

**Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA)****Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting****March 26, 2024****Provincial Building, McLennan, AB**

	Name	Sector
Attendees	Rick Keillor	Public Member-at-Large
	Ashley Rowney	Utilities
	Jim Webb	Lower Peace First Nation - LRRCN
	Abdi Siad-Omar	Federal-Transboundary
	Jill Henry	Agriculture
	Sandra Miller	Oil & Gas
	Dave Walty	Conservation/Environmental
	Chris Thiessen	Large Urban Municipality – MPWA Chair
	Vern Lymburner	Small Urban Municipalities
	Brian Lieverse	Recreation/Tourism/Fisheries
	Audrey Dewit	Public Member at Large
	Cathy Newhook	Watershed Stewardship
	Justin Hetu	Forestry
Regrets	Danny Roy	Rural Municipalities - Alternate
	Bonnie Segal	Provincial
Staff	Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier	Executive Director
	Adam Norris	Watershed Coordinator
	Ashley Garnham	Project Coordinator
	Amy Charles	Outreach Coordinator
Guest	Madison Kobryn	<b>Limnologist, Peace Region , Environment and Protected Areas</b>

<u>Chairman</u>	C. Thiessen
<u>Executive Director (5)</u>	R. Clarke-Gauthier
<u>Finance Committee (5)</u>	A. Rowney, C. Thiessen, R. Keillor, V. Lymburner, D. Walty, Executive Director
<u>Education &amp; Stewardship Committee</u>	J. Henry, E/O Coordinator, Exec Director
<u>Technical Committee</u>	R. Keillor, J. Hetu, E. Garrow, D. Walty, C. Thiessen, J. Webb, J. Henry, A. Rowney, Watershed Coordinator, Exec Director
<u>Integrated Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee (IWMP SC) (7)</u>	A. Rowney & E. Garrow (2 Other Directors), C. Thiessen (MPWA Chair), J. Webb (LRRCN seat - Indigenous Communities Sector), D. Walty (NGO), A. Siad Omar (Governments), J. Hetu (Industry), Watershed Coordinator, Exec Director
<u>Nomination Committee (3)</u>	C. Thiessen, V. Lymburner, S. Miller, Exec Director

## 1. Administration

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### 1.1. Call Meeting to Order & Quorum Statement & Introductions

- Meeting called to order at 9:33 AM by Chairman C. Thiessen.
- Quorum was present.

### 1.2. Approval of Agenda – Additions or Deletions

- Meeting Agenda March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 was reviewed.

**Motion to approve March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Agenda moved by D. Walty, seconded by R. Keillor**  
**Accepted by Consensus**

### 1.3. Approval of Minutes

- Meeting Minutes for February 27, 2024 were reviewed.

**Motion to approve February 27, 2024 Minutes moved by R. Keillor.**

**Accepted by Consensus**

Note: If grammatical/spelling errors are noted, then it is acceptable to provide edits to R. Clarke-Gauthier.

### 1.4. Receive Names for Alternate Directors

- Rebecca Cripps, Aquatera – Utilities Alternate
- Nikita Stamp, West County Watershed Stewardship – Watershed Stewardship Alternate

**Motion to approve Alternate Directors moved by A. Dewit and seconded by A. Rowney.**

**Accepted by Consensus**

### 1.5. Round Table – All Directors provide updates and information from their sector regarding issues/concerns/ideas around watershed management.

- C. Newhook – West County Watershed Annual General Meeting – April 11<sup>th</sup> – everyone is welcome to come join the AGM.
- B. Lieveise – Beaverlodge Artic Grayling Society – Meeting in April – will review Red Willow Report at that meeting.
- J. Henry – Warm Weather creating anxiety for farmers – fields drying quickly – not a lot of run off – Fire Risk is up there so everyone is on high alert; People are seeking grant funding for accessing alternate water sources.
- S. Miller – Heading on holidays for the whole month of April.
- A. Siad-Omar – Province is busy focusing on Drought Management – focus on the Southern portion of the province, but Province is working with WPACs on Drought Planning;
- J. Webb – Little Red River Cree Nation largest community had a major fire last spring and lost 75% of their housing. Over the winter attempted to bring in housing units and clean up debris – encountered issues with ice bridge so now having to rely on access through Wabasca were there is still ice.
- A. Rowney – River Flows are historically low – Aquatera sought a TDL and was provided with one – the Water Act Team with AEPA is currently working on an Amendment to the Junior Water Act Licence; Will be constructing a new Potable Water Reservoir in 2024/2025 and in the coming years will also be constructing a new Raw Water Storage Pond; In 2024/2025 will be installing UV Disinfection on the WWTP.
- V. Lymburner – Runoff can not be touched, but if you can capture stormwater, that can be utilized (received clarification from Province). Still discussing new reservoir and looking into grant opportunities; also discussing that if reservoirs are low, this may be an opportunity to

inspect/clean out existing reservoirs; spoke to potential that ag sources are suggesting its going to be a wet summer;

- R. Keillor – Member of the Wood Lot Association of Alberta and there has been discussions about doing lots of tree planting.
- D. Walty – Attended Grimshaw Aquifer Presentation – made a comment that the conferences and workshops that we've had this year are gaining traction and these have been well preserved and the participation has been great. Met with some senior guys in Environment and Protected Areas about making a web map for sturgeon lake and the new map can be used as a comparison with the older map to see if the older maps are still relevant and if not, may need to consider updating other existing web maps.
- C. Thiessen – Was at RMA last week and there was a discussion about geo-engineering and how it can cause drought in some places and heavy flows in others; Spoke with Minister at an event about Site C Dam – was looking for if there had been any solidified agreements with Transboundary and concerns surrounding rate of flows and how Site C can impact Alberta's water sources. Mr. Elliot Lindsey reached out to City – dam removal at Musko Reservoir to see if City may be interested in that – likely the City reservoir won't be able to be filled until 2026 due to armoring that still needs to occur – They may look at removing the dam to restore the reservoir to its natural habitat.
- J. Hetu – Lots of concern regarding fire – working on developing new fire plan for this year if fire season is like last year. Due to lack of moisture, ice roads up North harvesting did not last as long as they typically do. Accepted a new position as an Assistant Orchard Manager with Huallen (grow seed trees or do cone collection which then in turn go to be seedlings – try to keep it as natural as possible) and will be leaving Canfor in April.
- A. Dewit – Noted that there have been discussions about Drought Planning – The Aquifer Presentation was valuable and interesting. Participated in World Water Day.

## **2. Reports and Updates**

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### **2.1. Chairman Report – C. Thiessen**

- Took part in IWMP SC and TC Meetings last week.
- Thanked Dave Walty for stepping in and chairing the meeting for Chris.
- Spoke with Minister Horner (Finance) and his passion is focusing on Water Security and Drought Mitigation – which will be beneficial for WPACs and other watershed groups.

### **2.2. Office Report – R. Clarke-Gauthier**

#### **a) Activities and Initiatives**

- This office report covers the previous month since the last meeting;
- Several E&O opportunities are coming up.
- MPWA may look at deviating from free events (take a hit when people register and don't show, but food is ordered for the number registered). May need to look at charging some form of fee moving forward.
- Rhonda thanked Audrey DeWit for stepping in last minute, due to a cancellation of an end of day speaker at the Fire Forum, to which Audrey presented on the Slave Lake Fire.
- WPAC Manager Mtg in Camrose on April 10<sup>th</sup> to which she also gets to Chair it.

## **2.3. Financial Update – R. Clarke-Gauthier**

### **a. Financial Update – Reviewed ‘Profit and Loss’ Tracker**

## **2.4. Education/Outreach Update – (A. Charles and A. Garnham)**

### **a) In-person Events (A. Charles)**

- Fire & Water Forum – 90ish Participants – where able to use some new technologies for the Presentations;
- Bio 20's in Beaverlodge have some suggested projects that may be very viable;
  - Will be doing a planting fieldtrip;
- Attended Mighty Peace Teachers Conference and was able to make 11 Connections;
- Grimshaw Aquifer Event – 30 individuals;
- In April – West County AGM speaking to her position/role with the MPWA;
- In June – looking to see if we can be involved with Metis Fest;
- July 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> – Amy, Ashley and Adam will be taking part in a Brigade – Where 40 Indigenous Youth and then 40 Non-Indigenous Youth will be taking part in a School Program (receive 9 high school credits) that will have them out on the land doing water sampling, etc with a focus on stewardship.

### **b) Watershed Videos and Monitoring (A. Garnham)**

- New Watershed available Videos are on YouTube and Facebook; North Saskatchewan Watershed received a grant to do these videos and invited the other WPACs to provide direction and content. Adam participated on behalf of MPWA over the last couple of years. There is a total of four (4) videos currently which premiered on World Water Day;
- Ashley and Adam did their last monitoring event on March 25<sup>th</sup>;
- Will be conducting river sampling in Beaverlodge on March 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>;

## **2.5. Technical Committee Updates – A. Norris**

### **a) TC Report**

- Alberta Water Council Source Water Protection Project Team has had a start up meeting with Greenland; working on a communications plan; as part of the roll out, there will be two (2) online pilots and in-person event at the AWWOA Conference; should wrap up in March of 2025
- Beaverlodge Water Quality Monitoring Project – Nodes have been set and withdrawals tabulated; Last winter sampling occurs on March 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> and they will retrieve the last four (4) hobo temps that they weren't able to find last year;
- Cumulative Impacts on Wildfire on Groundwater – submitted grant application to Alberta EcoTrust; planning for pilot in Little Smoky in the next fiscal; Larger project with Oldman and Lesser Slave – some funding for this has already been confirmed;
- Boreal (Evergreen) Wetland Centre – Planning Wetland Innovation Workshop for September 25<sup>th</sup>; Advisory Committee, outreach, and monitoring.
- Floating Treatment Wetlands – In 2024 this will be an Education & Outreach Opportunity;
- Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer – at this point we think there is a lot of water based on models; discharge is in the form of measurements. How do we proactively plan for future uses of that – will work with community on those plans. Looking for a summer student to come on to assist with outreach components regarding the Aquifer.

- LakeKeepers – Wrapped up winter season and looking forward to Summer and potential data collection;
- Lower Peace Freshwater Contaminant Reduction – Ordered seedings for spring planting; Planning producer tour with Mackenzie County and Mackenzie Applied Research Association; School group to do livestaking; this is our final year with this project; Additional crossing requests have come in which indicates the word is getting out and leading to increased engagement;
- Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project – project is wrapping up; there had been concerns regarding bank stabilization – currently at the point where we can access what follow up work is required with the potential to get out there and do it.
- Resiliency in the Wapiti Watershed – Bexon Site – EcoAction Grant Application will be submitted for two (2) sites;
- Smoky Headwaters Initiative – time to follow up with O&G companies to see if they have actioned anything on their end;
- Source Water Maps – Will be presenting to the WNC at the Autumn Meeting;
- Wapiti Watershed Bank Stabilization – will be going back to complete assessments with how the project turned out;
- WWSWPP – continue to try and implement recommended actions;
- Water Use and Future Scan – Is it worthwhile to economically drain wetlands – realistic analysis allows for those conversations – this report will provide good information and talking points. Will provide a good foundation for the renewal of the State of the Watershed.

b) IWMP Report

- SC met for the annual review of the IWMP Report and which recommendations are currently in progress and which ones still need to be actioned.
- Review is completed to ensure that things aren't dropped over time;
- When items, potential projects or next steps arise these will be taken to the Executive Director.
- Report and process accepted by board

**Lunch Break**

**Presentation: Madison Kobryn, Limnologist, Peace Region , Environment and Protected Areas**

- **Select Peace Region Surface Water Quality Initiatives**
  - There is a Limnologist assigned to each region of the Province and with that are subject matter experts;
  - Madison has worked with the MPWA on various projects;
  - Madison presented on initiatives that she is personally involved with;
  - Three (3) primary initiatives currently working on are the following:
    - Water Quality sampling initiatives: Wapiti River Synoptic Surveys
      - To support the WRWMP/SWPP and Data will be used to update water quality models;
      - Support future Surface Water Quality Management Framework (SWQMF) Investigations;
      - Will be conducting three (3) synoptic surveys with the low flow season event completed in October 2023 and the summer runoff season planned for June 2024 and then the spring snowmelt season is planned

- for the Spring of 2025;
- Assessing major tributaries and effluents (Aquatera, IP) from Pinto Creek to the mouth of the Wapiti and is looking at general ion parameters, flow (most stations) and pesticides (to be considered for the next two (2) synoptic surveys;
- Beaverlodge/Redwillow Initiatives
  - Aligns with the Redwillow Watershed Restoration Plan;
  - Provides for water quality monitoring and a contract for hydrological monitoring;
    - 9 sites in the Beaverlodge / Redwillow watershed to complement and extend historical monitoring data;
    - Grant covers water quality sampling over the span of three (3) years – 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 fiscal years;
    - Grant covers contract to develop flow modeling in the watershed that, with expansion, could be used to understand if and how low flow in the watershed could be managed.
  - Supports community-based monitoring (participation of volunteers in water quality sampling) – two (2) training sessions for this has been completed.
- Upper Peace and Lower Peace Regions Surface Water Quality Management Framework (**SWQMF's**) for the Peace River Region
  - Framework 101
    - The Water Management Framework for the Industrial Heartland and Capital Region (2007) was the first application of Alberta's cumulative effects management approach;
    - In 2008, the Gov't adapted the Land-Use Framework which was a Province wide approach to manage land, water, air, and biodiversity;
    - SWQMF's will provide full provincial coverage – released: Lower Athabasca, South Saskatchewan, North Saskatchewan/Battle and Upper Athabasca Regions; in development: Peace and Red Deer Regions (presumably will be done in absence of Regional Plans);
    - Regional Objectives for each media describes the desired outcome from the given environmental component over the planning period, seeking to balance social, economic, and environmental considerations;
  - Indicators
    - A lot of consideration goes into the Indicator selection process, and they are assessed against a list of pre-requisites: reflective of land use pressures and can be directly influenced by management actions and, sufficient historical monitoring data, measured at LTRN stations;
    - There are Primary (have triggers/limits and act as management thresholds and can initiate a management response) and Secondary Indicators (do not meet primary indicator criteria but are still of interest and may do not have triggers or limits applied to them – these would be evaluated and reported);

- Two (2) types of thresholds: limits (set on the value of the most stringent water quality guidelines) and triggers (are set in advance of limits as early warning signals for evaluation, adjustment, and innovation on an ongoing basis);
- A Primary / Secondary indicator list has been drafted;
- Management Response – establish a management response process with clear steps that will be followed if management thresholds are exceeded.
- Status of Management Response Reporting is released every two (2) years.
- Status
  - Currently in the informal pre-engagement stage of the indicators and to follow would be approval for engagement with the goal of formal engagement to follow.

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## Other

### 3.1. Review of Fire & Water Forum

- Pleased with overall attendance and the variety of the attendees as well (Gov't, Fire Departments, Utilities, GPREP, etc.);
- It was a lot of work to coordinate and was a collective effort and it showed in the success of the Forum.
- The quality of speakers was exceptional.
- It was a great day for BEAVERS!!! This was a highlight presentation, and the presenter was an amazing speaker.

### 3.2 Board Seats for Election & Schedule for AGM

- Several Seats up for Election this go around and consist of the following:
  - Provincial Gov't, Small Urbans, Rural Municipalities, Agriculture, Oil & Gas, Utilities, Mining, Conservation and Environment, Research & Education, Metis Nation of AB, Lower Watershed First Nation, Upper Watershed First Nation, Middle Watershed First Nation, Metis Settlements General Council, and possibility Forestry (if Justin needs to step down due to change in job)
- Possible speaker at the AGM - John Patterson Williams – Current & Future Uses of Water will be available come May – so would have him/his student come present it to us;
- In keeping with the 'Current & Future Use of Water' theme, we could look to make it a full day event with a few key speakers and look include Gov't to speak on Licensing/TDL;
- Could do formal AGM requirements (nominations, voting, etc.) over lunch hour or first thing in the morning and minimize the time it takes to complete these items and then focus the rest of the time on the presentations.

### 3.3 Welcome to Website

- The newly formatted Website is up and running!!
- The Directors Area is still under work and not finalized as of yet; (mpwa is the pswd as of currently – all lower case – but will be updated soon);
- Is mobile phone user friendly!

### 3.4 Strategic Plan Work

- Reviewed where we are at;

- Have agreed on goals and most of the strategies;
- Added a third strategy on Goal #4, and tightened up some wording;
  - In discussion, it was decided that strategy 4.3 would be reworded into an 'outcome' instead of a strategy;
- It was discussed that the wording in 4.1 requires an action verb;
- For 6.2, it was discussed that we either 'Engage' or 'Involve' and not both – perhaps go with 'Engage/Involve' to note that we would be either engaging 'and/or' involving them for buy-in from the community. Or even use 'Engage and Coordinate';
- For Goal #5, Abdi suggested it be updated to include 'healthy aquatic ecosystems';
- Board to review the Summary of Work done on February 27<sup>th</sup> - that was handed out and discussed during meeting such that comments/suggested edits can be generated and sent back to Rhonda to compile/track.

### **3.5 Other Comments, Questions, or Discussion items to address from today's meeting or previous meetings.**

- A. DeWit – do we need to do anything proactive to eliminate the potential for pipelines for water conveyance down south to the Gulf and elsewhere – this is based off the photo that Adam shared during his Updates presentation;
  - Dave – In 1982 Alberta designed two (2) dams that could divert and convey water to the South;
  - Chris – Water is being viewed as a commodity resource;
  - Adam – The hope is that the report that Current and Future Water Use report will provide some context to this;

## **4 Upcoming Event Dates**

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- a. AGM June 20, 2024

## **Adjourn Meeting**

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Meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm by C. Theissen



### Office Report February 27, 2024 to March 26, 2024:

- Follow-up from February 27th Board meeting (minutes, etc.)
- Hosted Fire and Water Forum – Feb 28<sup>th</sup> (90 attendees)
- Website upgrade and migration
- Computer and information management upgrade
- Planned roll out of Source Water maps
- Submitted grant proposal to Alberta Ecotrust for Cumulative Impacts of Wildfire on Groundwater (with Innotech)
- Feb 29-Mar 5 – Gathering expenses and pay bills
- Mar 5 – conversation with Woodland Cree FN regarding Peace River Youth Brigade event happening in July.
- Mar 6 – Telephone town hall with EPA regarding AB Drought
- Mar 8 – meeting with EPA about erosion sites
- Approving Ad for GGAMAA Summer Staff position.
- Mar 15 – Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Information Session and Speaker Dr. Brian Smerdon. (35 people – 30 residents, 1 speaker, 4 staff)
- Mar 20 – IWMP SC annual review
- Review Land Stewardship Grant Applications (Mar 11-19)
- LSG Application decisions Day (31 applications)
- Mar 21 – Review Current & Future Uses Document
- Mar 21 – Technical Committee meeting & update of Current & future Water Uses report
- Mar 22 – Hosted WPAC World Water Day event
- Mar 22 – submitted grant application to ECCC EcoTrust as implementation for Wapiti Water Source Water Protection Plan
- Prep for Mar 26 Board Meeting (Minutes, Strat plan doc, finances, office reporting, tech & E/O reports)
- Coordinating Staff efforts
- Begin plans for AB WPAC Manager meeting for April 10 (Rhonda Hosting)
- Working with Dion Computers to update technology and re-align programs, emails, calendars, and other office support systems.
- Mar 25 – Staff meeting
- Mar 26 – Board meeting

### Project Summary of events/activities/progress

- Alberta Water Council Source Water Protection Project Team
  - Mar 8 – meeting
  - Communication plan development and pilot development
- Education, Outreach, Stewardship
  - Social media posts – World Water Day, New Watershed Video Series, Upcoming events
  - Mar 4 – WPAC E&O meeting about curriculum
  - Mar – Walk Through the Forest organizational meeting
  - Mar 7 & 8 – attended Mighty Peace teachers' conference
  - Newsletter Posted
  - Mar 21 – presentation to Grande Prairie Environmental Network
- Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Source Water Protection Plan
  - GGA meeting Mar 7<sup>th</sup>
  - Hosted Grimshaw Gravels: Where Water has a Rockin' Good Time event

- Mar 21 Attended GGA water budget presentation by Brian Smerdon to EPA
- LakeKeepers
  - Mar 20 – Swan and Sturgeon Lake sampling (Ashley & Adam)
  - Collection and return of lake sampling equipment to ALMS
- Lower Peace Freshwater Contaminant Reduction
  - Project management
  - Communications work
  - Looking for funding for a new crossing
- Reducing Invasive Species in the Peace-Athabasca Delta
  - Field season planning
- Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project
  - Last sampling of winter season planned for March 27 & 28 (Karlen, Adam, Ashley)
- Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection Plan
  - Continuing to follow-up on recommendations

Upcoming Events:

West County AGM – Apr 11

Walk through the Forrest - May 6-9

AGM – June 20

Peace River Youth Brigade – July 14-20

**Submitted By:** Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier, P.Ag, - Executive Director  
Adam Norris, M.Sc, P.Biol, - Watershed Coordinator  
Amy Charles – Outreach Coordinator  
Ashley Garnham – Project Coordinator