



# Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council

## Meeting Notes – Meeting #10

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**Date:** December 2-3, 2009

**Place:** Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel, Edmonton, AB.

**Next Meeting:** January 6-7, 2010

**Attendees:** **Regional Advisory Council Members:**

Hildy Hanson, Lanny Coulson, Clarence Makowecki, Peter Koning, Dave Theriault, Marc Stevenson, Cecilia Quist, Heather Kennedy, Don Pope, Rick Pawluk, Glen Semenchuk, Doug Parrish, Roy Vermillion, Howard Ewashko, Melissa Blake (Day 1 only), Eric Butterworth

**Regional Planning Team:**

Terry Koch, Lisa Ng, Crystal Damer, Simon O'Byrne, Jonathan Mackay, Scott Milligan, Selena Cole, Toby Schneider, Tomas Nilsson, Lisa Sadownik, Randall Barrett, Preston McEachern, Jon Fennell, Margaret Klebek, Debra Hopkins, Justin Ellis, Katherine Braun, Nathan Wilson, John Steil

**Absentee:** Archie Collins

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**Item:**

### **Introductory Roundtable**

Meeting 9 notes were introduced and adopted as read with minor changes.

Meeting 10 agenda was adopted as read.

Roundtable of RPT/RAC member activity since November meeting.

### **Action Log Update – Simon O'Byrne**

Action Log is up to date with some ongoing items that will finish after the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan is submitted. Updated Action Log, draft regional plan with new draft glossary items and the draft agriculture fragmentation document are now on SharePoint site.

Questions about Action Log:

- Actions on reconciling surface/subsurface tenure issues, caribou, etc. from meeting two and three appear to be missing.
- Tenure is a provincial issue and should be on the Action Log as an issue that needs addressing.

### **Key Modelling Results – Lisa Ng**

Presentation is a synopsis of the results to date, with each subsequent presentation providing detail on individual topics. The synopsis document is on the SharePoint site. In general:



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- Two million barrels per day (mbd) and four mbd show positive trends and challenges in numerous areas.
- Six mbd has not been modeled yet – challenges encountered at two and four mbd need to be dealt with on a small scale first.

**Access Management – Scott Milligan**

Results are very similar to those found in Cumulative Environment Management Association (CEMA) studies previously – overall, best practices (BP) show some improvements for some species, and access management AM has an additive effect. Proposed conservation areas have not been included in the model runs to date.

- RAC advice:
  - AM as a concept sounds good, but need more details
  - Need measurable targets to show progress over time
  - BP needs a good definition with more details
  - AM should be tied to BP and predator control directly and should also be considered for industry
  - A policy/regulation regarding Integrated Land Management (ILM) practices should be part of LARP

**Economic Development – Toby Schneider**

Modeling has centred around five key questions. Economics of two, four or six mbd scenarios modeled, with a focus on export potential.

Thresholds for air/water/biodiversity – not complete, but will try and have something for January meeting.

Implications for rest of province – move from two to four mbd shows a very dramatic effect on population, employment, etc.

Changes to industry profile – shift in production methods, maturation of service economy and supply chains, and changes to non-energy sectors.

**Air Quality – Randall Barrett**

Current operations are causing some impacts on SO<sub>2</sub> from process upsets

- Very short timeframes.
- Occur just outside of the fenceline, not in populated areas.

AB has existing ambient air quality objectives (AAQOs) and frameworks to deal with these emissions.

AAQOs are based on health effects or effects on indicator species like plants.

Model runs show significant reductions from different levels of BPs. Biggest improvements in air quality tend to happen close to the areas with the highest impacts.

**Groundwater – Margaret Klebek/Jon Fennell**

LARP has some of the highest quantity and quality aquifers in Canada. Any effects are



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much localized and are dealt with under industrial approvals.

- Overall ground water quality has not changed detectably in over 20 years.

Alberta Environment has divided LARP into three framework areas to manage impacts.

- Mineable area and in situ area frameworks are done, Cold Lake area still under development. Outcomes have been established for both water quality and quantity as well as for aquifer vulnerability.

### **Surface Water – Preston McEachern**

Overall, surface water conditions are good in the region. Instream Flow Needs (IFN) sharing program as currently exists would allow all of industry to operate through drought periods for 60-80 days.

- Water levels on the Athabasca River have never exceeded the yellow warning level, which triggers management actions to that level.
- Bilateral agreement on the Slave River water going to N.W.T. is currently in development but is not yet complete.

### **Day 2**

#### **Land Use Classifications – John Steil**

Key revisions to map since last version:

- Updated to reflect the prioritization of conservation areas from November meeting.
- Inclusion of all recreation/tourism areas.
- Added in bitumen area under the conservation areas to illustrate this tradeoff.
- Moved the alignment of the multi-use corridors (MUCs) to better reflect logical alignments for the route east to Saskatchewan.
- Inclusion of an advice sheet that includes a section for regulations needed to make these come to pass, as well as a section on priorities that need to be considered so that discussions on tradeoffs can be held.

#### **Recreation and Tourism – Justin Ellis**

Discussions from the November meeting resulted in:

- Changes to advice sheets.
- Determination of physical area of conceptual areas.
- Map edited to include Lakeland Country concept boundary.
- Creation of management intents for each proposed area.

RAC should remember that not every proposed area will be designated as a park. The river valleys will be dealt with through the management intent for the areas. Discussion was held on areas not presented at November meeting – Otasan Lake, Gardiner Lake, La Saline Lake, Cowper Lake and Crow Lake.



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Advice from RAC:

- Engstrom Lake Provincial Recreation Area should be considered.
- Tourism, Parks and Recreation/Sustainable Resource Development should provide strategies to increase recreation opportunities on existing areas rather than adding new areas.
- Have not identified enough opportunities around Fort McMurray.
- Proposed alterations to map
  - a. Area near Richardson River should be included in Richardson Backcountry rather than mixed use, just next to area 5B.
  - b. Examine lakes that are in the area of Lakeland Country that is outside the region.
  - c. Include options for urban recreation as well.

Management Intents – Conservation areas will have only primitive recreation allowances. Traditional land uses are included in the maintenance of rec/tourism ideals.

Opportunity intents are combined with the broad mgmt intent – e.g. recreation/tourism management intent with semi primitive mechanized access. Details on each management intent are provided in the briefing notes.

**MUCs – Katherine Braun**

Larger Alberta Multi-use Corridor Strategy is being created as well, and will be administered by a single entity. Intention of the MUCs is to stay very high-concept level. Energy has created five briefing notes and a broad overview of MUCs, as well as concept routes for corridors along the following routes:

- Highway 63 to Fort McMurray
- Highway 63 to NWT
- Highway 686 E to La Loche/W to Red Earth Creek
- Highway 881 to Fort McMurray

**RAC Advice**

- Highway 36 corridor has potential, as does expansion of Highway 41 corridor.
- Need to include bypasses around Anzac and Cheechum Village to reduce traffic around/through these areas as the traffic increases.
- Advice sheets should state that proposal of new infrastructure should consider existing infrastructure where possible.
- Consider logistics of corridor passages into/through other regions as well.

**Conservation Areas – Scott Milligan**

Table provided measuring each conservation area against the terms of reference criteria. Overall, the RAC has done a very good job of fulfilling the criteria. Some concern that less than five per cent of additional conservation area is in Treaty 6 region.



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Roundtable discussion on areas to change/trade – result was a request for more information from provincial caribou specialist.

RAC to take the additional 15 per cent table and make priorities at the January meeting on these areas.

- Advice sheets should include recommendation that the upcoming regions should plan to be contiguous with our choices for MUCs and conservation areas.
- Community Traditional Use is important and should be added into both the conservation area and recreation area advice sheets, including hunting, fishing, etc.
- Management intents should include AM and caribou protection so that these tools are enshrined.

### **Forestry – Scott Milligan**

Impacts to forestry were run through ALCES including the rec/tourism areas and impacts to energy development. In essence, about half of the impacts could be mitigated but this would have costs to both forestry and oilsands industry

### **Vision Document**

New version of vision document will be provided in coming weeks, and will discuss it in more detail at January meeting.

### **Next Steps**

January 6-7 RAC meeting is scheduled for Lac La Biche. Marc to check with Treaty 6 chiefs and Metis Settlement General Council on Friday December 4 to see if they are coming for lunch. If they are unavailable, meeting will be moved to Edmonton.

January meeting topics – thresholds, economic impacts, management of TPR areas, conservation areas – effects of trades of areas eight and 10, land classification map and vision document, HHRAM modeling.

Information to share with stakeholders – land classification system but not the map, TPR maps and designation, MUC documents.

Results from Day 1 and Day 2 workshops will be incorporated into the vision and other documents prior to the next RAC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

**STANTEC CONSULTING LTD.**

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c. Regional Planning Team