goals. The value of including different knowledge systems, and an acknowledgement that emotions are part of all discussions was a key message.

83.8 Mackenzie FEI Update

- Members of the CWA Mackenzie FEI team provided an update on the recent call for proposals in the Mackenzie basin. The call was successful, and the FEI is oversubscribed with applications from all regions of the basin. The FEI team will incorporate feedback and lessons learned prior to the next call for proposals.
- Science and Knowledge Contract: The Mackenzie FEI team have launched a contract for a “State of Science” review in the Mackenzie River Basin. MRBB members flagged that gaps and priorities identified by BMCs as relevant.
- A technical modelling webinar is being planned to facilitate information sharing across the basin.

83.9 Secretariat Update

- i. Staff update (Information)
 - In addition to the ED, the MRBB secretariat currently includes 0.7 of an FTE (Interchange), a student, and a part time casual employee. .
 - This additional capacity allows the Secretariat to fill and support the role of MRBB SOAER Committee chair. The position of TKSP Committee chair is currently filled with 2 committee members who act as co-chairs.
- ii. 2025-26 priorities (Information)
 - The MRBB Secretariat will focus on the SOAER update, finalizing the Strategic Plan, supporting the Collaborative Leadership Initiative, and routine work such as annual reports production and website maintenance.
- iii. 2021 SOAER paper and Canadian Ecotoxicity Workshop Panel (Information)
 - The lead consultant on the 2021 SOAER has proposed writing a paper on the development of the 2021 SOAER. The MRBB Secretariat will be involved in writing

some sections and coordinating feedback and input from 2021 SOAER Committee members.

- The organizers of the 2025 Canadian Ecotoxicity Workshop (CEW) have asked for support on an opening panel that discusses different knowledge systems. The meeting is planned for October 5 to 8, 2025 and will be in Victoria, BC.
- iv. 2023-24 annual report text (Decision)
 - The penultimate version of the 2023-24 annual report is included in the meeting package.
 - MRBB members approved the draft text for the 2023-24 annual report.
- v. 2024-25 financial report (Information)
 - The MRBB continues to have a healthy carry forward balance.
- vi. 2025-26 budget – routine business (Information)
- vii. 2025-26 budget discussion – SOAER (Information)
 - The 2025-26 routine budget and proposed SOAER update budget tabled at this meeting will be further discussed and at a supplemental meeting in late May.

83.10 Water Quality Task Team

- Meeting 81 included a discussion around membership of the Water Quality Task Team (WQTT). Analysis of the current WQTT Terms of Reference indicates that the proposed change in membership does not require a change in mandate or objectives, but sections on Membership and Roles and Responsibilities will be revised. An updated Terms of Reference will be tabled at a future meeting.

83.11 Look Ahead

- Virtual follow up to Meeting 83 for approvals (budget) – May 2025
- Meeting 84 – in-person meeting in Yellowknife/Dettah; June , 2025
- Meeting 85 – virtual with focus on SOAER SoW – Oct. 2025
- Meeting 86 – virtual with focus on Agency Reports – Nov., 2025

83.13 Meeting Close

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.