

WABAMUN WATERSHED MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
ESRD Spruce Grove
Time: 6:30 PM Date: March 22, 2017

In Attendance: Kelly Aldridge, Art Erickson, Stan Franklin, Neil Fleming, Don Meredith,
Stan Kobylo, Jack Latham, Arin McFarlane-Dyer, Jordyce van Muyden

1. Welcome and Introduction of Members and Guests:

Judith Golub and Patsy Cotterill (Edmonton Native Plant Group), Jenna Curtis (Nature Alberta), Jenny Arts (Parkland County ALUS Coordinator), Breda Muldoon (NSWA), Gisele Bourgeois (Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association), Stacey Gibb (Wabamun Sailing Club).

2. Review and approval of meeting agenda: Moved: Stan K. Seconded: Neil Carried

3. Review and approval of minutes from December 14, 2016 Board meeting.
Moved: Jordyce Seconded: Don Carried

4. Executive Report: January 30, 2017 and March 1, 2017.

Executive Committee meeting notes distributed in advance of the meeting and at the meeting.

Stan Franklin indicated that we need to stay well informed about TransAlta's Highvale mine reclamation plans and progress. Dan Kuchmak from TransAlta will speak to us at our April 19th meeting.

We are also concerned about the state of the Lake Wabamun fishery. Some of our executive committee members will meet with AEP officials on April 12th to learn more about the health and management of the fishery.

5. Treasurer's report: Neil Fleming reported that the current bank balance is \$18,571.67.

6. Website report: Don Meredith explained that over the past year the largest number of visitors to our website have been from Russia. He has investigated this, but has not been able to explain it yet. He suggested that it may be that it is not real visitors, but rather robot programs, or BOTS. It appears that things have changed recently, and this last month 83% of visitors were from Canada, 11% from Russia, and 2% from USA. WWMC's Facebook page has been updated and is being read frequently.

7. Presentation: Edmonton Native Plant Group (website: edmontonnativeplantgroup.org).

Judith Golub and Patsy Cotterill from the Edmonton Native Plant Group gave us an excellent presentation about the native riparian plants around Lake Wabamun. They also gave us each a pamphlet on Common Wetland Plants in the Edmonton Area, and "Go Wild!", an easy to understand guide to Prairie Wildflowers and Grasses. These will be of great assistance in our work on shoreline restoration.

8. Presentation: Jenna Curtis, Nature Alberta

Jenna spoke to us about her work in the Living by Water program. This includes conducting shoreline assessments for all lakefront property owners, followed up by providing these assessments to individual owners. They use a program borrowed from an Ontario initiative called "Love Your Lake". The shoreline assessments are conducted from the water in boats. Last year they did 488 assessments on Lake Wabamun for those owners located in Parkland County subdivisions. This year they are planning to do approximately 400 assessments for lakefront owners in the Summer Villages and the Village of Wabamun. There are funds available to assist owners with shoreline improvements that will help protect the lake water quality and wildlife habitat.

On May 27th Nature Alberta and Parkland County will be holding an information and training workshop at the Fallis Community Hall relative to the Love Your Lake Program. The workshop will be held from 2:30 to 5:30 pm.

9. Wabamun Watershed Management Plan update.

See Draft Terms of Reference distributed with these minutes. Breda Muldoon will attempt to schedule a meeting of the watershed CAO's and TransAlta to discuss their participation in the Watershed Management Planning Process.

10. Parkland County Municipal Development Plan Open House March 21, 2107.

Stan Franklin and Jack Latham attended this event. Materials will be available on the county website next week.

9. Parkland County Boat Launch project.

The background and current status of this project was the subject of an article in the WWMC Spring Newsletter. Parkland County will be holding Open Houses on respect of the project on April 18th (Village of Wabamun) and April 19th (Seba Beach). WWMC members will attend as observers.

10. 2017 projects

- Education/Shoreline Naturalization

Gisele Bourgeois from the Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association asked us if we would be interested in a joint effort to prepare an educational booklet for distribution to shoreline owners. WWMC agreed to participate in the development and funding of the project.

11. Adjournment: 10:15 PM Next meeting: April 19, 2017

WABAMUN LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

FEBRUARY 8TH, 2017

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan (WWMP). The TOR will identify and outline the following:

- Planning Context
- Planning Area
- Vision and Objectives
- Key Issues
- Nature of the Plan
- Planning Steps
- Organizational Structure
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Plan Implementation
- Regulatory and Policy Context
- Public Engagement
- Work Plan and Schedule

PLANNING CONTEXT

1. *A Review of Scientific Studies and Environmental Impacts* for Lake Wabamun was published by Dr. David Schindler in 2004. The report contained several recommendations to improve the health of the lake. One of the recommendation was:

“that a permanent citizen panel, whose objective it is to protect the health of Wabamun Lake....be established and maintained. This panel must have members who are selected by, and representative of, the community of Wabamun Lake users¹.”

2. Wabamun Watershed Management Council formed in 2006 in response to Dr. Schindler’s recommendation. A Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Planning process was initiated in 2013 by the Wabamun Watershed Management Council with the purpose of protecting the quality and health of Wabamun Lake, while meeting the needs of all stakeholders.
3. *A Wabamun Lake State of the Watershed Report* was completed in 2013 by Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd. The report summarized existing and historical knowledge for Wabamun Lake and its watershed and contained several recommendations. One of the recommendations was:

“the Wabamun Watershed Management Council, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, and Parkland County [should] partner immediately to begin the watershed planning process. Long-term management, planning and forward thinking is critical to the overall success in achieving goals for the

¹ pg. 6 “Lake Wabamun: A Review of Scientific Studies and Environmental Impacts”, Schindler et al., 2004

watershed.... Continued watershed management planning is necessary to ensure the long-term health and preservation of the Wabamun Lake watershed².”

4. A *Wabamun Lake Sub-Watershed Land Use Plan* was completed in four phases by Stantec Consulting Ltd. (for Parkland County) from 2014 to 2016. The Plan aims to develop and implement responsible land-use practices to assist in maintaining or improving the health of the watershed. The Plan will become the land-use component of the broader *Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan*³.

PLANNING AREA

The planning area for the *Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan* will include all of the *Wabamun Lake Watershed*, as shown in *Figure 1*.

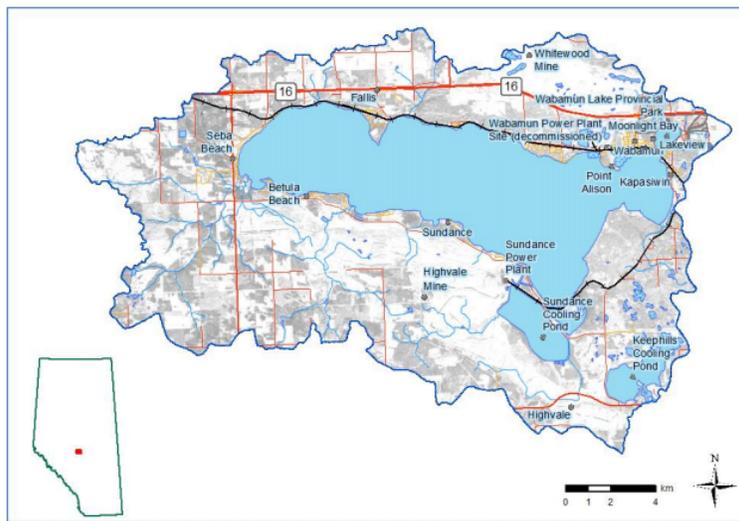


Figure 1. Overview of the Wabamun Lake Watershed⁴.

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

A statement will be developed collaboratively specifying what will be achieved by the WLWMP. The focus of the plan is on maintaining the health of Wabamun Lake and its watershed.

KEY ISSUES

The Watershed Management Plan will provide management advice on several key issues affecting the sustainability and health of Wabamun Lake and its watershed, initial priorities may include:

- Lake Water Quality

² pg. 86 “Wabamun Lake State of the Watershed Report”, Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd., 2013

³ pg. 3 “Wabamun Lake Sub-Watershed Land Use Plan”, Stantec Consulting Ltd., 2016

⁴ pg. 12 “Wabamun Lake State of the Watershed Report”, Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd., 2013

Water quality on Wabamun Lake has gradually changed due to land use activities within the watershed. Threats to water quality in the watershed include non-point source pollution from land use within the watershed as well as internal loading.

- Lake Water Quantity

Water levels at Wabamun Lake are important to maintain aquatic and wildlife habitat, lakefront property value and recreational activities on the lake.

- Shoreline and Riparian Health

Maintenance of healthy riparian and littoral zones is a vital part of managing the health of the lake and its watershed.

- Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic invasive species, such as zebra mussels and noxious weeds, pose a serious threat to the ecological health of the lake and its watershed.

- Recreation Management

Wabamun Lake is a popular year-round destination for recreational users. Recreational activities include motorized boating, sailing, paddling, swimming, fishing etc. With a rapidly growing regional population, recreational pressures on Lake Wabamun and other nearby lakes is expected to increase, and could result in undesirable changes to the health of the lake.

- Watershed Land Use Planning

Aspects of land use planning within the Wabamun watershed will be address through Parkland County's Wabamun Lake Sub-watershed Land Use Management Plan (WLSLUP). WLSLUP will be integrated into the WWMP in addition to other land use plans produced by other Governments (Summer Villages, Government of Alberta Regional Plan, First Nations) and industry. The planning process will identify any additional opportunities to improve land use practices to support improved outcomes for the general health of the lake and its watershed.

- Reclamation of TransAlta Highvale Mine

The Highvale Coal Mine occupies approximately one-third of the Wabamun watershed. Therefore, changes that occur within this area could significantly impact water quality and quantity in Wabamun Lake. The Plan will identify recommendations for the reclamation process, including subsequent landscape development and hydrological functioning.

- Fisheries Management

Wabamun Lake is a popular recreational fishery. The plan will identify management strategies for protecting fish habitat and recommendations aimed at managing the fishery to meet ecological and social objectives.

- Wildlife Management

Wabamun Lake is home to a population of Western Grebe, which are listed as species of special concern under Alberta's Species at Risk. This population is vulnerable to human disturbance and rates of nest abandonment at the lake are high. Protecting these, and other important wildlife populations, are important for maintaining a healthy watershed.

NATURE OF THE PLAN

1. Adaptive management approach: Plan implementation and outcomes will be monitored. Implementation strategies and recommended management actions will be adapted, as necessary, to reflect and address emerging issues, new information, and opportunities within the watershed.
2. Implementation-oriented: Recommended actions will be designed at the outset with a mind to implementation. Strategic and feasible actions will be prioritized.
3. Community Engagement: A major feature of this plan will be an emphasis on involvement from a well-informed and engaged watershed community.
4. Collaborative development and implementation: This plan is proposed to be a collaborative initiative, both in its development, and in its execution. We anticipate that the scale of the effort required to maintain a healthy lake and protect it from unwanted anthropogenic changes is too large for any single agency or organization to be responsible for and thus requires that responsibility for the various actions to protect the lake be shared among governments, stakeholders, land owners and the general public.
5. Science-based, but socially and economically balanced: The plan will consider the best available science-based information as the foundation for decisions about actions that can be taken to protect the lake, but that the expectations and needs of the various communities that utilize the lake must be carefully considered, all within the limits of the regional economy that supports those actions.

PLANNING STEPS

- a) Document community aspirations for the enjoyment of Wabamun Lake.
- b) Document and analyze environmental issues at Wabamun Lake and its watershed.
- c) Develop technical projects to address key questions and fill data gaps if necessary to complete plan.
- d) Develop recommendations. These will be created with implementation in mind. Therefore, they will be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-specific.
- e) Proceed with the implementation of priority projects that require immediate action and which have sufficient information, resources, and partnerships available (e.g. boat launch management and aquatic invasive species).
- f) Identify indicators (biological, chemical and physical) to be used in monitoring the health of the Lake and its watershed.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The WWMP Project will require collaboration between watershed stakeholders, Governments and other key partners. The WWMP, and the accompanying implementation strategy, will provide long-term direction for lake watershed management, consistent with the goals of the *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability* (2003).

Several key stakeholders will be invited to participate in the development of the WWMP. Stakeholders will be encouraged to participate in the watershed planning partnership voluntarily based on their perceived role. Stakeholders will include, but are not limited to, the following organizations:

- North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
- Wabamun Watershed Management Council
- Parkland County and possibly representatives from the Hamlet of Fallis
- Alberta Environment and Parks
- Alberta Energy Regulator
- Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
- Alberta Health
- Summer Village of Lakeview

- Summer Village of Point Alison
- Summer Village of Seba Beach
- Summer Village of Betula Beach
- Summer Village of Kapasiwin
- Village of Wabamun
- TransAlta
- Paul First Nation
- Members at Large (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, other ENGOs)

The following organizational structure will be established to run the planning process:

- A Steering Committee of partners will approve scope and deliverables and will take overall responsibility for the project. The committee may include representatives from the WWMC, NSWA, AEP, Wabamun Lake Summer Villages, Village of Wabamun, Parkland County, TransAlta and Paul First Nation.
- A Technical Advisory Committee will provide scientific and technical advice to the project. The Technical Advisory Committee may be composed of representatives from AEP, TransAlta, Parkland County and NSWA.
- The NSWA will write the Watershed Management Plan and provide administrative and technical support.
- The Watershed Community will be engaged throughout the process.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is responsible for the development and stewardship of the Wabamun Lake Watershed management planning process. The Steering Committee will:

- Review and approve the Terms of Reference.
- Define Plan components and schedule work plans to address these components.
- Compile information acquired for each component.
- Write the Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan.
- Help determine and find the resources needed to develop and implement the Plan.
- Facilitate involvement and support, as needed, from the general public and technical committees.
- Document and track progress and keep all members advised on progress.
- Monitor implementation of the Plan and evaluate progress.
- Approve engagement Plan and inform the watershed community, including elected officials and appropriate decision makers.
- Make decisions in consultation with key stakeholders.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Conduct the technical work to complete the planning process, including scientific assessment and the development of science-based management options.
- Advise the Steering Committee as needed.
- Oversee monitoring program.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Upon completion of the WWMP, an Implementation Committee will be established to direct implementation of the Plan and monitor its progress. The Committee should include representatives from all of the proposed implementers identified in the Plan, all major stakeholder groups in the watershed (listed in Section 8) and some original Steering and Technical Committee members.

Implementation of the Plan will be achieved through the voluntary choices and actions of stakeholders. To provide potential implementers with an understanding of their commitment, the Implementation Committee will identify the priorities, roles, responsibilities, budgets and funding requirements for the recommended actions in the Plan. To ease the implementation phase, recommended actions in the Plan will identify the implementer best suited and on-board with implementation. Actions in the Plan will also incorporate, build-on and complement recommendations made under the WLSLUP.

REGULATORY AND POLICY CONTEXT

The WWMP will be developed within the current framework of federal, provincial, and municipal legislation and policies. Legislation and policies most relevant to watershed management in the subwatershed are summarized in Section 3 and Appendix B of the Wabamun Lake Sub-Watershed Land Use Plan⁵. The Provincial *Water for Life* Strategy and recent planning initiatives also provide framework and context for the development of the Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan:

- *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability (2003)*
- *NSWA Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the North Saskatchewan River (2012)*
- *Parkland County Wabamun Lake Sub-Watershed Land Use Plan (2016)*
- *Parkland County Highvale End Land Use Area Structure Plan Bylaw 28-97 (2016)*
- *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan, Re-imagine. Plan. Build. (2016)*
- *Government of Alberta Climate Leadership Plan (2016)*

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement will be designed and implemented to ensure stakeholders are informed about the development of the plan, and have opportunities to make contributions to it, and feel empowered to implement its recommendations. Wabamun is a very well-studied lake and the main issues affecting its health are relatively well-understood. It therefore makes sense to use that information to propose effective management recommendations that are cost-effective and have commitment from implementing agencies and partners. Nonetheless, public and stakeholders are owed an opportunity to provide input into the plan, and to assist in its implementation.

A Strategic Public Engagement Plan will be developed as a stand-alone product by the Steering Committee. The Strategic Public Engagement Plan will ensure targeted public engagement and active public participation in Plan development and Plan implementation. The engagement process will be supported and facilitated by Alberta Environment and Parks Community Engagement Branch.

WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

⁵ pg. B.1 "Wabamun Lake Sub-Watershed Land Use Plan Technical Report," Stantec Consulting Ltd., 2015

The Steering Committee will develop a work plan pending identification of potential technical and policy projects. Work that is to be addressed under the work plan and timeline includes: Plan Governance and building partnerships; Plan development; Technical and Policy projects; Watershed Community Engagement; Plan Approval; and Implementation and Prioritization of Actions. A draft schematic for the work plan is provided in *Figure 2*.

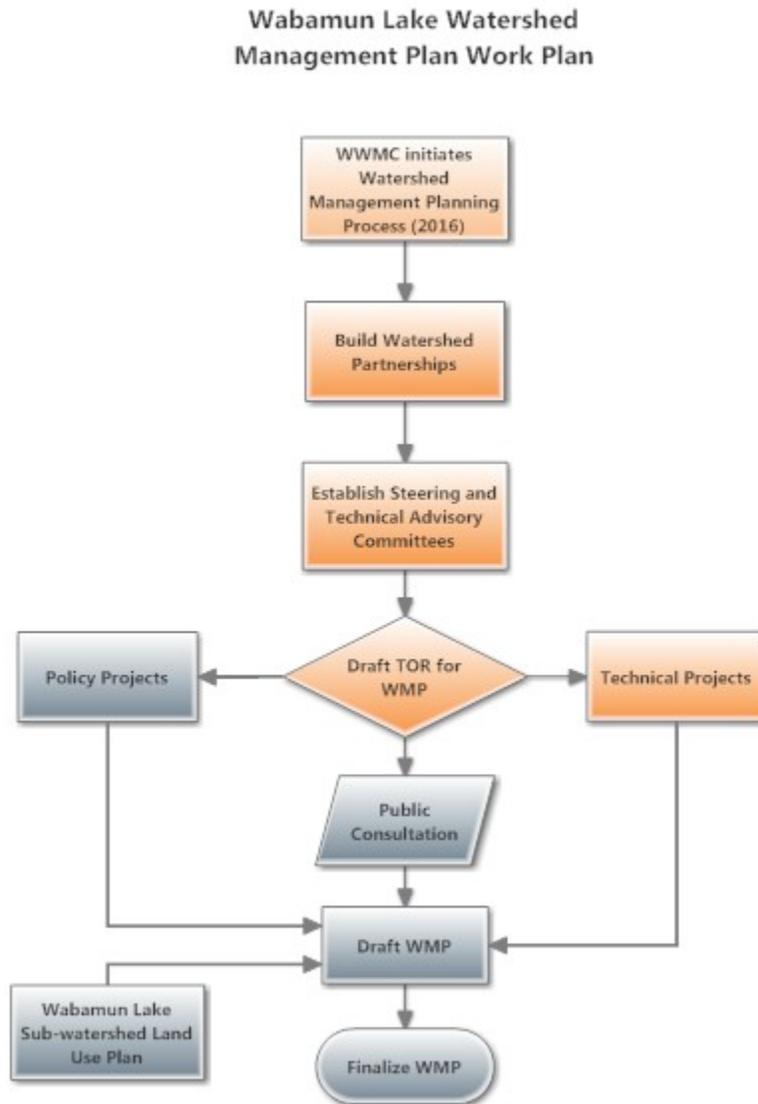


Figure 2. Draft schematic for the Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan.