



Directors present: Doug Kaupp, Chris Gallagher, Brad Sclossberger, Wade Goin, Errol Kutcher, Randall Wolf Tail, Terrence Lazarus, Andy Hurly, Autumn Barnes, Mark Svenson, Ninna Piiksii (Mike Bruised Head), Erik Cline, Megan Andre (left at 3:10pm), Allan Garbutt, Cheryl Dash, Rick Cooke (joined at 2:15pm), Keshav Singh (joined at 3:15pm)

Staff present: Shannon Frank,
(other staff joined from
2:30pm-3:30pm including Kallie
Desruisseaux, Debra Still,
Sofie Forsstrom , Rachel Morris)

Doug called the meeting to order at 1:03pm. Introductions were had, and a land acknowledgement was given.

Motion: Andy moved, seconded by Ninna Piiksii, to approve the agenda as presented. 11 in favour. Carried.

Motion: Brad moved, seconded by Ninna Piiksii, to approve the minutes from the May 16, 2024 meeting as presented. 10 in favour. 1 abstained. Carried.

Executive Committee Report

- Board of Directors performance evaluation survey results were shared and discussed. Overall results were very positive. For more information see the attachment that was sent out before the meeting.

Motion: Ninna Piiksii moved, seconded by Autumn to accept the survey results for information, and to complete a similar survey every year. 13 in favour. Carried.

Orientation after summer break

- Highlights from the Strategic Plan, Operational Plan, 2024-25 approved budget, balance sheet, and Board Policy Manual were shared. For more information see the attachments that were sent out before the meeting.

Motion: Ninna Piiksii moved, seconded by Erik to accept the orientation documents as information. 13 in favour. Carried.

Staff introductions and projects

- Sofie, Education Program Manager
 - Been with OWC for 9 years.
 - Started our youth education programs, including X-STREAM Science where youth collect benthic invertebrates.
 - CABIN sampling underway each September, trains other staff and partners.
 - Leads the development of a CABIN reference model for the eastern slopes.
- Rachel Morris, Watershed Stewardship Assistant
 - Been with OWC for 6 months.
 - Maria Albuquerque is also a Watershed Stewardship Assistant but is away on holiday.
 - Does on the ground outreach in the backcountry to encourage responsible recreation on public land.
 - Helps with restoration activities, CABIN sampling, writes blogs, leads posts on Instagram and Tiktok.
 - Led the pollinator monitoring in partnership with Alberta Native Bee Council, and designed an interactive education program about pollinators for events.
- Jon Martin, Communications Manager
 - Been with OWC for 6 years.
 - Leads online communications, social media, website, newsletter.
 - Reviews written documents, grants, etc.
 - Leads agricultural literacy project focused on innovation in agriculture, connecting people to where their food comes from.
- Debra Still, Restoration Manager
 - Been with OWC for almost 3 months.
 - Focus on restoring natural infrastructure for drought resilience.
 - Hit the ground running with many restoration projects, including building a constructed wetland, installing beaver dam analogues, planting willows, converting a lawn to native flower habitat for pollinators, restoring native grasslands.
 - Supporting landowners to install stewardship projects like fencing and watering units to keep livestock out of streams.
- Kallie Desruisseaux, Accountant and Office Manager
 - Been with OWC for 6 years.
 - In charge of bookkeeping and annual audit, tracking 20 grants, and related data.
 - Assists with CABIN sampling, leads pesticide sampling at two sites in partnership with Pest Management Regulatory Agency.
- Shannon - Monitoring groundwater with Living Lakes Canada

- A new project to monitor 9 groundwater wells, in clusters, in 3 areas.
 - Piikani Nation Land Management, EPA, University of Calgary are partners.
 - Using a new technology to map under the ground up to 60m to identify potential water.
- Shannon - State of the Watershed assessment
 - Surveyed 5 watershed councils and 11 potential users to understand how they could benefit the community. Results will be shared this fall.
 - Seeking partners to assist with developing a new assessment.
 - Hoping to see a provincial assessment as well, not just for the Oldman watershed.
- Shannon - Calculator for the economic value of natural assets
 - Planning to develop a tool to calculate the per hectare value of natural assets (wetlands, grasslands, riparian zones, etc) for indicators such as water storage, carbon sequestration, flood disaster risk avoidance, etc.
 - Working with Natural Assets Initiative, ESSA, and Earth Economics who specialize in this field of study.

Executive Director report

- Fund development
 - Most of our revenue currently comes from grants and we are very successful with these, but we would like to diversify our revenue streams.
 - Hiring a Development Manager to lead this diversification plan and assist with government relations, building partnerships to lead projects so we don't have to, etc. A job posting is public and we are interviewing candidates in 2 weeks.
 - The first step will be to develop a new Fund Development Plan. We have \$10,000 for this from a grant.
- Government relations
 - After two years of building partnerships, a coalition is officially forming to lead a group of water and nature based organizations to advocate for increased government investment in protecting and restoring natural assets. Our first priority is advocating for the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program that many nonprofits, municipalities, and irrigation districts rely on for funding restoration activities. Last year they had \$28 million in applications and only \$3.5 million to give out.
 - EPA is writing a Nature Strategy and public engagement has started with a survey. We have an opportunity to influence where this goes and show strong support. Please [complete the survey](#).
- Office space
 - Someone took over our lease on September 1 so staff are working from home and our belongings are in storage.

- We made an offer on a new office but we could not agree on the terms and we walked away.
- Shannon is watching for other options.

Governance Committee (need volunteers)

- Nothing to report. Topics that we will work on next include:
 - Engaging Metis Nation Region 3
 - Indigenous cultural awareness training day, policy, protocol guide
 - Supporting external groups policy

External Committee Reports

- South Saskatchewan Regional Plan 10 Year Review - Shannon Frank, Linda Cerney
 - Announcement was made that it is officially launched: <https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=90866C80BF1C3-EAA0-B4F9-69E781866B9FD341>.
 - Survey opening in September, and we will share it widely.
- Livingstone Porcupine Hills Recreation Advisory Group - Andy Hurly
 - Have not received any new information about this.
 - Can be removed from the agenda.
- SSRB Water Coordination Committee / Drought - Doug Kaupp, Shannon Frank, Chris Gallagher
 - Committee will meet this fall to receive updates on apportionment, meeting instream objectives, reservoir levels, etc.
- Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District (LNID) Update - Chris Gallagher
 - Low early water irrigation district allocations and on-farm seeding/crop adjustments, careful monitoring, timely rains and diligent work of Water Infrastructure and Operations Branch (WIOB) staff with Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI), resulted in a significant rebound in year over year storage levels in irrigation reservoirs. The Oldman River Reservoir is at 64% of design full supply, 12 m (40 feet) higher than at this time last year. The Oldman and the Southern Tributaries Water Sharing MOU's remain in effect, with irrigation district self-administered mandatory restrictions continuing in LNID, SMRID, RID, MID and the mountain districts. Bow River supply has resulted in excellent recovery for WID, BRID and EID. We are all in a better water supply situation heading into this fall. The recent AWC drought simulation project provided a good exercise to provide stakeholder and water manager awareness of the various levers available to mitigate drought in 2024.
 - The Irrigation District Water Quality program is continuing with results posted to www.idwq.ca

- Rehabilitation of irrigation works continues with several canal to pipeline projects going to construction this fall to reduce seepage and evaporation losses. Irrigators are continuing to access the SCAP program to improve their irrigation application efficiencies with available technologies.
- The annual Alberta Irrigation Districts Association conference will be taking place in Calgary in early February, 2025.

- Kainai Environmental Protection Association - Ninna Piiksii (Mike Bruised Head)
 - 11th Annual Summit will be June 11-13. Details to come.
- Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent - Ninna Piiksii (Mike Bruised Head)
 - Another conference will be held in 2025.
- International Joint Commission Public Advisory Group (PAG) - Cheryl Bradley
 - Met in Lethbridge June 4-6 (see account in the [newsletter](#)). Shortly thereafter – on June 17 - the dramatic failure of the diversion siphon near Babb MT occurred. U.S. federal funding has been approved for replacement of two siphons, tentatively proposed to be complete by August 2025. Flow in the Milk River in Alberta is just above 0 currently.
 - An one-year extension of the study was approved - to Spring 2026.
 - The next Study Board public meeting is scheduled for Oct 7 (6 pm – 7pm) in Malta MT. I am not planning to attend that one.
 - Overall I am impressed with the ongoing work on hydrologic and water management modeling (aligning EPA's WRMM and Montana Dept of Natural Resource Riverware) and linking them with climate change scenario modeling to predict future streamflow. I look forward to seeing modelling results applied to test defined administrative and infrastructure options and effects on performance indicators (socio-economic and ecological) (see fact sheet links in the [newsletter](#)). It appears to be a much more sophisticated and credible approach than SSROM (which is weak in its predictive capabilities) on which to base decisions about water management projects.
 - On another topic, the Chin Reservoir EIA was recently-released (July 31) for the Chin Reservoir Expansion.
 - The EIA is now being reviewed by NRCB and EPA with any deficiencies sent to the proponent for response. A Joint Notice of Filing by NRCB and EPA was published on August 13. They are now reviewing the application for any deficiencies and when it is deemed complete NRCB will issue a Notice of Hearing.
 - Past experience suggests nonprofits would not be determined as directly affected to have standing in a hearing. Since considerations of impacts on the Southern Tributaries and the Oldman River are outside the EIA scope, determinations of

directly affected status will likely be limited to landowners adjacent to the reservoir construction site and perhaps users of water delivered by SMRID.

- Crowsnest Forest Products / West Fraser Public Advisory Group - Rick Cooke
 - Nothing to report.
 - Meeting this fall.
 - May be behind schedule.

- Alberta Water Council (AWC)
 - WPAC seat on the Board of Directors
 - Doug is the alternate for the first two years, then main representative for two years, and will sit on the new “water availability” committee.
 - Water for Life Action Plan - Shannon Frank
 - There will be no action plan.
 - Writing a lessons learned document instead.
 - Water is still a priority but the process was rushed.
 - Source Water Protection Planning Project Team - Michael Wagner
 - A workshop is being held to look at the new online tool.
 - If you would like to attend, please let Shannon know.

Meeting adjourned at 4:08pm.

Next meeting: October 17, 2024 from 1pm-4:30pm on zoom or at the Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District office

The foregoing minutes were approved by the Board of Directors on _____.

_____, Doug Kaupp, OWC Chair