

SUSTAINABILITY OF LESSER SLAVE LAKE INITIATIVE

Minutes of

Watershed Committee

November 25th, 2004
Kinuso Senior Center, Kinuso, Alberta

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman George Keay called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Watershed Committee members in attendance:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Stakeholder Group Represented</u>
George Keay	Chairperson
Mike Daubert	Town of High Prairie (<i>alternate</i>)
Lynn Sandquist	Agriculture
Cindy Koop	Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council
Rod Burr	Alberta Environment
Tim Toth	Alberta Environment (<i>alternate</i>)
Gordon Sanders	Forest & Related Industry
Myler Savill	Municipal District of Big Lakes
Rob Irwin	Town of Slave Lake
Larry Marquardt	Recreation/Tournaments

Absent:

Brian Rosche	Municipal District of Lesser Slave River
Grant Gramiak	Tourism Operators/Groups
Murray DeAlexandra	Commercial Fishermen Association/Related Groups
Duncan Fisk	Oil/Gas Industry
Doug Lowe	Fisheries & Oceans Canada

Others in attendance:

Scott Kelly, Facilitator	Lesser Slave Lake Community Development Corporation
Bonnie Raho	Regional Environment Action Committee (REAC)
Leanne Osokin	Alberta Conservation Association (Presentation)
Ed Kolodychuk	Alberta Conservation Association

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Mike Daubert/Rob Irwin, that the agenda be adopted as amended.

Motion Carried

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES – *September 9, 2004*

Amend that Terry Sly be placed under ‘Others in Attendance’

Moved by Gordon Sanders/Larry Marquardt, that the minutes of the September 9, 2004 meeting be adopted as amended

Motion Carried

4. Presentation

Leanne Osokin, Alberta Conservation Association presented the *South Heart River/Lesser Slave Lake Riparian Conservation Project* highlights.

A PowerPoint presentation available.

- ACA is a non-governmental organization funded by hunters and anglers.
- Riparian areas are those lands adjacent to streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Only 2.5% of the province is classified as riparian area.
- Riparian areas are responsible for numerous functions within the watershed including buffering and filtering the water, recharging underground aquifers, and providing high quality habitat for fish and wildlife populations.
- Lesser Slave Lake is the largest, fully-accessible self-sustaining walleye lake in Alberta.
- To determine where the walleye go, ACA tracked their migration patterns in Buffalo Bay-Horse Lakes by placing tracking devices in a selected number. Implanting of tracking devices took place at the Grouard water station.
- There are concerns over cattle grazing in riparian areas; some areas need complete ‘rest’ in order to become re-established as effective riparian lands.
- Even though grazing controls weeds in these riparian lands, weeds generally become a problem in disturbed (over-grazed) situations.
- Riparian buffer widths vary within the area, based upon local site requirements, as well as what the landowner can ‘live with’.
- ACA is working on a report that will state the level of damage to riparian lands.
- Many opportunities for funding are available should landowners want to make their operation more environmentally sustainable.
- Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS) has been contacted about hosting a workshop in the Lesser Slave Lake area. Rob Irwin will contact ACA about assisting with this.

- ALMS works with Alberta Environment with regard to sampling water bodies, training, etc. (Pine Lake example)
- Riparian zones can best be restored through cooperation between landowners, other stakeholders and the government.
- Everybody depends on a healthy safe water supply and should therefore have a vested interest in protecting our watersheds, because they supply healthy and safe water

There was discussion about beaches on Lesser Slave Lake, and the desire to “clean” them by removing vegetation vs. leaving them in a more natural state. Vegetated beaches provide aquatic habitat during high-water. Tourists mostly want non-vegetated beaches but vegetation also anchors the sand from blowing or being washed away as easily. George Keay identified a need to work together to develop an acceptable amount of beachfront while maintaining the environmental services vegetated beaches provide.

Rod suggested that as part of Phase 2, the Committee may consider recommending a shoreline management plan be developed for all of Lesser Slave Lake. A plan would allow all stakeholders to know what is happening with regard to shoreline development and management. Of note, two beach management plans have already been initiated, one for Devonshire Beach and one just in initial stages for Spruce Point Park.

5. OLD BUSINESS

5.1 Water Management Plan – Task Updates

NOTE: PLEASE REFER TO THE JUNE 10, 2004 MINUTES FOR THE TASK DETAILS

- **Task 1: Future Water Uses**

Task is essentially complete, report is complete and in draft form.

- **Task 2: In-Stream Flow Needs for Lesser Slave River**

Although the IFN Technical Committee has not met to accept the Golder IFN Scoping Study, the water quality Committee member has proposed a river water-quality monitoring program recommended by the study. The objectives are to characterize nutrients and dissolved oxygen at the LS River mouth, and to determine the influence of the main tributaries on LSR water quality. This includes sampling tributaries every other month for a year, including sampling a storm event, and would cost about \$67,000. The water quality program will be vetted through the IFN Technical Committee, and then proposed to the project steering committee for funding for next year.

Tim asked if the Committee wanted any more information or presentations to help members understand technical aspects of the project (e.g., on in-stream flow needs

or the aquatic environment). George replied that he would leave it to Rod and Tim to determine the value or importance of specific presentations.

- **Task 3: Sedimentation in the Lesser Slave Lake Outlet Channel**

No change from last meeting. Rod needs to prepare the draft report.

- **Task 4: Weir Configuration Impacts**

Rod noted that there was more technical discussion about the volume of water (in-stream flow needs) that should remain in the LS River when the river is at very low levels, if existing withdrawals were allowed to continue. More water than was initially understood is needed to ‘make up’ to the level identified in the accepted model, the Alberta Method for IFN. Rod is working with our hydrologist to model the impacts on lake levels of making up this water in the river under these low-flow scenarios.

ACTION: For next meeting, Rod will provide model results illustrating river flows and the resulting impacts on lake levels.

5.2 Developing Water Conservation Objectives

A Water Conservation Objective is basically the volume of water to be left in the river to support its many uses: the aquatic ecosystem, tourism, industry, effluent assimilation, recreation, etc. These needs overlap, as the volume for one purpose may also meet the needs of another purpose (e.g., aquatic environment and recreation). As part of developing the WCO, the Committee needs to agree on a volume of water required to meet future human use and the needs of the aquatic environment.

After some discussion the committee agreed to ”Maintain sufficient water in the LS River to maintain current human uses and foreseeable growth. The impact of this objective on lake levels will be evaluated to the extent possible, as part of the flow modeling.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 New Member Criteria

- George has contacted Metis Zone 5 about a representative, since recent elections have seen the previous Watershed Committee member replaced. George will ensure that Peavine and East Prairie River Metis settlements are represented using the ‘alternate’ system as we do for the current membership.
- Regional Environmental Action Committee (REAC) – In response to a concern about the role of a non-government environmental organization on the Watershed Committee, Bonnie Raho stated REAC’s interest in the project is for awareness and to assist when possible. REAC is interested in the overall sustainability of the lake.
- There was some concern expressed about the Committee becoming too large to work well and the size of the constituency that REAC represents.

- Rod stated that there would likely be a requirement to have representation by an NGO environmental group on the Committee in order to be granted WPAC status.

Decision tabled about REAC's membership status on the committee until additional information is received from Alberta Environment on the requirements for recognition of WPACs.

6.2 Vacant Secretary/Treasurer position

Leave it vacant at the moment.

6.3 Vacant sub-committee Chairperson positions

Leave vacant at the moment, as they are currently inactive. A decision was made to create these committees, as they are required, much like was done to guide Task 1.

6.4 Update Members list

Alternate members are to be named for: High Prairie, Slave Lake, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

6.5 Phase Two Preparation

In preparation for Phase 2 of the water management plan; Rod and Tim have initiated a report on sedimentation of the lake, its sources and fates. The contract is to be completed by the end of March 2005. Rod will present a status report at the next meeting.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

Date of next meeting: Thursday, January 13, 7:30 p.m., Kinuso Senior Drop in Center.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm

Chairperson, Watershed Committee