

International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board (IRLWWB) Teleconference

Date: October 2, 2015
Time: 1:00-4:00 CDT (2:00-5:00 EDT)
Chairperson: Michael Goffin

ATTENDANCE

BOARD MEMBERS	
PARTICIPANTS	
Michael Goffin (Board Canadian Co-Chair)	Environment Canada
Karen Cederwall	Local Canadian Member
Greg Chapman	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Gail Faveri	Environment Canada
Todd Sellers	Local Canadian Member
Colonel Koprowski (Board U.S. Co-Chair)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Nolan Baratono	Local U.S. Member
Matt Gouin	Local U.S. Member
Suzanne Hanson	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Mike Hirst	Lake of the Woods Soil and Water Conservation District
Charlene Mason	Local U.S. Member
James Stark	U.S. Geological Survey
ABSENTEES	
Lori Dowling-Hanson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Matthew Gouin	Local Member
Al Pemberton	Red Lake Department of Natural Resources
James Stark	U.S. Geological Survey
Dennis Brown	Local Canadian Member
Kiley Hanson	Local Canadian Member
Chief Earl Klyne	Seine River First Nation
Mark Lee	Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship
Trina Rawn	Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION	
Nick Heisler	Canadian Section
Wayne Jenkinson	Canadian Section
BOARD ENGINEERING ADVISORS/SECRETARIAT	
Scott Jutila (U.S. Engineering Advisor/Secretariat)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Diane de Beaumont (Cdn Secretariat)	Environment Canada
OTHER	
Kelli Saunders	International Watershed Coordinator

Summary of Discussion

1. Welcome and Introductions

Attendance was recorded. No additional agenda topics were proposed.

2. Review updated work plan

The April 2015-March 2016 IRLWWB work plan (September 25, 2015 version) was circulated to members ahead of call. Members were asked to flag any further proposed updates/revisions. It was explained that further detail on the activities of the Board (e.g., IWI projects, actions to date) have been included in the work plan, as per the August 2015 Board discussion. This addressed a concern of a member that the format of the work plan may be too limiting. It was also mentioned that the model of this work plan is supported by Commissioners because it makes it clear that Board activities fall within its mandate.

ACTION/DECISION:

- 1. Todd Sellers to join the IRLWWB's Water Quality Sub-Committee.***
- 2. The work plan was approved with revisions noted below.***
 - a. Secretariat to correct the number of recommendations on page 7 from three to two.***
 - b. Secretariat to add "No action planned in 2015/16 pending completion of IJC's Water Quality Objectives Review Project and/or implementation of the Water Quality Plan of Study" as item #4 in second column for Directive 4a.***
 - c. Secretariat to include the task of "review of transboundary coordination of environmental emergency planning and response measures in basin".***
- 3. Secretariat to keep track of developments and update work plan accordingly.***

3. Consider use of more sub-committees to accomplish Board mandate

The Board discussed how best to manage its activities through the use of sub-committees. It considered its mandate and capacity, and concluded that, in addition to the Water Levels Committee, there is a need to establish two more standing committees to coordinate activities related to water quality and engagement. Further discussion ensued on the specific role of the Water Quality Sub-Committee (WQSC), which, beyond water quality reporting, may include keeping track of relevant water quality issues in the basin such as AIS, emergency preparedness. First task of the WQSC will be to scope out its role and seek approval of Board. It was pointed out that the Board may require the assistance of non-Board experts in carrying out some of its activities through the standing committees. The IJC confirmed that anyone can serve on sub-committees. Concern was raised over reaching out to outside expertise especially from agencies which may result in conflict of interest issues. It was mentioned that the needed expertise may be accessible through agency members on the Board as much as possible. The Technical Advisory Committee of the International Multi-Agency Arrangement (TAC-IMA) was proposed as a principal source of outside expertise. It was decided that the WQSC would first scope out its role and then propose how this would be accomplished (e.g., what additional skills are required and is there a need to bring in outside expertise); the Board would then go to IJC for endorsement.

ACTION/DECISION:

- 1. Board agreed that the Water Quality Sub-Committee should be a standing committee and its main role is to coordinate the annual review of water quality data and prepare a report on water quality for the IJC.***
- 2. Board agreed to organize its activities around three sub-committees: water quantity (Water Levels Committee), water quality, and engagement.***

3. *Nolan Baratono and Trina Rawn will organize the first meeting of the Water Quality Sub-Committee.*
 - a. *Board members are asked to identify their participation by date of first meeting.*
 - b. *Sub-committee to start scoping its water quality role/activities.*
 - c. *Sub-committee to work towards identification of additional expertise that may be required in order to fulfill Board's water quality mandate.*
 - d. *Suzanne Hanson to join the IRLWWB's Water Quality Sub-Committee.*
4. *Engagement Sub-Committee to formalize its membership and inform Board.*

4. Water Quality Sub-Committee

Discussion on Water Quality Sub-Committee occurred under item 3.

5. Discuss role of IMA in Board activities

It was raised that it would make sense to use the IMA as a source of expertise given the large responsibility of the Water Quality Sub-Committee. The Board was informed that the IMA agreed to conduct a self-assessment of its strengths and weaknesses; this will be considered in establishing next steps. It was further pointed out that the IMA was created before the creation of this Board and its role is changing. The Board would like to continue receiving updates from the IMA as the one provided at the Board's meeting with agencies this past August.

ACTION/DECISION:

1. *Ongoing communication on IMA activities would be helpful.*

6. Discussion on emerging/ongoing efforts to maintain or improve water quality in the IRLWW

The Board was provided with information with a septic system initiative by the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board (VNPCWJPB) and asked if it wants to be informed of such initiatives and provide letters of support for such initiatives. The Board supports the suggestion as long as there is agreement within Board that the initiative is significant.

ACTION/DECISION:

1. *Board agreed that it would like to be updated on IMA activities on an ongoing basis.*
2. *Board agreed to inform Commissioners through Semi-Annual meetings on relevant initiatives in basin.*
3. *Board agreed that all letters of support should be on request, kept at a high level, and signed by Board Co-Chairs.*
4. *Nolan Baratono to draft letter on Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board's initiative, using the 2011 letter as model, for Board Co-Chairs signature.*

7. Discussion on Border Lake Association request that the Board recommend two Border Lakes Association Board members to the IJC for possible appointment to the Rule Curve Public Advisory Group

The Board discussed whether it is appropriate for members to forward/recommend names to the IJC for possible appointment to the Rule Curve Advisory Group.

ACTION/DECISION:

1. *Board agreed that it is appropriate for members to pass on names directly to Kelli Saunders.*

8. IWI

Discuss any proposed projects that would require Board support (IJC submission deadline is Nov. 20)

Board was asked to consider advancing a proposed project on AIS focused on public outreach for this upcoming IWI funding deadline. This project has been discussed by leaders in the basin, funding is being sought, and binational coordination is being considered. Given that AIS has been raised as an important issue by advisory group and at public meetings, the Board agreed to review a project outline and then consider next steps. The IJC offered assistance in developing the proposal.

ACTION/DECISION:

1. *Mike Hirst to obtain preliminary project concept on AIS and circulate to Board for consideration*

Obtain Board feedback on HPAB projects

The Board discussed Nolan Baratono's recommended HPAB projects #24 and #25 related to contaminants, and agreed to inform the HPAB that the Board would be interested in supporting projects in these areas. The Board briefly discussed other HPAB project (Great lakes health indicators) that could provide insight in one of its charges.

ACTION/DECISION:

1. *Michael Goffin to pass on to Board HPAB recommendation on Great Lakes Health Indicators*
2. *Board to indicate to HPAB interest in project developed around Water Quality Plan of Study projects 24 and 25.*

Discuss October IWI Workshop

Information on the October 27 IWI Workshop was circulated to the Board. Board required to confirm participation to the IJC by October 9. It was pointed out that Gail Faveri and Scott Jutila have confirmed in-person participation.

ACTION/DECISION:

1. *Todd interested in attending IWI workshop in person.*
2. *Board members interested in remote participation are to contact Board Secretariat by October 9.*

9. Future Meetings

Information on the October 27-29 Semi-Annual Meeting and a proposed Board meeting schedule from October 2015-October 2016 were circulated to members. The Board did not think that a call is necessary before the upcoming Semi-Annual Meeting. The Board appearance presentation can be finalized by email. Members are invited to participate in Semi-Annual meetings remotely by teleconference or Webex.

ACTION/DECISION:

1. *Board agreed to the proposed meeting schedule.*

10. Roundtable

- Greg Chapman provided short update on Steep Rock project in basin and asked Board if interested in hearing more on this topic.
- Kelli Saunders provided an update on Phase One of the Rainy and Namakan Lakes Rule Curves Evaluation Study. The Rule Curve Study Board conducted stakeholder meetings in late September to explain to stakeholders the Directive and Terms of Reference provided by the International Joint Commission to the Study Board and to solicit feedback on the evaluation approach. Members were informed that comments can be sent online.
- Mike Hirst provided short update on TMDL initiative. 1st round of meetings took place with resource agencies to seek input on process. Information to be posted on Soil and Water Conservation District website. Members are encouraged to contact Mike Hirst for additional information.
- Michael Goffin asked for an update on Wheeler's Point funding to Jim Stark and Gail Faveri who were tasked at the August 2015 Board meeting with looking into that issue. Jim Stark informed the Board that USGS and MPCA are working on a process that is expected to resolve this situation. Jim committed to flag issue to Board, if any come up.
- Michael Goffin mentioned that he provided his observations on the water flow simulation to the Water Levels Committee.

ACTION/DECISION:

- 1. Greg Chapman to coordinate Steep Rock presentation to Board at earliest convenience for all.***

11. Review of new action items and adjournment (Michael Goffin)

Canadian Co-Chair summarized action items stemming from this meeting and adjourned the meeting at 3:30 CDT.