

MEETING SUMMARIES

International Rainy - Lake of the Woods Watershed Board
 Basin Meetings
 August 9-12, 2016
 Kenora, Ontario

ATTENDANCE	
PARTICIPANTS	
BOARD MEMBERS	
Michael Goffin (Board Canadian Co-Chair)	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Gail Faveri	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Trina Rawn	Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Greg Chapman	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Mark Lee	Manitoba Sustainable Development
Kiley Shebagegit	Local Canadian Member
Todd Sellers	Local Canadian Member
Karen Cederwall	Local Canadian Member
Colonel Calkins (Board U.S. Co-Chair)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Nolan Baratono	Local U.S. Member
Jim Stark	U.S. Geological Survey
Mike Hirst	Lake of the Woods Soil and Water Conservation District
Charlene Mason	Local U.S. Member
Shane Bowe	Red Lake Department of Natural Resources
INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION	
Commissioner Richard Morgan	Canadian Section
Commissioner Lana Pollack	U.S. Section
Commissioner Rich Moy	U.S. Section
Camille Mageau	Canadian Section
Wayne Jenkinson	Canadian Section
Nick Heisler*	Canadian Section
Michael Toope	Canadian Section
Mark Gabriel	U.S. Section
BOARD ENGINEERING ADVISORS/SECRETARIAT	
Daniel Rokitnicki-Wojcik (Cdn Secretariat)	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Scott Jutila (U.S. Engineering Advisor/Secretariat)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
OTHER	
Kelli Saunders	International Watershed Coordinator

*Participated remotely

ABSENTEES	
BOARD MEMBERS	
Dennis Brown	Local Canadian Member
Lori Dowling-Hanson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Suzanne Hanson	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Matthew Gouin	Local U.S. Member
Al Pemberton	Red Lake Department of Natural Resources
BOARD ENGINEERING ADVISORS/SECRETARIAT	
Matt DeWolfe (Cdn Engineering Advisor)	Environment and Climate Change Canada

Tuesday August 9

Experimental Lakes Area 10:00am – 2:00pm

Some members of the Board, IJC Commissioners (Morgan, Pollack, and Moy) and staff, and others participated in an optional tour of the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) research station that is currently managed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD – www.iisd.org). The ELA is roughly 90km east of Kenora.

Participants were provided with a brief history and summary of past and current science being conducted by the research group by Michael Paterson (Chief Research Scientist) and were given a tour of the station's facilities (near-by experimental lakes, water chemistry lab, fisheries lab, and meteorological station).

Wednesday August 10

Water Quality Plan of Study Briefing 10:00am – 10:30am

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS	
OTHER	
Veronique Hiriart-Baer	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Felicia Minotti	Global Affairs Canada
Joel Wessman	Consulate General of Canada

At the request of the Board, representatives from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) attended a specially scheduled meeting to provide a brief update on the direction of the Canadian portion of the implementation of a binational science plan and the funds announced in the Canadian 2016 Federal Budget.

The GAC representatives briefly described the process that the governments had undertaken to make their decision, which included a binational assessment of the Water Quality Plan of Study (WQ PoS). The ECCC representative then provided an overview of the proposed activities to be included in the Canadian portion of the plan.

The meeting concluded with questions from Board members that focused on:

- what are the expectations of the IJC and Board
- what are the timelines of the proposed work
- what are the anticipated outcomes of the proposed work

U.S. government representatives were not available to attend the meeting.

Board Meeting with CAG / IAG
12:30pm – 1:30pm

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS	
Community Advisory Group	
Tom Mosindy	Canadian Member
Teika Newton	Canadian Member
Susan McLeod	Canadian Member
Paul Anderson*	Canadian Member
John Carlson	U.S. Member
Jerry Caple	U.S. Member

*Participated remotely

The Board meets annually with its advisory groups to provide the groups with updates on topics of interest, listen to their concerns, and discuss other emerging issues of importance. Since Industry Advisory Group (IAG) member's summer schedules were particularly busy, IAG members were not in attendance; however, IAG co-chairs provided an update from the group and provided their concerns to the Board. Arrangements are being made to accommodate this joint meeting during an alternate time of the year (e.g. March) to ensure that members can participate.

Board Update

The meeting began with an update by the Board on two requested issues; the status of the cumulative effects of mining letter and the WQ PoS. With respect to the mining letter, neither government has responded. Governments were reminded of this at the IJC's spring semi-annual meetings in April 2016 during the formal discussion between the IJC and the Governments.

With respect to the WQ PoS, the recent events and new information received from ECCC were provided to the advisory groups. This included the news release of the announcement of the development of a binational science plan and funding for the Canadian portion of this plan, the letter received from Governments indicating their direction in response to the IJC's PoS, and a general overview of the information received during the ECCC briefing earlier in the day. In addition, permission was granted to distribute to the advisory groups the letter from the IJC to the Watershed Board concerning these developments.

Comments received from the group regarding these updates especially in relation to the WQ PoS included:

- how will the public, tribes, First Nations, and metis be included in this process
- stressing the need to consult with local experts
- the need for explanation on why specific studies were not retained in the government approach

Membership

The next topic of discussion was regarding group membership. There was a motion to renew four members of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) for 3-year terms and this decision was deferred to the Board meeting later in the week. The issue of the decrease in Canadian membership on the IAG was raised. The IAG will be seeking to increase participation and especially target new Canadian members to ensure a more balanced membership in the group.

Advisory Group Updates

Co-chairs of the IAG and CAG provided updates to the Board on group activities and meetings. Both groups requested and have received updates during their meetings on the following subjects:

- Ongoing rule curve evaluation study
- International Watershed Coordination activities
- Board's Engagement and Aquatic Ecosystem Health Committees
- Rail safety in the watershed

Advisory Group Issues Raised

The meeting concluded with CAG members raising issues of concern, including pipeline safety, development in unorganized and unincorporated areas in Canada, and coordination of aquatic invasive species in transboundary waters.

The issue of development in unorganized and unincorporated areas in Canada was discussed in further detail. It was explained that according to CAG members' understanding, unorganized or unincorporated areas fall outside the jurisdiction of a municipality, and so no provincial building code, zoning, or permitting applies. This could lead to unregulated development and pressures including impacts to water quality in some lakes. It was highlighted that this is an issue more on the Canadian side of the watershed than on the U.S. side.

In closing, Board co-chairs thanked advisory group co-chairs and members for their ongoing efforts and participation and indicated that the Board will discuss the issues raised and will determine if and when these issues can be examined in more detail.

Public Meeting 2:00pm – 4:00pm

The Public Meeting was well attended by roughly 100 individuals that included IJC Commissioners and members of the public, Board, media and indigenous communities. Of note was the attendance of former Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. John Turner.

The meeting was structured around three main focus areas that were followed by a question and answer period. The focus areas were as follows:

- IRLWWB Activity Update
- International Rainy and Namakan Lakes Rule Curves Study Board
- ECCC Draft Science Plan

The meeting was opened with an introduction by Commissioner Morgan, who welcomed participants and provided a brief overview of the IJC, Board and the Rule Curves review.

Board co-chairs, board committee co-chairs, and the International Watershed Coordinator presented as part of the IRLWWB update, which included Board mandate, structure, membership, and activities.

The International Watershed Coordinator presented on behalf of the Rule Curves Study Board and provided a synopsis of the goals, process, and status of the ongoing rule curve review.

Veronique Hiriart-Baer, (Acting Director, Watershed Ecohydrology and Research Division) presented a draft science plan on the main components that ECCC plans to implement as part of the Canadian portion of a binational science plan. This presentation has been posted to the IJC's WQ PoS webpage and can be accessed here: http://ijc.org/en /LWBWQPOS/Draft_ECCC_Science_Plan.

Questions and Comments

The following questions were posed and comments made during the second half of the meeting.

On the draft ECCC science plan

- How will the public be consulted with this draft science plan? Will there be a formal comment period? Will the presentation be posted on the Board's webpage?
- Does the plan have a policy mechanism?
- The public has waited a long time for this and let's hurry up and get moving on the problems affecting the lake.
- The State of the Basin Report synthesizes the science and governance and the WQ PoS outlines a plan of action, so why do we need another plan?
- The IJC needs to be involved as they can act as a bridge across political boundaries.
- There is a need to be cognisant of how each jurisdiction will evaluate climate change impacts and ensure that they are consistent.

Engagement

- A local teacher asked if there are there materials that could be used to communicate issues to the public and in schools.

Other Issues in the Basin

- There are concerns over water quality in Lac des Mille Lacs in the Seine River basin. A First Nations individual reported that there are impacts from forestry, pipelines, transportation links (highway 17 and rail). This lake is at the headwaters of the basin and that what happens there could impact boundary waters.
- A concern was reported over float planes being a vector for zebra mussel expansion.

The meeting was closed by Commissioner Moy who thanked the participants for their time and input.

Thursday August 11

Board Meeting (Part I)

8:00am – 10:00am

Introductions and Board Business

Due to the travel arrangements of the Commissioners in attendance, the agenda was modified to include a discussion on the WQ PoS, to move the IJC update to this day's meeting, and to address the renewal of CAG members. Action items were addressed as completed, or with status updates and members identified that the Board should follow up with the concerns from the individual from Lac des Milles Lacs from the public meeting. Meeting minutes from the May 12th teleconference were approved with changes that were previously provided to the Secretariat by Board members.

Action: Todd Sellers and Karen Cederwall to follow up and speak with the Individual from Lac des Milles Lacs that voiced concerns during the public meeting.

Action: Secretariat to see that previous meeting minutes are posted to the Board's webpage.

Water Levels Committee Update

The Water Levels Committee (WLC) provided an update on summer 2016 conditions which have been within the rule curve band, although not always at mid-band. With respect to the gate refurbishment project, the company plans to update the public via online posts, which will help reinforce that the company is leading the project not the WLC. The WLC has also requested that the company provide alerts online if there will be a flow change. Overall, the WLC continues to work well with the companies and the recent meeting held in International Falls was productive. The WLC has no IWI project updates to provide at this time.

CAG Membership

CAG co-chairs requested that the 4 members with soon to be expiring terms be renewed.

The Watershed Board agreed to approve the following CAG members for a second 3 year term: Jerry Caple, John Carlson, Teika Newton and Paul Anderson.

Action: CAG co-chairs to send letters of renewal.

Water Quality Plan of Study

There was a lengthy discussion by the Board and Commissioners present on members' views and initial assessment of the information that was presented at the morning briefing and public meeting on a binational science plan and draft ECCC plan.

In general, there was confusion as to how the implementation will proceed and how the Board and IJC could be involved with the limited information provided. Views and concerns expressed by Board members are summarized below:

On the Information Provided

- A major focus of the ECCC plan is on phosphorus; how will other issues other than phosphorus be addressed?
- The letter from governments indicates that a binational science plan is in development. Based on what we have been provided at this point, there is little to indicate that there is a coordinated binational plan.
- What is the end goal? Will policy makers have what is needed to develop policy tools?
- A concern was expressed that governments didn't examine all of the available data in their assessment.
- How do we move from science to action?
- The Board requires more information to fully assess how governments are moving forward with science, engagement, and action.

On the role of the IJC or Board

- It is difficult to know where the IJC could fit in until there is the opportunity to learn more about the path forward including timelines, details, and outcomes.
- The Board's role can only be defined after the Commissions role is defined.
- The role of the IJC should be as oversight to make sure that the science is compatible across the border.
- If governments agree to targets, could the IJC play a role in tracking success in achieving targets?

Risks Associated with the Current Path

- risk that agencies will lose interest when the funding runs out
- risk that local scientific capacity will not be sustained
- risk that the IJC will lose credibility with the public

The Commissioners requested that the Board respond to their letter outlining what was heard at the meetings and provide recommendations on what the IJC or Board role could be.

Action: The Board will respond by letter to the IJC’s recent correspondence and will summarize the views and concerns raised and also recommend a suitable role(s) for the IJC and Board. Aquatic Ecosystem Health Committee Co-Chairs will draft the letter and will circulate to the Board for comment.

IJC Update

The IJC update included the status of the Water Quality Objectives review and other strategic initiatives. IJC advisors described the water quality objectives review project and indicated that a final draft report will be circulated to the AEHC for final review with a focus on ensuring that the conclusions are consistent with the Board’s view on the subject. The final draft of the report will be circulated soon with the intention of a quick review.

Other strategic initiatives that the IJC provided updates on included:

- providing harmonized geospatial data to federal agencies (USGS and NRCAN) for distribution on online data dissemination platforms
- completing the pilot SPARROW modelling for the Red-Assiniboine system with the next phase focusing on the Great Lakes and Rainy-Lake of the Woods basins. The SPARROW model is a large scale water quality model that can help to better understand nutrient loadings
- continuation of the StreamStats project with the objective of completion by fiscal year 2018. The IJC plans to receive more frequent updates on the project from U.S. Geological Survey moving forward. The Stream Stats project allows for estimation of peak flows where gauging data are not available.
- on hold status of the Stressor Index project due to linkages to the PoS and the lack of information on the potential direction of a binational science plan
- current review of the issues with the website platform. A technical expert has been contracted to examine the website and determine how it could be more user-friendly.
- a new expanded geospatial team with the goal of trying to build capacity on Boards
- scheduling the Fall Semi-annual meetings for the week of October 24th in Ottawa.

The second part of the Board meeting was held on Friday morning to accommodate the full range of Board business and accommodate committee updates.

Board Meeting with Rule Curves Study Board

10:15am – 11:00am

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS	
OTHER	
Pam Tomevi	Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District
Erika Klyszejko*	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Syed Moin*	International Joint Commission

*Participated remotely

Board Secretary, IRNLRCS alternate Co-Chair, provided a presentation on behalf of the Rule Curves Study Board on the process, governance, strategy and status of the rule curve evaluation. He outlined the use of the Shared Vision Model (SVM) as a tool to help include a variety of stakeholder views in the evaluation process.

An update of the rule curve basin meetings that occurred in last the week of July 2016 was also provided. It was highlighted that there has been a significant change in views and relationships with local communities. This is largely attributed to the transparency in the process which has also been acknowledged in local media. It was also noted that the concerted efforts to develop effective materials, science and outreach have gone a long way to build trust with the public and have been well received and highly regarded to those engaged in the process.

Rule Curve Studies Project Management Update
11:00am – 12:00pm

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS	
OTHER	
Ryan Maki	Voyageurs National Park

Ryan Maki, project manager, provided his last update to Board on the status of the various studies completed in support of the evaluation of the rule curves for Rainy and Namakan lakes. Ryan’s presentation consisted of a brief overview of the project followed by the status of each of 21 studies.

There was a great deal of appreciation expressed by the entire Board for all the work that Ryan has put in managing all the studies and members continue to be impressed with the science produced. When asked which study Ryan thinks will be the most important, he suggested that Jean Morin’s Integrated Ecological Response Model (IERM) should have the greatest impact in the assessment of the rule curves.

Meeting with Resource Management Agencies
1:00pm – 4:00pm

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS	
BOARD MEMBERS	
Suzanne Hanson*	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Lori Dowling-Hanson*	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
OTHER	
Glen Niznowski	Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Ryan Maki	Voyageurs National Park
Kevin Peterson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Jesse Anderson*	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Phil Talmage	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Eldon Voigt	Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District
John Vandebroeck*	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource and Forestry
Josh Peacock	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource and Forestry
Darryl McLeod	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource and Forestry
Shawn Stevenson	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource and Forestry

*Participated remotely

The meeting with resource management agencies was centred around six presentations provided by various agencies in the basin on a diverse range of topics including:

- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Fisheries Monitoring and Management
- Lake levels
- Nutrient Modelling

John Vandebroek (OMNRF) provided an update on the International Multi-Agency Arrangement's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) subcommittee's recent work investigating the classification of AIS amongst the various jurisdictions in the basin.

Kevin Peterson (MNDNR) provided a thorough overview of Minnesota's fisheries management programs and their activities in the Rainy Lake and the Namakan Reservoir.

Ryan Maki (VNP) provided a brief overview of the various water level monitoring and research projects implemented at Voyageurs National Park.

Josh Peacock (OMNRF) provided an in-depth looking in Ontario's Broad-scale Monitoring program with a focus on the Rainy-Lake of the Woods basin.

Darryl McLeod (OMNRF) presented on the Province of Ontario's fisheries and aquatics monitoring programs that fall outside of the purview of their Board-scale Monitoring.

Mike Hirst (Board Member) provided an overview and update on Minnesota's Total Maximum Daily Load project that is currently underway for the Lake of the Woods.

Friday August 12

Board Meeting (Part II) ***8:00am – 10:30am***

Due to the week's compressed schedule, the second half of the Board meeting was scheduled to accommodate updates by the Board's committees and complete the remaining Board business. Commissioners were not present due to prearranged travel plans.

Engagement Committee update

The Engagement Committee (EC) provided an update on a number of products that they have been working on:

- A new member orientation package was developed from various sources and was distributed to the board for approval. The EC intends to pilot the orientation material with new alternate member with the help of his mentor. The material is intended to be a living document that will be updated and modified as new information and feedback are received.
- Website bios have been posted. A couple still require information and pictures from members.
- An engagement database listing contacts has been developed by the Canadian section of the IJC. It may link to a table where members record engagement activities. The IJC is working on having the database web-enabled.
- EC has developed a combined headline presentation, which was run on a loop in the background for the duration of the meeting. To facilitate approval of all of the presentations, they will be sent to the Board for a suggested 2 week period for review. G. Chapman has volunteered to meet with Treaty 3 and use the approved slides as background material about the IJC and Board.
- EC intends to review and update their Strategic Communications Plan.
- EC is developing Frequently Asked Questions and responses to be posted to the Board's website under the "About Us" tab.
- A small subcommittee has been struck to focus on the website with the goal of improving the content and layout of information. Members are G. Faveri, M. Toope, and T. Newton. The committee welcomes any feedback from the Board on improvements to the website.

- The EC suggested that the Board invite local First Nations or Tribal members or elders to open and close public meetings.

The Board approved the new member orientation material.

Action: EC co-chairs to request bios and photos from Board members who have yet to provide any.

Action: EC co-chairs to distribute the presentations to the Board for review and approval.

Action: The Board will invite members/elders of local First Nations or Tribal communities to open and close public meetings.

Aquatic Ecosystem Health Committee Update

The Aquatic Ecosystem Health Committee (AEHC) circulated a memo to the Board prior to the meeting to provide an update on the committee's activities. The memo included:

- The status of the IJC Health Professionals Advisory Board (HPAB) International Watershed Initiative (IWI) proposals. The AEHC reviewed the proposals, provided feedback to the HPAB, and have decided that the projects do not provide any benefit to the Board in their current state.
 - For Proposal 1: – Human Health Consequences of Potential Spill Pollution of the Rainy Lake-Lake of the Woods Basin: Given the concerns about the scientific efficacy and costs of this proposal, the AEHC cannot support submission of the proposal to the IWI Review Committee.
 - For Proposal 2: Identification and Human Health Reviews of Potential Mining Contaminants in the Rainy Lake – Lake of the Woods Basin: The AEHC does not support submission of this proposal to the IWI Review Committee.
- The AEHC recommended the development of a proposal entitled “Effects of Water Levels on phosphorus and sediment loading to the Lake of the Woods” as brought forward by M. Hirst.
- AEHC also recommended the approval of a letter to emergency response agencies in the basin requesting information on whether and how they coordinate in the event of a transboundary environmental emergency.
- AEHC continues to develop an Aquatic Ecosystem Health reporting template. Committee. The co-chairs requested and received permission to send out information requests in support of the initiative.

The Watershed Board agreed not to recommend to the IJC the two HPAB IWI proposals.

The Watershed Board agreed to the development of an IWI proposal on shoreline erosion.

Action: M. Hirst to determine a suitable location in the Board's work plan for the addition of the shoreline erosion proposal.

Action: Board Canadian Co-Chair to revise transboundary emergency response letter and send out to targeted agencies.

Board Business

The remaining Board business items were presented and discussed as follows:

- Updates to the Board's work plan are required and committees will be responsible for updating their portions of the work plan.
- A draft Board meeting schedule up to October 2017 was circulated for comment. A number of conflicts were identified and other suggestions such as including the March Forum.

Action: Secretariat to circulate a Microsoft Word version of the Board's work plan to facilitate the updating of content.

Action: Secretariat to update meeting schedule and recirculate for comment by the Board.

Roundtable Discussion

A number of round table items were discussed by the Board as follows:

- The IAG U.S. co-chair reiterated the fact that the summer months are difficult for members to find the time outside of work to attend meetings. The IAG will meet face-to-face again at the March Forum and may request to meet with the Board at that time. There was support to further discussing the possibility of shifting the annual joint Board advisory group meeting to March.
- The Water Levels Committee provided an update on recent correspondence received from H2O Power on the maintenance work to be completed on generators in Fort Frances from late August to October. WLC intends to request that the company notify the public of this work. WLC is supportive and recognizes the fact that the company is being very proactive with this work and intends to assess the conditions prior to working on each generator.
- Kelli Saunders, International Watershed Coordinator, provided an update on her program's activities.

Action: Board Canadian Co-Chair to compile information on Energy East in the basin and circulate it to the Board.

The Board is greatly appreciative of the Kenora Fire Service in providing the meeting space in their boardroom on August 11 and 12.