

Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA)**Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting****August 19, 2024****Provincial Building, McLennan, AB**

	Name	Sector
Attendees	Rick Keillor	Public Member-at-Large
	Ashley Rowney	Utilities
	Bonnie Segal	Provincial
	Abdi Siad-Omar	Federal-Transboundary
	Sarah Cairns	Agriculture
	Jill Henry	Agriculture - Alternate
	Sandra Miller	Oil & Gas
	Dave Walty	Conservation/Environmental
	Chris Thiessen	Large Urban Municipality – MPWA Chair
	Elaine Manzer	Small Urban Municipalities
	Brian Lieverse	Recreation/Tourism/Fisheries
	Audrey Dewit	Public Member at Large
	Cathy Newhook	Watershed Stewardship
	Nikita Stamp	Watershed Stewardship - Alternate
	Alden Armstrong	Metis Settlement General Council – Paddle Prairie
	Wendy Patton	Metis Nation of Alberta – District 14
	Trina Tosh	Forestry - Alternate
	Corinna Williams	Rural Municipalities
	Wayne Thorp	Forestry
Observer	Ba Thuong Le	Research Associate, Center for Boreal Research, NAIT
Staff	Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier	Executive Director
	Adam Norris	Watershed Coordinator
	Ashley Garnham	Project Coordinator
	Amy Charles	Outreach Coordinator
	Adanna Hustler	Grimshaw Gravels Steward (Summer)
Guest	Melody Lepine	Business Lead, Environmental Assessment at the Firelight Group

<u>Chairman</u>	C. Thiessen
<u>Executive Director (5)</u>	R. Clarke-Gauthier
<u>Finance Committee (5)</u>	A. Rowney, C. Thiessen, R. Keillor, E. Manzer, D. Walty, Executive Director
<u>Education & Stewardship Committee</u>	E/O Coordinator, Exec Director
<u>Technical Committee</u>	R. Keillor, D. Walty, C. Thiessen, J. Henry, A. Siad-Omar, A. Rowney, Watershed Coordinator, Exec Director

<u>Integrated Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee (IWMP SC) (7)</u>	A. Rowney & _____ (2 Other Directors), C. Thiessen (MPWA Chair), A. Armstrong (Indigenous Communities Sector), D. Walty (NGO), A. Siad Omar (Governments), _____ (Industry), Watershed Coordinator, Exec Director
<u>Nomination Committee (3)</u>	C. Thiessen, S. Miller, Exec Director

1. Administration

1.1. Call Meeting to Order & Quorum Statement & Introductions

- Meeting called to order at 9:05 AM by Vice Chair D. Walty.
- Quorum was present.

1.2. Approval of Agenda – Additions or Deletions

- Meeting Agenda August 19th, 2024 was reviewed.

Motion to approve August 19th, 2024, Agenda moved by B. Lieverse, seconded by B. Segal
Accepted by Consensus

1.3. Approval of Minutes

- Meeting Minutes for March 26th, 2024, and June 20th, 2024, re-organization meeting were reviewed.

Motion to approve March 26th, 2024, Minutes moved by A. DeWit seconded by R. Keillor.

Accepted by Consensus

Motion to approve June 20th, 2024, Re-Org Minutes moved by C. Williams seconded by E. Manzer.

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 – None.

1.5. Expectations and roles of Board Members

- R. Clarke-Gauthier provided an overview of expectations and roles of Board Members and noted the following:
 - Membership – established with initiators group – 4 general sectors with 5 seats under each sector; mining not filled and none of the first nations seats are filled as of currently;
 - Expectation that board members will attend all or most of the board meetings – pre covid in person, since covid, it's a blend of virtual and in-person;
 - If a board member misses 3 consecutive meetings without noting that they can attend – then the board can make the decision to remove that member from the board – has not happened to date – please just always provide a response as to whether or not meetings will be attended;

- Expectation is that an alternate attend at least one (1) meeting a year; ensure you are sharing and staying in communication with your alternate in the event they are required to attend on your behalf;
- If both are in attendance, the director and alternate must speak as the same voice when making decisions/voting;
- Reviewed MPWA boundaries and showed map to those in attendance;
- Important role is to bring information to the Board and take and share information with your sector;

Note: Chair Thiessen arrived and resumed the Chair.

1.6. Round Table – All Directors provide updates and information from their sector regarding issues/concerns/ideas around watershed management. (Also, think about what you can bring to the table/org? Priority for You/Your sector? Water & Watershed Info?)

- C. Thiessen – Large Urban Representative – Wildfire Season; Still engaging conversation with a couple of groups surrounding the Bear Creek dam about seeing if it can be returned to its natural state and what restoration may look like – estimating a \$40-50M project.
- S. Cairns – Ag Rep – Noted that a lot of individuals are concerned about Ag water usage and their permits with dugouts and withdrawals; has been looking at water alternatives for livestock.
- D. Walty – Interesting that there were drought concerns in March and April then it rained and rained in May and June; completed a cumulative effects web page for Sturgeon Lake and this is a map that also looks at the amount of human disturbance in the watershed for Sturgeon Lake and maps out the wetlands (types and %);
 - [Abdi – HLFN were interested in generating a similar plan – have they been engaged? D. Walty – Not that he is aware of. A. Norris – there has been a member of HLFN that has been in contact with Sturgeon Lake]
- B. Thuong Le – Associate Researcher at the Boreal Centre – Wetland Team – here as an observer as Bin Xu could not attend today. MPWA and the Center have worked together in the past and hope to continue. The Current focus on wetland reclamation methods and validation.
- W. Patton – The new Metis Nation of Alberta name is Otipemisiwak and the new district that she represents is 14. Otherwise as a new board member just taking it all in.
- B. Lieverse – was with the Beaverlodge Artic Grayling Society, which has decided to disband, because it was decided that the Beaverlodge River is not a suitable place to translocate Arctic Grayling to.
- A. DeWit – it was a relief with the amount of rain the area has received; found an interesting article about inter-basin water transfers between Canada and the US – there is a database that has been maintained around that.
- B. Segal – attended session where they discussed landslide in the States that has resulted in disruption in the Milk River's water source – will take time to fix – those communities will have to look at how to deal with that; thought this correlated with Site C and its potential impacts on other communities.
 - R. Keillor – was there any discussion that water allocations would stay the same; she indicated that it was not part of the discussion as discussion was focused on emergency preparedness.
- E. Manzer - water act licenses have been discussions in their neck of the woods and there were

concerns with the level in the river and potential impacts to intake – water was so low that they could see the intake and what would that mean in the winter if water remained low; reviewed their bylaw (4 underground reservoirs – if levels are too low then certain water restrictions kick in); there have been some conversations regarding Site C (water will have been used 3 times to make electricity prior to that water reaching their town) – are being told that the water levels at their town should not be impacted too much due to Site C; Government of Alberta asked municipalities to come up with drought plans; there is a new industrial project going in on the Wapiti River.

- R. Clarke-Gauthier – some communities like Spirit River and to the west are concerned about lack of water – discussions around other alternatives – i.e. Peace River.
- T. Tosh – Alternate with Forestry – no updates.
- C. Williams – RMA is concerned re Site C and Transboundary agreements. Minister Shultz is trying to get an agreement in place – looking at all agreements to see what needs to be put in writing; Northern Sunrise County is exploring options for a new raw water intake – currently in limbo and awaiting geotechnical reports; Northern Sunrise County's Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program is growing and 9000 trees were planted within the county in assistance with its residents this year; at the RMA as if wastewater could be used for dust suppression – within 2 weeks that had a mtg with her and they have received authorization from AEP to be able to do that (ww has to be treated and tested to meet the standards – which it does);
- W. Thorp – new to committee and looking forward to working with the MPWA – from a forestry perspective: concern around communications and what the alliance is doing and what it's doing with the forestry industry – so this is one of his objectives in being new to the board; climate change and its impact on water and fire is a concern for the forestry industry and what are the cause and effect and how they maintain all the respective needs (i.e. vegetation, water run-off, etc).
- R. Keillor – landscape and forest cover is a concern; educating farmers but still work to be done – thinks we are losing lots of forest cover on private land – thinks this is something that could be promoted within the MPWA.
- S. Miller – nothing new for her sector of Oil and Gas.
- A. Rowney – still working with the Water Act Team on amending the Junior Water Act Licence.
- A. Armstrong – provided a background dating back to 1988 including MRBB and MPWA. Also, spoke about his involvement in the WFL strategy. Indicated that Site C will have negative effects; Due to global warming, engineering techniques need to be explored. Paddle Prairie is intending to clear 30,000 acres in the next decade and is looking to move to groundwater. Wants to see action from reports and hold politicians accountable.
- C. Newhook – Concerned regarding land practices. West County Watershed Society has a new President, Justin Hetu.
- A. Siad-Omar – WPACs fall under a newly minted Division in the Ministry – Water & Circular Economy. Working on increasing water availability to communities and would like to see input from smaller communities.

2. Reports and Updates

2.1. Chairman Report – C. Thiessen – nothing to report

2.2. Office Report – R. Clarke-Gauthier

a) Activities and Initiatives – Report included

- Prepared and hosted a Water uses Forum and AGM.
- Hosted several E&O opportunities.
- New Division in AEPA called Water & Circular Economy – WPACs will fit into this new structure under partnerships but will have various avenues and connects throughout the Division. Unsure at this time if this change may mean adjustments to the MRD signed in 2022.
- We did receive our 2024-2025 grant of \$320, 000.00 from AEPA

2.3. Financial Update – R. Clarke-Gauthier

- ### **a. Financial Update – Reviewed ‘Profit and Loss’ Tracker from 1st of April through to August 19, 2024 – we are on target and no unusual spending has occurred.**

Guest Speaker Presentation: Melody Lepine – Business Lead, Environmental Assessment at the Firelight Group

- Joining in from Ft. McMurray – Treaty 8 as member of Mikisew Cree First Nation.
- New to Firelight Group as Business Lead
- Sharing experience and work with MCFN
 - Not a lot of monitoring to date has gone on within the Athabasca Delta.
 - have in time initiated their own monitoring program – community-based programs within the pasts 10 years – gathered water quality monitoring
 - 4-5 years ago, launched one of Canadas first, indigenous led collaborative monitoring groups; funder primarily by Parks Canada
 - Currently building a field station in the Delta where they can do cultural and education programs, house scientists and researchers
 - The facility in Fort Smith has a new research laboratory which was done in partnership with Canada Labs.
 - It’s a mobile lab, within the community.
 - Spent a lot of time on Regulatory Work in her time with Mikisew (i.e. related to Site C Dam)
 - Monitoring completed has been towards developing a Base Flow Analysis (incorporates oil sands withdrawals) and identified Indigenous thresholds for use on the Athabasca River.
 - Water had to be shut off during Kearn Oil Sands spill in 2023
 - Canada needs to action the Wood Buffalo National Park Action Plan

Lunch Break (Self-directed Bird Walk Tour)

2.4. Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Summer Steward Report (A. Hustler)

- Lots of activities were attended to promote the GGA Source Water Plan. Also, discussions regarding household efficiencies, conservation, water literacy, wetlands, riparian areas, well testing.
- Connected with AHS for info on treating hard water and working well info
- Lots of discussion around small nuclear reactors.
- Water monitoring at various locations

- Lake level logger has been deployed in Lac Cardinal
- To do: Video for aquifer action, basic analysis of information gathered throughout summer, final report to Grimshaw Gravels Committee.

2.5. Education/Outreach Update – (A. Charles and A. Garnham)

- Many of the activities and events are listed in the office report – bigger activities include Evening at the Lake, Info at Paddle the Peace, Treaty Days at Simon Lake, connecting with Home Schooling parents who are looking for resources, etc.

2.6. IWMP/SOP Committee Membership

- There are a couple of vacancies.
- Committee Membership: C. Thiessen (Chair – Ex-officio), D. Walty (NGO), A. Soad-Omar (Government), Vacant (Industry), Vacant (indigenous Communities), A. Rowney (Other Director) & and Vacant (Other Director 2)

Motion to approve Corinna Williams to fill “Other Director” Seat moved by D. Walty seconded by B. Lieverse.

Accepted by Consensus

Motion to approve Alden Armstrong to fill “Indigenous Communities” Seat moved by C. Williams, seconded by R. Keillor.

Accepted by Consensus

- There is still a vacancy to fill at the next meeting

2.7. Technical Committee Updates – A. Norris

- Planning a workshop for the Source water Protection Webtool being developed as part of the Alberta Water Council Source Water Protection Project Team. We will also be doing a workshop at the Alberta Water and Wastewater Operators Association conference.
- Boreal Wetland Centre – we are continuing to sit on the advisory board, to do groundwater monitoring and helping organize the Wetland Innovation Workshop.
- Cumulative Effects of Wildfire on Groundwater – grant applications have been submitted and now we are waiting to hear back
- Floating Treatment Wetlands – there was a Grade 8 class school trip to launch the rafts and harvest plants; water quality monitoring has happened throughout the summer and we will engage students to harvest and remove the rafts.
- Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer – A. Hustler did a great job actioning our Source Water Protection Plan recommendations this past summer
- Lower Peace Freshwater Contaminant Reduction – almost wrapped just have one field trip planned to do some livestaking and Knowledge Transfer and Translation this autumn
- Reducing Invasive Species in the Peace-Athabasca Delta – this has been challenging as our partner, Little Red River Cree Nation, has dealt with wildfires in the past 2 years; still need to complete control work
- Redwillow Watershed Restoration Plan – hydraulic modelling is almost complete for the Redwillow watershed; the water quality monitoring program continues.
- Source Water maps – we will present these at the next Water North Coalition meeting and then look to engage individual communities
- Victor Lake Riparian Assessment – worked with Mountain Metis Nation Association to complete riparian assessment of Victor Lake and assess some watershed issues. Trained several of their youth on these protocols.

- **Acceptance of Water Uses Report:** The Current and Future Water Uses Document which was prepared before the AGM and then presented on was sent to Board for review previously. The project is now complete.

Motion to accept the Current & Future Water Uses Report 2024, moved by B. Lieverse and seconded by B. Segal.

Accepted by Consensus

- **Committee Membership:** The Technical Committee needs members as many are no longer on the MPWA Board. A few volunteers were accepted from the floor.

Motion to add A. Siad-Omar & J. Henry to the Technical Committee.

Accepted by Consensus

2.8. SOW/IWMP/MPWA Goals – Working towards the SOW Update (A. Norris)

- Reviewed our State of the Watershed and Integrated Watershed Management Plan, as well as the need to do an SOW update as per the Mandate and Roles Document
- Provided overview of adaptive management
- We will need to set a vision for the SOW, identify processes and desired outcomes
- Many different projects and initiatives will feed into this
- We need Board members to bring their sectors perspective and concerns to the table so that we can capture them

3. Other

Due to the previous items overrunning time on agenda, items 3.1 to 3.4 were not fully addressed

3.1. Process Guide, Website, Information Flow, Basis Organization Info (Documents, Structure, etc.)

3.2 Committee Membership (Technical; Education, Outreach and Stewardship) – R. Clarke-Gauthier

3.3 Possible Guest Speakers, Topics, and/or Project Site Tours for Board Education?

3.4 Questions?

4. Upcoming Event Dates

- a. Next Board meeting will be late Nov or Early Dec.

5. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm by C. Theissen

Office Report March 27, 2024 to August 19, 2024:

- Follow-up from March 26th Board meeting (minutes, etc.)
- Continued onboarding of 2 new staff
- Website upgrade and migration
- Worked with company to switch emails, set up under windows 360 (new email, file storage, teams communication etc).
- Year-end reporting
- AGM preparation and Preparation for Current and Future Water Uses Forum. – location, agenda, speakers, preparations
- Working with InnoTech Alberta for a grant proposal submission to Alberta EcoTrust
- Staff meetings - Jul 29
- Mar 27 – attended Friends of Sturgeon Lake meeting
- Apr 10 – AB Managers Mtg (Rhonda – chair)
- Apr 11 – presented at West County Watershed AGM
- Apr 11 – Powell site visit and measurements
- Apr 11 – Mercer Public Advisory Group
- Apr 15 – interviews for Aquifer Steward (position for Grimshaw Gravels and partially funded with GGMAA)
- Apr 29 – Technical Committee meeting
- Drought Update Call with GoA – Apr 8, May 10, Jul 29
- Jun 18th – met with Accountant
- Jun 20 – MPWA AGM (Summary of events and activities of past year, financial and Water Uses Forum – good speakers including updated Current & Future Water uses Paper, Irrigation, Municipal Water Co-ops, CAPP, Athabasca Chipewyan FN, Neolithica.
- Aug 8 – attended Riparian Health Assessment training (Amy & Ashley)
- Aug 16 – Call with Northern WPACs about potential conference

Project Summary of events/activities/progress

- Alberta Water Council Source Water Protection Project Team
 - Meetings – Jun 3; Jul 2
 - Planning workshop with Fort Mac and Town of Spirit River to pilot web tool
- Boreal Wetland Centre advisory group meetings and Workshop meetings – Apr 2; May 13; Jun 25; Jul 29
 - Groundwater monitoring – May 6, Jun 11, Jul 9
- Cumulative Impacts of Wildfires on Groundwater Resources in Alberta (with Innotech)
 - Calls May 2, May 16
 - Budgeting, project layout and grant writing
- Education/Outreach
 - Social media posts
 - April 28 - 4-H Workshop (Amy & Ashley); Jul 4 – Junior Agrarians Program (Amy & Adanna); Jul 25 PCBFA Field Day (Amy & Adanna); Jul 24 - Alberta Crop Diagnostics Day at SARDA (Amy); Jul 30 & Aug 1 – Soil Health Caravan with Living Labs)(Adam)
 - May 7-9, 2024 - Walk Through The Forest (WTTF) (Amy)
 - May 16, 2024 - High School Spring Tour
 - May 17, 2024 - Watershed Presentation at GPPL
 - May 21, 2024 - Willow Planting (and fish passage assessment) at Beaverlodge weir (Adam, Amy, Ashley)
 - Field trips (Boreal Wetlands – May 22, McNaught Homestead – May 23, Floating Treatment Wetlands - Jun 12 & Jul 31; Wilderness Park – Jun 18)
 - Booth at/participated in Metis Fest -June 22, 2024; Heritage DayGP – Aug 3; Fresh Air

- Market Dunvegan– Aug 4; Paddle the Peace – Aug 17
 - (Amy)
 - Booth at Lac Cardinal Regional Pioneer Village Museum Day Camp – Jul 18; Lac Cardinal Regional Pioneer Village Museum Pancake Breakfast – Jul 20; Berwyn Berd's Community FunDay – Jul 20; Pioneer Day Aug 10; (Adanna)
 - August 17, 2024 - Event at the Lake – Leddy Lake (Amy)
- Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Source Water Protection Plan
 - Meeting with AEPA and Brian Smerdon (U of A) – Apr 18
 - Hired Aquifer steward – Adanna Hustler June 10 to Aug 30 (maybe Sept 30)
 - GGAMAA meeting - June 13
 - Spring discharge measurements, Lac Cardinal level measurements
 - Presented to Lac Cardinal Regional Economic Development Board – July 9 (Adanna & Rhonda)
 - Completed several wellhead assessments; running survey for residents; planning Farm Water Management event (with NPARA) - Adanna
 - Lac Cardinal Enterococcus sampling (For AHS – Mainly by Volunteers Rick and Megan)
- LakeKeepers
 - Discussion with ALMS about volunteers, coordination and lakes
- Lower Peace Freshwater Contaminant Reduction
 - Project management
 - May 22 & 23 – revegetation; (Adam & Ashley)
 - Producer tour with Mackenzie County and MARA – Jun 26 (Adam & Ashley)
- Project Scoping and Follow-up work
 - Call with Fish & Water Program – Apr 8;
 - Eastern Slopes Collaborative – Apr 10;
 - Powell and Richard site visit – Apr 23; Sebastien-Powell site visit – May 6; Lind crossing site visit – Jun 4
 - Call with West County partners
- Reducing Invasive Species in the Peace-Athabasca Delta
 - May 27-29; Jun 25 – invasive species survey
- Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project
 - Beaverlodge Water Quality Modelling
 - Contract management
 - Mar 27 & 28 - late winter sampling; Jul 3 & 4 – summer sampling
 - Sharing of data with Fish & Water program – stream temperature project
- Victor Lake Riparian assessment – Jun 16 – call;
 - Riparian workshop with Mountain Metis Community Association – Jul 22-24 (Ashley & Adam)
- Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection Plan
 - Continuing to follow-up on recommendations

Upcoming events

- Aug 28 – Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Farm Water Management (with NPARA)
- Sep 18 & 19 – Alberta Lake Management Society Annual Conference- open to public (3 staff going)
- Sep 25 – Wetland Innovation Workshop – open to public (Adam & Ashley presenting)
- Sep 25 – Water Use Adaptation

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
 Adanna Hustler – Aquifer Steward (Grimshaw Gravels)