

Elk-Kootenai/y Reference

Meeting Summary: Meeting 6 of the Governance Body

Meeting Location: Virtual

November 20, 2025

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

On November 20, 2025, the Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Governance Body held its sixth meeting virtually. The Governance Body discussed progress on its draft Action Plan and matters related to communications. As per the Terms of Reference, the Governance Body discussed a process for conducting a review of its Terms of Reference and how best to make a decision on the IJC role as Secretariat by March 2026. The Governance Body discussed future meetings and information sharing sessions.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: International Joint Commission (IJC), ʔakisqnuq, ʔaqam, British Columbia, Canada, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Idaho, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Montana, United States, Yaqan Nuʔkiy, Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi'it

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. Welcome, Opening, Introductions, Review of Governance Body Process and Work to Date

The Secretariat welcomed participants to Meeting 6 of the Governance Body. New Governance Body members were invited to introduce themselves. The Governance Body approved the November 20, 2025 meeting agenda. The Secretariat provided a brief review of the Governance Body's process and work to date.

2. Discussion on Work Plan

The Action Plan Working Group provided an overview of their work on the draft Action Plan, including the preamble, and Governance Body members shared positive feedback on the work completed to date. The Working Group will aim to have the next iteration of the draft Action Plan ready to share in advance of the next in-person Governance Body meeting (January 21-22, 2026).

3. Discussion on Study Board Interim Status Report

IJC Staff involved with the International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board provided an update as to when governments will be receiving the final version of the Study Board Interim Status Report, what documents will be included, and how Governance Body members will receive the Study Board Interim Report (through their respective governments).

4. Communications

The Governance Body discussed the timeline for developing and publishing its next Progress Report, which will report on Governance Body activities from September 2025 up until at least March 31, 2026.

5. Additional Items for Discussion

- a. Governance Body Terms of Reference Review

- i. As per the Governance Body Terms of Reference, the “Secretariat will facilitate a Terms of Reference Review prior to March 2026.”
 - ii. During this meeting, there was consensus amongst Governance Body members that the Secretariat would put together a survey to facilitate the review.
 - b. March 2026 Decision on IJC Role as Secretariat
 - i. As per the Governance Body Terms of Reference, “the IJC will serve as the Governance Body Secretariat until March 2026. After that date, the IJC may continue in that role, subject to consensus of the members and issuance of any necessary authority to the IJC, consistent with Article IX of the Boundary Waters Treaty.”
 - ii. There was consensus amongst Governance Body members that to support a decision about the future of the IJC’s role as Secretariat, the Secretariat would compile a list of criteria for the Governance Body to consider and discuss during an *in-camera session* (i.e. the IJC would leave the room) at the next in-person meeting of the Governance Body.

6. Information Sharing Sessions

The next Governance Body Information Sharing Session will be on January 8, 2026. Following one more presentation by the Canadian Delegation in the future (date TBD), information sharing sessions will be paused as other work of the Governance Body progresses. The Governance Body may resume information sharing sessions in the future.

7. Planning for Next In-Person Governance Body Meeting

Canada (Environment and Climate Change Canada) will host the next in-person meeting of the Governance Body on January 21-22, 2026, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

8. Review and Approval of November 20th Meeting Summary Statement

Towards the end of the meeting, the Governance Body reviewed and approved the summary statement as shown above.

9. Approvals

- a. Meeting minutes from the September 15th Governance Body meeting were approved by the Governance Body.
- b. A Consensus Committee “Structure and Procedures” document was approved by the Governance Body.

10. Review Decisions Made and Summary of Next Steps

The Secretariat reviewed decisions made by the Governance Body and will begin preparing for the next Information Sharing Session (January 8, 2025) and the next Governance Body meeting (January 21-22, 2026).