

Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA)**Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting****December 5, 2024****Centre 2000, Grande Prairie, AB**

	Name	Sector
Attendees	Chris Thiessen	Large Urban Municipality – MPWA Chair
	Ashley Rowney	Utilities
	Bonnie Segal	Provincial
	Abdi Siad-Omar	Federal-Transboundary Relations
	Sarah Cairns	Agriculture
	Elaine Manzer	Small Urban Municipalities
	Sandra Miller	Oil & Gas
	Dave Walty	Conservation/Environmental
	Vern Lymburner	Small Urban Municipalities - Alternate
	Brian Lieverse	Recreation/Tourism/Fisheries
	Audrey DeWit	Public Member at Large
	Nikita Stamp	Watershed Stewardship - Alternate
	Wayne Thorp	Forestry
	Alden Armstrong	Metis Settlements General Council – Paddle Prairie
	Corinna Williams	Rural Municipalities
	Rick Keillor	Public Member-at-Large
	Bin Xu	Research-Education
Staff	Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier	Executive Director
	Adam Norris	Watershed Coordinator
	Ashley Garnham	Project Coordinator
	Adranna Hustler	Education and Outreach Coordinator
Guests	Marsha Trites-Russel	Wetlands Specialist, AEPA
	Bradley Peter	Executive Director, ALMS

<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, Executive Director
<u>Technical Committee</u>	R. Keillor, D. Walty, C. Thiessen, J. Henry, A. Rowney, A. Siad-Omar, Watershed Coordinator, Exec Director
<u>Integrated Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee (IWMP SC) (7)</u>	C. Thiessen (MPWA Chair), A. Armstrong (Indigenous Communities), D. Walty (NGO), A. Siad Omar (Governments), Vacant Seat (Industry), A. Rowney & C. Williams (2 other Directors), 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 9:15 AM by Chairman Chris Thiessen.
- Quorum was present.

1.2. Approval of Agenda – Additions or Deletions

- Meeting Agenda December 5th was reviewed.

Motion to approve December 5, 2024 Agenda moved by B. Lieverse.

Accepted by Consensus

1.3. Approval of Minutes

- Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2024 were reviewed.
- A. DeWit proposed an amendment to the August 19, 2024 minutes such that the Round Table comments were amended to say, “water transfers *in* Canada and the US”.

Motion to approve August 19, 2024 Minutes moved by C. Williams.

Accepted by Consensus

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

1.4. Director Resignation

- Wendy Patton has submitted their registration to the Board. The Metis Nation of Alberta – District 14, seat is now vacant.

The registration was accepted by the board with regret.

1.5. Expectations and roles of Board Members

- Chair, C. Thiessen shared his hope that there will be a full board by the MPWA’s AGM next year, in 2025. The MPWA is working on refreshing the SOW and the IWMP. He shared that there will be an increase in learning and participation from board members as MPWA reviews and revises these documents. He reiterated that the next 2 years will be busy and will involve lots of education and learning for the board.
- R. Clarke-Gauthier reiterated to please answer emails in a timely manner to ensure board member’s voices are heard. Amy Charles resigned from the E&O position at the end of August. Advertising for new staff were posted. Interviews were held, Adanna Hustler took on the position in mid October. Please email Rhonda if you are unsure of which staff member to contact.
- R. Clarke-Gauthier shared the organization chart, including all board seats and staff. Board elects, Chair, secretary, treasurer. The Board’s only staff member is Rhonda. There are the following committees – nominations committee, technical committee, education and stewardship committee, IWMP steering committee, executive/finance committee. The education and stewardship committee is currently non functioning but will be in 2025 after the Terms of Reference are reviewed.
- B. Segal asked where the descriptions for each committee can be found. Rhonda clarified that they can be found on the Directors site.

GUEST SPEAKER: Marsha Trites-Russel – Wetlands Specialist, AEPA – 9:32 AM

- Reviewed the AB wetland policy, wetland classification in AB. Mitigation techniques including avoid, minimize and replace. Wetland replacement can be fulfilled by purchasing credits, make a payment to the in-lieu fee program, undertake permitted responsible replacement. A code of practice was introduced in 2020 as part of the red tape reduction program.
- Wetland Replacement Program was introduced in 2020 which aims to provide resources for collaborative agreements.
- Program elements – MOU, identify potential replacement sites, proposal, contract, approvals + construction, monitoring
- Fen restoration near Wabasca, several projects in County of GP, MD of Greenview near Victor Lake. Inventory pilot project with Ducks Unlimited and ABMI to update wetland inventory.
- Questions for Marsha:
 - R. Keillor asked how readily available the LiDAR to the public.
 - B. Segal asked if the province is updating their wetland inventory. Marsha clarified that the pilot project is all that is planned so far.
 - B. Segal asked how wildfires have affected the wetlands in AB. Marsha clarified that the smoke made the inventory difficult. Areas affected by fires may change classifications due to changes in vegetation in burnt areas.
 - E. Manzer asked how much money may be allocated to projects and where funding is being procured.
 - C. Theissen asked how the fire break south of GP would be implicated in wetland replacement. Marsha said that it was her belief that the replacements have been done.
 - A. Norris asked where the 5 million dollars influx has come from. Marsha clarified that that money is from wetland replacement credits.
 - R. Keillor asked how immediate response vs. ditch plugging. Marsha said that most projects are ditch plugging and most are functional within 5 years.

2. Reports and Updates

2.1. Chairman Report – C. Thiessen

- C. Thiessen has been advocating and educating himself. He recently met with the Minister of Finance, Honourable Mr. Nate Horner, where the topics of 'how to monetize water resources such as nuclear, Site C and lithium mining' were discussed.
- The Minister of Environment committed to a meeting with WPACs.
- Adam, Rhonda and Chris attended an AEP/Water Partners meeting in Edmonton Nov 20th, but due to a small meeting space, only 3 people from each organization were invited to attend. They discussed the 7 themes of the Water availability Engagement and an indepth exploring of inter-basin water transfers, .
- Met with the IWMP SC last week.

2.2. Office Report – R. Clarke-Gauthier**a) Activities and Initiatives**

- This office report covers the previous month since the last meeting;

2.3. Financial Update – R. Clarke-Gauthier

- a. Financial Update – Reviewed ‘Profit and Loss’ Tracker from 1st of April through to December 3rd 2024

2.4. Education/Outreach Update – A. Hustler

- Amy Charles attended Treaty Days – August 21-23 (Cadotte Lake)
- Attended Summer’s End Festival – Fairview
- Working on updating school programs (K-6)
- Working with Camp Tamarack to create watershed curriculum – May 2025
- Open Farm Days Partnership in August 2025 – theme in 2025 is ‘water’
- Homeschooling program with DUC and Inside Learning – June 2025 (Homeschoolers in the GP/Hythe Area have expressed interest)
- Attended webinars and RDAR on the Road in Rycroft (September) as a form of Continuing Education
- In the process of planning to attend tradeshow in the new year – will have a booth set up
 - Alberta Sand and Gravel Association Conference (January)
 - Will attend either KTCEA Conference or the CBFAs Northern Women in Agriculture (February 2025)
 - Water Management in AB’s Boreal – February in Grande Prairie
 - Mighty Peace Teachers Convention
 - SARDA Tradeshow
- Noted potential future initiatives (X-Stream Science Program; Winter Outdoor event for the ALMS Lake Keepers Program at Sturgeon Lake)

2.5. Technical Committee Updates – A. Norris & A. Graham

A. Graham

- Floating Treatment Wetlands
 - Installation took place in June 2024
 - Raft Removal – October 23, 2024 (tip for next year – get them out before the ice forms)
 - Still working on data compilation and assessment
- Wetlands & Watersheds: Making the Connection presentation at the Wetland Innovation Workshop on Sept 25th, 2024
- Beaverlodge Monitoring
 - Final Sampling – November 5th and 6th for 2024
 - Madison K. with AEP joined Ashley at the last monitoring event
 - Consisted of nine (9) monitoring sites – no data as of yet, but Ashley working on analyzing it - Future consideration to do less sites as nine (9) is a lot
- Lake Keepers
 - The lakes currently in mind are Swan, Sturgeon and Snipe
 - One volunteer confirmed for the Winter 2025 Sampling event
 - ALMS 2025 Winter Sampling Training Webinar – December 10, 2024
- CABIN 2025/2026
 - Currently applying for funding through Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA), Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP)
 - Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) – led by ECCC and is a collaborative initiative that provides standardized protocols for monitoring the

health of the aquatic ecosystems across Canada

- Focuses on assessing ecosystem health through the collection and analysis of benthic macroinvertebrates, with data shared through a web-accessible database.
- Many other WPACs are already participating in this initiative
- Within our watershed we would be looking South of Grande Prairie – focus is on less disturbed areas so is site specific; as a whole, this program is currently focused on an ‘eastern slope collaborative’
 - Then this protocol could be taken and used for the rest of the Province

A. Norris

- Cumulative effects of wildfire on Groundwater
 - Partner with InnoTech Alberta, where the MPWA contributes field work in the Peace – currently waiting for funding approval
- Grimshaw Gravel Aquifers SWPP
 - Started accessing potential losses (i.e. evaporative losses) – used linear regressions and found that physical parameters (sun, wind, rain) is not the primary determinant of lake level – this provides more evidence for the aquifer being the primary driver of lake level.. Will monitor again in 2025
- Lower Peace Freshwater Contaminant Reduction
 - Project had two (2) sites – was about engaging landowners to change practices to reduce their impacts; now complete except for final reporting.
- Peace River Tributaries Project – Partners are the Northern Sunrise County, Mackenzie County and landowners; Water Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP) Application was submitted for funding;
- Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project – spent time finalizing model and now we need to find funding/money in order to run it; exploratory ‘what if’ tool
- Reducing Invasive Species in the Peace-Athabasca Delta
 - Worked with Little Red over concerns regarding thistle getting into the Delta
 - Parks Canada has interest in the report and suspect thistle was brought in by bales (i.e. feed) into the Province
 - Didn’t find thistle on the Wabasca or the Peace River Mainstem
 - Project is complete except for final reporting and some final ongoing promotional work.
- Resiliency in the Wapiti Watershed
 - Just received funding through a grant – two (2) sites with one (1) along the Redwillow River and the other near Saskatoon Mountain
- Source Water Maps – worked with Dave Walty on the maps re: watershed characterization

Lunch Break

GUEST SPEAKER: Bradley Peter, Executive Director, Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS) (12:42 PM)

- ALMS has been around since 1991 and the ALMS is focused on Lakes
- Main program is LakeWatch in which the ALMS staff works alongside the public to gather monitoring data – community-based monitoring of Alberta’s Lakes for nearly 30 years – monitor 5 lakes/year, every 4 years – ALMS does the monitoring alongside Conservation officers – data is uploaded into the Gov’t database and Datastream platforms; when doing this monitoring they

are looking at trends and do publish this trended data annually – monitoring shows decreasing and increasing trends - See Annual Trend Summary at www.alms.ca/reports

- The Lake Keepers Program is a traditional citizen science program where volunteers are trained and equipped to collect data and is designed to support remote and under-sampled waterbodies. After launching the summer monitoring program, they identified a gap with winter monitoring programs (or lack thereof) so they put out the most significant effort to understand winter lakes in Alberta and trained and equipped citizen scientists and winter anglers to monitor Alberta lakes
- Indigenous Community-Based Monitoring Program – Supporting 8 Indigenous communities in the Alberta Oil-Sands Region with year-round lake monitoring – is an enhanced monitoring program. This data gets uploaded to an oil sands data portal, so its not accessible for most and the Indigenous communities have closed data sharing agreements in place.
- Involved in collected data for ‘Recreational Beach Monitoring’ – have a contract to perform AHS beach monitoring each year – enhanced monitoring for rare cyanobacterial toxins including anatoxin and cylindrospermopsin. This data goes into a spreadsheet which can be found on the government website. All historical data can be referenced in one spreadsheet. This information can be used to form public advisories.
- Almost all of the monitoring that ALMS does includes invasive species monitoring. No aquatic invasive mussels were detected in 2023 or 2024 – they do look annually for them but have yet been found in any of the monitoring that they do. Not saying they aren’t here – they just haven’t been found in monitoring that has occurred.
- Been working on a satellite project for the last two (2) years with the goal to model lake water quality – was a highly collaborative project – samples collected during flyover data of Sentinel 2 satellites on cloud-free days – sample 20-30 locations each time there is a satellite flyover and use this data/information to convert the data into an image; can take bloom duration, extent and intensity and generate an index that can be used from year-to-year

2.6 IWMP Steering Committee – A. Norris

- **Update of Committee Membership (Clarify Industry & Other)**
 - **A. Rowney will remain in the “Other Director” so the Committee requires a Industry Representative**
 - **Still need a Director to fill the Industry Representative**

Motion: A. DeWit nominated Wayne Thorpe to fill the Industry seat on the IWMP SC as there were no further nominations, W. Thorpe accepted the nomination. Seconded by B. Lieveise.

All in favour

- **Update of Committee Work**
 - Why do a SOW? – mandate; baseline that tells us the status of the watershed at one point in time; helps assess if things are good, bad or otherwise; helps identify issues and potential solutions; its proactive and helps us engage the community; and reporting – helps getting information out to groups for planning.
 - MPWA to do assessment and reporting and the Gov’t to do policy/standards and use the input of the work the MPWA does;
 - SOW and IWMP are linked and the main bulk of the work the MPWA does – look at triggers, plan, implement, then monitor and report and then transition over to review which is currently where we are sitting in the iterative process (noting that the first iteration was our baseline development)

Other

3.1. Water Availability Engagement – Review. MPWA Submission. All Individual Board members should do surveys and distribute to as many in your sector as possible to participate. The survey ends January 10 (no extensions). Remember to include messaging around all that is working as well as suggestions.

- Board members were sent email via R. Clarke-Gauthier, highlighting dates for the Water Availability Engagement – some members were able to attend in person, some virtually
- R. Clarke-Gauthier encouraged board members to take part in the survey
- Board indicated that R. Clarke-Gauthier should submit a survey response on behalf of MPWA
- Water Availability Engagement Survey trying to get an understanding of about what the people of Alberta want to share about water – survey stems from Ministers mandate that she was given back in 2023 – when WPACs talked to the Minister, it was noted that ‘First in Time, First in Right’ (FITFIR) under the Water Act would not be touched during this process
- Did a round table exercise to discuss topics highlighted in the Water Availability Survey

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

- All information is contained in the Director’s area of the website;

3.3 Water Management in Alberta Boreal 2025 Conference

- Board members have been sent information regarding the conference
- Board’s responsibility to register for the conference and book accommodation if required
- This is hosted by three (3) watersheds, Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC), Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA) and Lesser Slave Watershed Council (LSWC) . There will be a variety of topics, all under the umbrella of Water Management in the Boreal
- Need to find a keynote speaker for the conference

4 Upcoming Event Dates

- a. Office closure – December 24th through to January 2nd
- b. Water Availability Engagement Survey – January 10, 2025
- c. Water Management in Alberta Boreal Conference – February 25-26, 2025

Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 3:41 pm by C. Theissen

Office Report from August 19, 2024 to December 4, 2024:

- Follow-up from August 19th Board meeting (minutes, etc.)
- Continued onboarding of 2 new staff
- Staff meetings - Sep 3, Sep 17, Oct 1, Oct 15, Oct 29, Nov 12, Nov 26
- Aug 29 – TC meeting
- Aug 30 - E/O Coordinator Amy Charles resignation – Review of work accomplished and files to finish and discussion regarding position Sept 3. Set last day Sept 5 to have computer, supplies and files returned to McLennan Office.
- Sept 15 - Submitted WRRP grant application for crossing installation and cropper setbacks from watercourses
- Sept 24 – Last AEPA Drought meeting with WPACs
- Oct 17 – meeting with Land Stewardship Center to review previous year process and discuss any possible changes for upcoming year. Funding secured.
- Oct 17 – Special meeting with Water Partners and Minister Schulz – introduction to upcoming Water Engagement – in part due to drought and ensuring future availability but also looking towards other priorities and changes regarding water resources.
- Oct 21 - Hired E/O Coordinator, Adanna Hustler
- Oct 24 – Collected Well Loggers from GP County sites and retrieved data.
- Oct 10 - Presented source water maps to Water North Coalition
- Nov 1 – removed lake monitoring device Lac Cardinal
- Nov 14 – Rhonda Attended Virtual Webinar explaining Water Availability Engagement
- Nov 18 – Ashley attended the Northern AB Water Availability Engagement Webinar
- Nov 19 - WPAC managers meeting Edmonton – Water engagement, SOW reviews, Compendium, roundtable, AWC, E/O Committee workload, AB WPAC MOU
- Nov 19 - WPAC State of the Watershed Discussion meeting - NSWA, BRWC, BRWA provided summary of methods and Info from the OCS
- Nov 20 – AEPA/Water Partners Forum, Millwoods Town Center
- Nov 21 – Only open house in Northern AB for the Water Availability Engagement - Peace River - Adanna
- Reviewing and discussing SOW opportunities, methods, needs, possible projects, etc.
- Nov 25 - IWMP SC meeting – State of the Watershed renewal meeting with the Tech Committee
- Nov 25 - TC meeting
- Water Management in Alberta's Boreal 2025
 - Meetings - Sep 13, Oct 15, Oct 31, Nov 14
 - Organizing workshop, finding speakers, setup registration, promotion
- Prep for Fall Board Meeting – survey, location, agenda, speakers, minutes, office report and financials.
- Dec 4 - Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Management Advisory Association Meeting

Project Summary of events/activities/progress

- Alberta Water Council Source Water Protection Project Team
 - Meetings – Sep 17, Sep 26, Oct 10, Oct 28, Nov 3, Nov 7
 - Hosted web tool workshop using Town of Spirit River – Oct 1
 - Lead Alberta Water and Wastewater Operations Association workshop – Nov 12
- ALMS Annual Conference – Hinton - September 18/19 – Adam, Ashley and Adanna
- Boreal Wetland Centre advisory group meetings and Workshop meetings –
 - Presented at Wetland Innovation Workshop – Sep 25
 - Groundwater monitoring – Aug 21, Sep 25
- CABIN Project (Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network)

- In the process of completing application for funding through Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA), specifically the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP).
 - East Slopes Collaborative Meetings Nov 7 & Nov 28
- Cows & Fish – Beaver Coexistence Tools: Tree Wire Wrapping Oct 1– Ashley attended
- Cumulative Impacts of Wildfires on Groundwater Resources in Alberta
 - Waiting to hear confirmation of grant application
- DataStream – connected with them to create account and upload our data into their database
- DUC – attended Wetland Webinar November 26
- Education/Outreach
 - Social media posts and Website Updates
 - Working on fall newsletter
 - Planning for upcoming outreach events – tradeshow, and conferences
 - Meeting to discuss Home school opportunities
 - Met with Camp Tamarack to start to set up a Water resource session and training module.
 - Re-working aquifer video
 - Attend SARDA Ag Soil event - Rycroft
 - Attended virtual AB WPAC E/O meeting Nov 26
- Floating Treatment Wetlands
 - Sampling – August 21
 - last sampling and raft removal - Oct 23
- Grimshaw Gravels Aquifer Source Water Protection Plan
 - Aquifers and Agriculture Event – Aug 28
 - GGAMAA meeting – Sep 12
 - Lac Cardinal level measurements
 - Completed wellhead assessments; running survey for residents; planning Farm Water Management event
 - Lac Cardinal Enterococcus sampling
 - Aquifer steward wrapped term September 30
- LakeKeepers
 - Discussion with ALMS about volunteers, coordination and lakes. Potential Lakes: Swan, Sturgeon, Snipe
 - Upcoming: LakeKeepers Webinar for Volunteers
 - Sampling Protocol Winter 2024/2025 - Dec 10
 - One volunteer confirmed
- Lower Peace Freshwater Contaminant Reduction
 - Project management
 - Oct 3 – establishment survey
 - Oct 4 – Grade 5 field trip and livestaking
- Reducing Invasive Species in the Peace-Athabasca Delta
 - Worked with Canada Water Agency Grant Manager to adjust funding
 - Invasive species control and Grade 9 field trip – Oct 15 - 17
- Redwillow Watershed Restoration Project
 - Beaverlodge Water Quality Modelling - Contract management with AE
 - Sep 5 – meeting with Madison Kobryn, EPA limnologist
 - Water Sampling September 11/12, November 5/6
- Resiliency in the Wapiti Watershed
 - Signed contract with **Canada Water Agency** (Funder) – Nov 20
 - Site visits – Nov 27
- Victor Lake Riparian assessment
 - Shared final report with Mountain Metis Nation Association– Sep 23

- Wapiti Watershed Source Water Protection Plan
 - Continuing to follow-up on recommendations

Upcoming events

- Office Closed Dec 24-Jan 2 for Holiday season
- **Register for Water Management in Alberta Boreal 2025 Conference** – Register through Event Brite and book hotel
- Final reporting for Reducing Invasives, Complete work on Friia Application, AEP midterm reporting

Submitted By: Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier, P.Ag, - Executive Director
Adam Norris, M.Sc, P.Biol, - Watershed Coordinator
Ashley Garnham – Project Coordinator
Adanna Hustler, B.Sc. – Education and Outreach Coordinator