

SUSTAINABILITY OF LESSER SLAVE LAKE INITIATIVE

Minutes of

Watershed Committee

April 22nd, 2004
Kinuso Senior Center, Kinuso, Alberta

1. CALL TO ORDER

George Keay, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm

Watershed Committee members in attendance:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Stakeholder Group Represented</u>
Jerry Wallsten	Municipal District of Lesser Slave River (<i>alternate</i>)
Lisa Brown	Town of Slave Lake
Jeff Burgar	Town of High Prairie
Lynn Sandquist	Agriculture
Cindy Koop	Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council
Craig Bissell	Municipal District of Big Lakes
Rod Burr	Alberta Environment
Tim Toth	Alberta Environment (<i>alternate</i>)
Duncan Fisk	Oil/Gas Industry
Larry Marquardt	Recreation/Tournaments
Grant Gramiak	Tourism Operators/Groups
Murray DeAlexandra	Commercial Fisherman Association/Related

Absent:

Gordon Sanders

Doug Lowe

Forest & Related Industry

Fisheries & Oceans Canada

Others in attendance:

Edie Spagrud Facilitator, Lesser Slave Lake Community Development Corporation

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Jerry Wallsten, **seconded by** Cindy Koop, that the agenda be adopted as presented.

Motion Carried

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES – February 19, 2004

Moved by Duncan Fisk, **seconded by** Lynn Sandquist that the minutes of February 19, 2004 meeting be changed on Item #6.2 to state “landowners have” and that the minutes be adopted as modified.

Motion Carried

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

Committee members were provided with copies of the following:

- Watershed Committee Administration Income Statement, March 31, 2004
- Sustainability of Lesser Slave Lake Initiative, Watershed Committee Action Plan Contributions, as at March 31, 2004
- Expenditures for Lesser Slave Basins Water Management Plan FY 2002-03 & 2003-04 (prepared by Tim Toth, LS Basins Project Manager, February 23, 2004)

Moved by Craig Bissell, **seconded by** Grant Gramiak that the financial reports be received for information.

Motion Carried

Discussion ensued regarding the rationale that stakeholder groups make a monetary contribution to participate in the Sustainability of Lesser Slave Lake Initiative and that the onus lies with representatives of each stakeholder group to ensure that the appropriate contribution is made.

Moved by Jerry Wallsten, **seconded by** Larry Marquardt that stakeholder groups who have not paid their “Action Plan Contributions” be re-invoiced by the facilitator.

Motion Carried

5. OLD BUSINESS

5.1 Alberta Environment Website Content (Tim Toth)

Mr. Toth explained that the Lesser Slave Basins water management plan project would be located on the Alberta Environment website, and would include:

- Project Terms of Reference
- Map of basin area
- Contact information for Watershed Committee and Government Coordinating Committee
- Minutes of Watershed Committee meetings
- Links to municipal, tourism and other pertinent websites (upon approval of Environment’s Communications Branch)

Mr. Toth also advised that Alberta Environment is better resourced than the Watershed Committee to keep the website updated with pertinent information as the plan progresses.

Moved by Jerry Wallsten, seconded by Murray DeAlexandra that the initiative of Alberta Environment to host and maintain the website information pertaining to Sustainability of Lesser Slave Lake Initiative be fully supported by the Watershed Committee.

Motion Carried

5.2 Consent Forms (Permission to post business contact information on the website)

Eddie Spagrud, facilitator, circulated consent forms for Committee members to sign; once signed, these were given to the representatives from Alberta Environment. The data in these forms will be the contact information for the Watershed Committee to be posted on AENV's website.

5.3 Task Update

Mr. Toth requested the order of the tasks be changed because his Task 2 flowed better into Agenda Item 5.4.

Task #1 Future Water Needs

Committee Members: Lisa Brown, Denny Garratt, Craig Bissell

Tim Toth provided information supplied by Ron Davis, Alberta Environment, Chair of this sub-committee. As of April 1, the Committee has:

- Reviewed water use data (1993-2003) for major municipal and industrial licenses
- Reviewed Population /census data in basin area for 1991-2003
- Discussed how to forecast future water use. Decided:
 - Municipal water use to be based on population served by each license
 - Industrial water use to be based on trends; each company will be contacted for their injection license volumes

At the next meeting (April 27), the Committee will review water use projections and help create the municipal projections. Mr. Davis has made industrial projections and will vet the forecasts with industry before finalizing them.

Task #3 Sedimentation in the Lesser Slave Lake Outlet Channel

Committee Members: Jerry Wallsten, Cindy Koop

Rod Burr, representative from Alberta Environment who chairs Task 3, explained:

Not much has transpired since the last meeting when the Committee was shown river cross sections at the Highway 88 bridge taken by Water Survey of Canada. The cross-sections indicate sediment deposition is not constant and the channel "flushes out" sediment during high water flows.

Task #4 Weir Configuration Impacts

Committee Members: Larry Marquardt, Peter Rippon, Karl Gongos

The Weir Configuration Sub Committee met April 6. Rod provided them historical information on the Lesser Slave Lake Regulation Project. Information was presented on weir rating curves, which demonstrated that at higher lake levels the weir does not have any impact on lake outflow. Options for providing flows to maintain the aquatic ecosystem and assist downstream water users will be looked at. In addition, temporary modifications to the weir will be examined, which would attempt to supplement lower flows during the

late summer, fall and winter period. Mr. Marquardt explained his idea to accomplish this by placing concrete blocks on the weir to control flows in a step-like fashion as lake levels decrease.

Changes to the weir to provide riparian/industrial flows will have some impact on lake levels. If weir modification were to proceed, stakeholders will have input on preferred “trade offs” for providing water for riparian and downstream river users, versus lowered lake levels and the potential affects on lake uses: recreation, fishing, etc. Chairman George Keay commented that Committee recommendations would be based on majority vote. Although not all stakeholders may be happy with a majority decision, they will attempt to reach consensus, and the democratic process must be honoured in order to move forward on these issues.

Jerry Wallsten advised that the Town of Slave Lake and the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River have been aggressively lobbying the provincial government to relax environmental regulations regarding removal of debris from Devonshire Beach. The municipalities feel that if the beaches were kept clean, they would be more attractive to local residents and tourists.

Mr. Wallsten showed the historical water availability matrix for Lesser Slave Lake (with data from 1917 – 1999), which illustrated when water was and was not available under certain flow protection criteria. He noted that high water events are a part of natural fluctuation of the system, and a series of high water years are necessary for maintaining beaches and other natural processes. Mr. Wallsten went on to say that since the Town and the Municipal District want Devonshire Beach to be cleaned more regularly to make it more conducive to tourism development, these fluctuating levels provide this service.

Task #2 In-stream Flow Needs for the Lesser Slave River

Committee members: Jerry Wallsten, Vince Martell

Mr. Toth reminded the Committee that this task was to develop the science-based in-stream flow needs **study**, which would be needed to develop a flow recommendation that would fully protect the river aquatic ecosystem. He explained that the variation of high and low water levels also sustain river aquatic systems.

The Consultant’s report indicates that to scientifically define the weekly flows needed to sustain the river aquatic ecosystem would require a 2 – 3 year, approximately \$1 million study. Mr. Toth provided a copy of the scoping study. It described two options to define those weekly flows, the scientific study and an office-based desktop method. The scientific study would provide the most sound data and provide a better understanding of the aquatic environment, but it comes at a cost of time and dollars. The Desktop method is much cheaper and will provide flow recommendations immediately; the result is that development decisions based on it have a much higher level of risk and uncertainty about any resulting environmental impact that must be dealt with. The Consultant advises that workshops using experts could be used to shortcut some of the full scientific study, yet be valuable in producing a more defensible in-stream flow needs recommendation.

Five Committee members requested copies of the study. Mr. Toth said AENV would copy the report and send them out next week.

In response to a question about how to develop the actual water conservation objective **recommendation**, Mr. Toth stated that there is a public process where interviews must be conducted with stakeholders to determine their values and how they see the future of the watershed. He encouraged the Committee to look a long way into the future when considering this question.

Mr. Sandquist expressed concerns about landowner issues at the west end of the lake and general stream drainage into the lake. Mr. Burr assured him that Alberta Environment would assess sediment build up in the Buffalo Bay Horse Lakes area during the summer of 2004. Discussion ensued regarding the need to determine sediment formation from data points used in the 1970's study.

Mr. Toth reiterated that the Watershed Committee (with stakeholder consultation) needs to determine what they would like to see as the future of the Lesser Slave River basin.

Mr. Toth also advised that Alberta Environment would be undertaking a consultation process with First Nation stakeholders as per the approved government consultation process with First Nations.

6. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

Date of next meeting: Thursday, June 3, 2004, at Kinuso Senior Drop In Center, 7:30 pm.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm

Chairperson, Watershed Committee