

MEETING SUMMARY

International Rainy - Lake of the Woods Watershed Board
 January 10, 2017
 Teleconference
 13:00 – 15:00 CT

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
Kiley Shebagegit	Local Canadian Member
Dennis Brown	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
Pat Carey	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Charlene Mason	Local U.S. Member
INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION	
Wayne Jenkinson	Canadian Section
Nick Heisler	Canadian Section
Mark Gabriel	U.S. Section
BOARD ENGINEERING ADVISORS/SECRETARIAT	
Matt DeWolfe (Cdn Engineering Advisor)	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Scott Jutila (U.S. Engineering Advisor/Secretariat)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Daniel Rokitnicki-Wojcik (Cdn Secretariat)	Environment and Climate Change Canada
OTHER	
Kelli Saunders	International Watershed Coordinator
Felicia Minotti	Global Affairs Canada
Rachel So	U.S. Department of State
Veronique Hiriart-Baer	Environment and Climate Change Canada

ABSENTEES	
BOARD MEMBERS	
Mark Lee	Manitoba Sustainable Development
Matthew Gouin	Local U.S. Member
Lori Dowling-Hanson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Suzanne Hanson	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Al Pemberton	Red Lake Department of Natural Resources

1. Welcoming Remarks and Introductions

The Canadian Board co-chair called the meeting to order and welcomed members to the first meeting of 2017. New U.S. Board member, Holly House was welcomed to the Board.

2. Review of Meeting Agenda, Status of Action Items and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Several additions to the agenda were identified and were included as items for discussion during the roundtable. Action items were addressed as completed or as ongoing. No changes to the previous meeting summaries were identified.

The Watershed Board approved the August basin meetings summary and the September 27th meeting summary.

Action: Secretariat to have the approved summaries posted to the Board's webpage.

3. Fall Semi-Annual Meeting Debrief

The Board appeared before the Commission on October 25th during the Fall Semi-Annual meetings held in Ottawa. The focus of the Board's report and discussion with commissioners was on the government's plan for science and action in the Lake of the Woods. Other items presented included ongoing board activities.

Positive feedback was received from the Commission on the quality and content of the Board's update as well as the continued focus of members on issues of importance in the basin. The co-chairs of the committees and especially the co-chairs of the CAG and IAG were thanked for their time and effort in leading the groups.

4. March Meeting During Forum Week

Board secretaries presented a preliminary schedule for holding a meeting during the week of the March science forum. The meetings are intended to focus on a joint meeting with the Board's advisory groups and discuss other board business. It was noted that meeting details be determined as soon as possible to provide advisory group and Board members time to make travel arrangements.

It was also noted that a spot for the watershed board would be included in the Forum schedule for the Board to provide an update on their activities.

Action: Secretariat to determine March in-person meeting details as soon as possible.

5. Binational Science Plan Update

To follow up with the previous briefing received during the August basin meetings, government officials (GAC, DoS and ECCC) updated the Board on their activities in the development of a binational science plan for the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River.

Officials outlined their progress since August and the various groups, partners, and agencies that have been involved in developing the plan and in discussions at the federal and sub-national levels.

Discussions have also included the IJC, by updating Commissioners on progress on the file as well as working with IJC staff to identify a suitable role for the Commission in this initiative. A briefing was held during the Fall Semi-Annual Meetings and a second is scheduled for mid-January 2017.

To limit duplication of efforts and to identify potential synergies, ECCC held a science planning meeting in December with a comprehensive set of local agencies, partners and academics. Subsequent meetings have occurred and are planned to discuss sampling locations and existing modelling efforts. ECCC also deployed some instrumentation this fall to support ongoing monitoring of nutrients.

To demonstrate the binational collaborative approach underway as well as the objectives, mechanisms, and partners involved in the plan, 2 documents are currently in development that will outline the main components of the Governments plan and path forward. The March Science Forum was identified as an important milestone to have a well-developed draft of this plan completed to present to the public during the event.

Officials offered to provide another briefing during the Board's next meeting in March in advance of the Forum.

Action: Secretariat to work with government officials to include an update in the March in-person meeting.

6. Committee Updates

Water Levels Committee

The WLC provided an update on conditions in the basin. Early winter has been wet in the basin and snow pack is building. Local members indicated that they estimate a 30% exceedance to the average snowfall for this time of year. Dam operators opened a gate on Rainy Lake to prevent exceeding the rule curve. Current conditions indicate that it could be a busy melt period this spring.

Aquatic Ecosystem Health Committee

The AEHC provided an update on IWI proposals and the committee's upcoming report on aquatic ecosystem health. Committee co-chairs met with HPAB representatives and IWI program advisors during the fall semi-annual meetings to discuss the proposals and considerations for future multi-board collaboration. The IWI proposal regarding the impacts of a potential petro-chemical spill in the basin hasn't moved forward yet as the committee needs to consider more information.

With respect to the committee's report on aquatic ecosystem health, letters requesting 2015 data from agencies will be sent shortly. The committee requests that it be a Board request rather than a committee request. Board co-chairs agreed for the requests to be sent on behalf of the Board.

Action: Secretariat to work with AEHC co-chairs to finalize and distribute data request letters.

Engagement Committee

The EC provided a brief update on recent outreach activities which include:

- continued work to update the Board webpage
- completion of the photo essay on the Board's tour of the ELA
- completion of new releases
- planning engagement with indigenous groups
- orientation of new members

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Jan 24th.

7. Advisory Group Updates

Community Advisory Group

The CAG last met on December 5th and received updates from:

- the International Watershed Coordinator
- Rule Curve Study Board
- Aquatic Ecosystem Health Committee
- Engagement Committee

Issues noted by group members during the roundtable included unorganized territories and interest in updates on the science plan for the basin. The group next meets in March during forum week.

Industry Advisory Group

The IAG is meeting next on February 1st. The Group plans to receive updates on:

- International Watershed Coordination Program
- Minnesota's TMDL
- Mining in the basin
- New Gold Rainy River Mine

8. Roundtable

Rainy-Namakan Rule Curve Review Update

The Canadian co-chair of the Rule Curve Study Board provided an update on the evaluation. The assessment has shown that the 2000 rule curves have performed as expected and that there is interest in possible further modification for additional benefit through the shared vision model process. The 2 principle areas for additional improvement of the 2000 rule curves are further ecological improvements and lowering flood risk. Improvements could be realized through changing the winter drawdown profile to decrease muskrat mortality (environment) and implementing an adaptive regulation approach in the spring (flood risk). Operational guidelines are currently being developed to act as best practices for dam operators that would complement the rule curves as well as providing ecological and flood risk improvements. Engagement of indigenous groups

in the basin has been a success and the Study Board intends to continue to work with local groups for the remainder of the project.

A schedule will be distributed in the near future that will outline the remaining meetings, webinars and timelines.

Wheeler's Point Gage

At the request of the IMA-TAC, the status of Wheeler's Point Gage was discussed by the Board. It was suggested that the Board send a letter of support to the IJC to designate it as an international gage and also to highlight its importance to understanding flows and nutrient inputs to the Lake of the Woods. It was noted that a similar correspondence was sent to the IJC on the topic a number of years ago and that it should be referenced and attached to the current letter.

Action: Secretariat to draft a letter of support for the designation of the Wheelers Point gage as an international gaging station.

Climate Change Framework Working Group

A brief introduction of the working group was provided. The working group's purpose is to identify individual Board needs for understanding and identifying climate change impacts as well as to determine where Boards stand on climate change adaptation strategies and approaches. The working group is currently in an exploratory phase with the completion of a white paper that will be presented to Commissioners in the near future.

Water Quality Objectives Review

A brief introduction and current status of the review was provided. A final report on the review was recently completed and will be presented to Commissioners at the next executive meeting. The AEHC was thanked for providing input on the report and providing the Board's narrative.

Transition to the New U.S. Administration

IJC staff provided an overview of the transition process that occurs when a new U.S. government comes into power. The potential implications on the Commission and Board should no quorum of Commissioners exist was also discussed. Regardless of the ensuing process, the Board will continue to function and work towards completing the items in its work plan.

Shoreline Erosion Proposal

The status of this proposal was raised with respect to moving forward with IWI projects that are linked to studies identified in the WQ PoS. IJC staff indicated that if the specific study is not currently funded as part of the PoS or another initiative, then it can be brought forward as an IWI project as long as it is included in the Board's work plan.

Action: IAG U.S. co-chair to identify a suitable location for inclusion of this project into the Board's work plan.

Annual Report

To facilitate the completion of the Board's annual report for spring 2017, secretariat will begin to develop a table of contents and identify responsibilities for each section. Similar to previous years, secretariat will work with committee and advisory group co-chairs to coordinate the completion of their respective sections.

Action: Secretariat and Board co-chairs to develop a draft Table of Contents and timelines for the Board's annual report and circulate it as soon as possible.

5. Review of Action Items and Adjournment

Action items were reviewed by the Secretariat and the meeting was adjourned by the Canadian co- chair at approximately 15:00 CT.