

International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board

Summary of Discussion – For Review

January 21, 2020 meeting via teleconference
9:00-11:00 CT

1. Welcome and introductions

As meeting chair, Colonel Jansen welcomed everyone and invited participants to introduce themselves. The list of participants is as follows:

U.S. Member Participants

COL Jansen (Board Co-Chair)
Matthew Gouin
Amy Adrihan
Mike Hirst
Shane Bowe/Joshua Jones
Jim Stark
Scott Jutila (Secretary; Engineering Advisor)

Canadian Member Participants

Michael Goffin (Board Co-Chair)
Karen Cederwall
Greg Chapman
Erika Klyszejko
Mark Lee
Teika Newton
Trina Rawn
Todd Sellers
Kiley Shebagegit
Carla Torchia
Pamela Finlayson (Interim Secretary)

International Joint Commission

Mark Gabriel
Wayne Jenkinson
Carole Smith
Tristan Lecompte

Additional Participants

Kelli Saunders
Abby Moore
Rebecca Seal-Soileau

2. Review of meeting materials

No additions to the agenda were identified, however some changes to the order were noted to accommodate availability of some participants. Action items were addressed as completed or as ongoing – outstanding actions are listed below. The summary from the October 2019 teleconference was approved.

- **ACTION: AEHC to complete AEH report in Spring 2020.**
- **ACTION: Suzanne Hanson to provide MPCA's description of its initiative and role related to water quality objectives.**
- **ACTION: Secretariat to take website training.**
- **ACTION: Board to discuss potential CAG candidates once the amendments to its Directive have been dealt with – following fall 2019 semi-annual meeting**

3. Board Business

It was noted that the 2019-20 workplan remained valid. WLC input has not been finalized. The Board noted that work planning would be needed for the new fiscal year 2020-21.

- **ACTION: Scott to finalize WLC input to current workplan, and review full document in time to include in 2019-20 Annual Report.**

- **ACTION: Secretariat to research and report back on process and timing used in the past to create new workplans.**
- **ACTION: Discuss 2020-2021 workplan at March 2020 Board meeting.**

For the 2019-20 Annual Board Report, the timeline, participants considered the table of contents, timeline and next steps. No changes were proposed.

- **ACTION: Scott to send copy of most recent Annual Board Report and note where input is needed to create 2019-20 edition. Input to be provided by February 21.**
- **ACTION: Discuss 2019-20 Annual Board Report at March 2020 Board meeting.**

Future board meetings were discussed, starting with meetings during Forum week March 9-13, 2020. No changes were proposed to the draft agenda sent to Committee Co-Chairs. All of the meetings, including for the Board and of the Board-IAG-CAG are on March 10. Space is available for WLC to meet with Dam Operators if needed. It was noted that Directive requires a meeting with Dam Operators once annually, so it should remain on the schedule

- **ACTION: Keep space and proceed with plans for WLC to meet with Dam Operators on March 10.**

The location and week for the August 2020 Basin Meetings were confirmed. Expected location is Kenora Ontario, and proposed dates are 11-12 August, 2020. It was noted that the Clarion Hotel had recently had a major fire and may not be available. Other venue options were suggested. There was a discussion about water levels and algal blooms in Kenora and Fort Francis, and past public meetings in each area. The WLC plans a public meeting in Fort Frances/International Falls each August.

- **ACTION: Plan for Basin Meetings on 11-12 August 2020 in Kenora ON.**

4. Board Directive and CAG/IAG Terms of Reference

The Board discussed the CAG vacancies on the US and Canadian sides, and the U.S. co-chair replacement. Wayne noted that Co-Chairs can be drawn from currently sitting members of the Board. It was noted that the Co-Chair role is an additional workload on existing volunteer Board members, and this could be an issue. The IJC feels strongly that the leadership link offered by Board membership is critical. An issue with IAG term limits was noted as inconsistent with its original setup. There are a number of CAG members whose term has expired and they have expressed interest in staying on. It was noted there is a small pool of members to draw from, so limited terms are problematic.

- **ACTION: Scott to send an email to the entire Board asking for volunteers to be CAG co-chairs. Report back to Board with responses.**
- **ACTION: Board to consider next steps for CAG leadership based on responses.**
- **ACTION: Wayne to connect with Mark Gabriel review details of the Directive and CAG/IAG Terms of Reference to make sure they are the current copy and identify updates required.**
- **ACTION: Wayne to distribute updated Directive and Terms of Reference to Board members, secretariat, CAG and IAG members. If desired, schedule a follow-up call on this item.**

5. Objectives and Alerts Project

The Objectives and Alerts Project is completed Phase 1 and Public Review. Helpful feedback was received and will be put into Phase 2, which includes: outcomes from Phase 1, early engagement with the Board, Indigenous engagement, and enhanced focus on agency engagement. The project is mostly unchanged from the IWJ submission, except for those three items and a narrower focus on specific issues. Todd is currently working on the Phase 2 Statement of Work. The Co-chairs met with the IJC and

will be ready to hand it off to staff advisors shortly. Wayne noted the IJC is waiting for the proposal, once it includes the statement of work, Nolan's replacement and the Board Submission.

It was noted that a US Project representative was needed to replace Nolan. There is a list of potential appointees. Kelli and Beth would be interested in having a document to share as a Scope of Work.

A question was asked about timing for completing the work. Todd noted timing is out of step with MN and ECCC programs, and will miss the March 2020 meetings. The schedule may need to be moved to Spring 2021. It was noted that having separate engagement for Objectives and Alerts for Phosphorus is potentially confusing to the public.

- **ACTION: When complete, Todd will circulate Phase 2 Statement of Work to Board members.**

6. Review of Environmental Emergency Planning, Preparedness and Response

A finalized report is available. CAG had noted that not all municipal crossings in the Basin were included. The Report was revised to have a more basin-wide scope and work is underway to add the crossing at Rainy River-Baudette. Letters were sent to engage the municipalities of Baudette MN and Rainy River ON, and no responses have been received. Board members were asked if they had suggestions for a path forward.

- **ACTION: Mike Hirst and Kelly to provide municipal contacts to Mike Goffin.**
- **ACTION: Board to report back to CAG when revisions are complete.**

A question was received regarding updates to the report based on MPCA findings related to a spill. It was noted that the report was not a living document, but the addition could be made in future if other revisions were necessary.

- **ACTION: Contact MPCA to appear at a future Board meeting to present an update on the spill.**
- **ACTION: Board to decide on updates based on MPCA presentation.**

7. Presentation on Draft 2020-2025 IWI Plan

Tristan from the IJC gave a presentation on the Draft 2020-2025 IWI Plan. Positive feedback from other Boards was reported. There was an inquiry for a deadline on feedback (noted below). There was also a question about IW Water Plan training, and response indicated that first step is to identify what is need. It was noted that information management could be improved by centralization. Sharepoints are being developed for various projects, and Office 365 is being piloted as a replacement.

- **ACTION: A note would be sent to Board members after this call.**
- **ACTION: Members should reply with feedback by February 7 to Tristan or Catharine.**

8. IWI Process Update

Mike Hirst provided a draft document with a flow chart showing the proposed policy and structure for Board IWI submissions. He asked for guidance as more external proposals have been submitted. It was noted that Board members have diverse knowledge and experience, and suggested each proposal include a cover page that identifies: how the proposal relates to the Board mandate, why the issue is a current priority, and why it is essential that the issue be addressed. It was also noted this may be useful to other Boards.

- **ACTION: Update draft document so that each project is required to have a title page that identifies: how project relates to Board mandate, why issue is a current priority, and why it is essential that the issue is addressed.**

9. IWI Proposals Update

AIS Coarse Filter Assessment

Efforts focused on addressing Project Conditions from Phase 1. Project will be locally specific and use existing resources. IJC and IMA-AIS Subcommittee are involved. The US IJC stated that they agree to move forward with the current proposal, under the condition that a midway checkpoint is added to make sure work is not duplicating efforts of US Fish and Wildlife Service.

- **ACTION: Update Project Statement of Work to include midway checkpoint.**
- **ACTION: Board to send any proposed changes or comments related to the draft Board appearance presentation to the Secretariat by Wednesday, October 16, 2019.**

Wild Rice Mapping, Project WET

- **ACTION: Deferred update to March 2020 agenda**

HPAB-SAB-IRLWWB Collaboration on Mining

Todd provided a summary of the context for this initiative. It stems from concerns of the CAG. It will look at development of past and present mining operations, and investigations into health effects. This project will be combined with similar work focused on the Great Lakes. Teika and Jim Stark are the co-leads for this project. Todd reported that a draft proposal was sent to the IRLWWB during this meeting, and needs to be shared with HPAB.

- **ACTION: Seek new Canadian Co-lead for this project.**
- **ACTION: Todd to forward the proposal to Mark Gabriel and Jim Stark**

10. Adaptive Management Initiative Update

Status is unchanged. In August 2019, task team recommended committee members and prepared a draft Directive. The Directive has been approved and the committee needs to be formed. There is interest from the Métis Nation. A champion is needed.

- **ACTION: Scott to resend Directive and recommended Committee members to Mark and Wayne.**

11. Water Levels Committee Update

No feedback has been received on the proposed changes to the WLC Directive and Order due to date changes and issues with the High Flood Risk Rule Curve.

For the High Flood Risk Rule Curve proposal, a choice was made to follow the curve this year. There were issues related to the intake at the PCA mill in spring that required management. This was successful but led to levels above the curve. The situation recurred in Fall. The Fall situation is being investigated to determine if the cause is the curve or the intake. Need to make an informed decision for the coming Spring. The IJC is ready to submit the project.

- **ACTION: WLC to review IJC proposal and respond to Wayne as soon as possible.**

For pre-spring engagement, dates for the webinar will be determined in late February or early March.

11. Aquatic Ecosystem Health Committee Update

For the Forum, a draft schedule should be available by the end of the week on the Foundation's website. It was noted that a Board Co-Chair typically gives the Governance Update presentation on Day 1, and this needs confirmation. Mike Goffin noted that he plans to attend in person and expects to give a similar presentation at the IJC Semi-Annual meeting in April. ECCC will also present work done over the past 4 years, including modelling results and scenarios of the effects of phosphorus loadings on algal blooms. Results are not yet available because models are still being calibrated.

- **ACTION: Todd to send Draft AEHC Report to Jim Stark after the call.**
- **ACTION: Secretariat to lead development of a Board Update presentation for use at the Forum in March and IJC Semi Annual in April 2020.**
- **ACTION: AEHC seeking membership from MN DNR.**

11. Engagement Committee Update

A meeting with the local councils of the Métis Nation of Ontario is proposed. Planning is in progress.

The IJC-First Nations story map project is moving forward with efforts from Kelly, Nick and Lucas.

12. Roundtable

Update on Wheeler's Point Gauge funding options

Michael Goffin and Jim Stark had a discussion with USGS. There are two issues: a source of funding for the gauge, and a need to relocate it due to monitoring issues. Discussions between ECCC and USGS are positive but paths forward are slightly different. The acoustic velocity gauge has issues with backwater that could be resolved by relocating it upstream under the bridge, which is currently under construction. It was clarified that the funding topic is specific to operations and maintenance, and that relocating the gauge is not an issue.

- **ACTION: Organize a single conversation for all parties involved with the gauge so they can assess the options and decide on best proposal for a path forward.**

IAG Update

Mike and Greg are working on the agenda for the March 2020 meeting. The group last met on October 29, 2019.

IJC Update

There is no update on the Annual Activities Report. The IJC has agreed to move forward with the AIS proposal.

Other Topics: IMA Subcommittee

Kelli provided an update from the January 10 meeting. There is a new Chair from Ontario MNRF. MN DNR provided an update on zebra mussels in the basin, stating that it is highly probable that adult zebra mussels have become established at Lake of the Woods. This is based on veliger monitoring results and

the location of adults and consequences of this are not yet known. There was also a presentation on Chinese mystery snails. Monitoring of zebra mussels and Chinese mystery snails will continue.

It was noted that the Board has also formed smaller task teams to look at: mapping AIS, outreach opportunities, working with Objectives and Alerts Phase 2, participating in IJC risk analysis and other tasks.

Other Topics: Miscellaneous

Recommendations for US Public Board members are currently being accepted. Board participation from MPCA Member and Alternate are also needed.

- **ACTION: Please send recommendations for US Public Board members, MPCA board member or alternate to Mark Gabriel.**

13. Review of Action Items and Adjournment

Members were reminded that the next Board meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2020 in person at the Forum in International Falls MN. Action items were reviewed and the meeting was adjourned.