



Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council

Meeting Notes – Meeting #11

Date/Time: January 6-7, 2010
Place: Stantec Consulting Ltd., Edmonton AB.
Next Meeting: February 10-11, 2010, Fort McMurray/Fort McKay
Attendees: **Regional Advisory Council Members:**
Don Pope, Roy Vermillion, Melissa Blake, Eric Butterworth, Heather Kennedy, Doug Parrish, Marc Stevenson, Clarence Makowecki, Hildy Hanson, Dave Theriault, Glen Semenchuk, Cecilia Quist, Peter Koning, Lanny Coulson, Howard Ewashko, Rick Pawluk
Regional Planning Team:
Simon O’Byrne, Terry Koch, Crystal Damer, John Steil, Ken MacDonald, Lisa Ng, Selena Cole, Scott Milligan, Dave Hervieux, Toby Schneider, Tomas Nilsson, Tom Ross, John van Nostrand, Janelle Wyman, Preston McEachern, Margaret Klebek, Randall Barrett, Debra Hopkins, Justin Ellis, Jonathan Mackay
Absentees: Archie Collins
Distribution: Attendees and Absentees

Item:

Introductory Roundtable

Meeting 10 notes were introduced and adopted as read with minor changes.

Meeting 11 agenda was adopted as read.

Roundtable of RPT/RAC member activity and correspondence since December meeting.

- Ministerial Working Group (MWG) briefed on RAC progress shortly before Christmas, and generally liked the land use classification system proposed and the associated land use map.
- Funding for FNs – funding has been approved for all of the six that applied, contracts have been sent out and should be returned soon

RAC Action Log – Simon O’Byrne

Additions to the log during the discussion included a request for an update on discussions regarding surface/subsurface tenure, and the creation of an action log tab/link on the SharePoint site for easier navigation.

SharePoint Site – Randy Hills

New access point to the SharePoint site – new link can be found on the Land-use Framework homepage “Members Only” page. Folder of files to share with stakeholders





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is found in the Public and Stakeholder Engagement folder along the left side.

Bitumen Production Continuum – Ken McDonald

Numerous discussions on production scenarios have resulted in more attention on pace of development than an endpoint (e.g. six million barrels per day, mbd). Recognition that development has to be balanced against environmental stewardship and social pressures. Broad advice on the three pillars is provided in the document.

Land Use Map and Classifications – John Steil

The map has evolved into a fairly complete, refined state that includes an associated description document.

- Mixed Use Forest designation changed to Mixed Use Resource

Mixed Use Resource – Scott Milligan

RAC approves of concepts of Integrated Land Management (ILM) and Access Mgmt. (AM), which together provide many of the controls that are needed in the plan. Potential to test application with two pilot areas in a defined subregion before expansion across region.

Conservation areas – Scott Milligan/Dave Hervieux

Advice sheet has been created and a draft version will be given to RAC soon. Investigation of eight and 10 series conservation areas found that the eight series has much more caribou range currently in use. Reversal of declining populations will require several complementary strategies.

Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) Demographic Analysis and Population Growth – Toby Schneider

Energy production of six mbd by 2045 – over 300,000 people in the region, construction is complete, demography between sexes and ages balances out, including a significant jump in the number of seniors in the area. Numbers provided on a regional basis with minimal breakdown to individual communities.

Comprehensive Regional Infrastructure Sustainability Plan (CRISP) – Tom Ross and John van Nostrand

CRISP initiative underway in the Government of Alberta (GOA) to plan infrastructure development on a regional basis. First CRISP plan complete for Athabasca oilsands deposit (not confined to LARP area), others for Peace and Cold Lake deposits to follow as well as for Industrial Heartland. Plan is to create two potential growth scenarios from the current seven possibilities that will be taken forward for more detailed analysis.

Vision Document Workshop – Terry Koch

The RAC was facilitated in a workshop to refine the components of the plan from a social pillar perspective. Outcomes, Objectives, Strategies, Actions and Goals were all discussed and further work will be needed to complete the revision.

Forestry – Scott Milligan

RPT has done some interpretation/analysis of RAC options. Low viability options –



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moving/altering forest management agreements, changing private land to mixed use. Potential higher viability option – convert public land to private land for forestry plantations only, likely via a lease/tenure process akin to the oilsands. Other options – enhanced best practices to mitigate impacts, purchase of private land by forestry companies to fill their quota.

Groundwater – Margaret Klebek

Wetland policy is being developed to manage impacts to wetlands and groundwater. Groundwater frameworks will be implemented in stages – develop facility specific groundwater management plans that align with the frameworks, develop a regional GW monitoring network, and then collect this data into a database to be shared among stakeholders.

The network for the mineable area has been started and baseline sampling completed. Cost differential between mining and in situ monitoring due to relative number of monitoring wells in the areas. Costs will be borne by industry, GOA and stakeholders, and industry will be mandated to participate through their Alberta Environment approvals.

Surface Water – Preston McEachern

Surface water quality management framework for the Athabasca River is under development, similar Beaver River framework already complete. Framework will streamline sampling and reduce overall costs. New database/protocol will have users provide information more frequently for quicker integration into monitoring/action decisions. Costs – 11 current sites cost \$200,000 per year for surface water monitoring alone. Monitoring is done at the mouth of every major tributary as well as the Athabasca itself to gauge impacts from flow in as well as the collective effect.

Air Quality – Randall Barrett

NO_x and SO₂ thresholds are important due to their acidifying effects and contributions to Particulate Matter creation. There is an extensive monitoring network in place in the area. Most of the emissions come from the upgrading process and not from the mining process. Threshold development accounts for human and ecological effects as well as odour control.

Alberta Ambient Air Quality Objectives are set at a level very protective of human health, even on a cumulative effects basis. The model focuses mainly on industry sources and does not really account for human population emissions increases (travel, heating, etc.). Airshed management could be done on a N/S basis and could create sub-regional thresholds for the mineable area and for the in situ area.

Economic Impacts of Air Thresholds – Toby Schneider

Environmental control technology is a very small percentage of the costs of starting a facility and the revenue that it generates. Several costs of not adopting environmental controls – development occurs only until a threshold is reached, and then it must cease unless emission technologies improve.

As technology requirements increase, production levels increase significantly and peak higher at a later date, and include population and employment increases. Three



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potential criteria for threshold development:

- Clear regulatory intent
- Minimize disadvantage to future entrants vs. incumbents
- Recognize fast pace of development may slow future technological advances

Health Risk Assessment Multimedia Model (HRAMM) – Debra Hopkins

Model is made to assist with understanding of potential human health risk impact from chemical exposures in the LARP. It takes a multi-media approach, multi-pathway, multi-chemical, multi-location and multi-receptor and factors in cumulative effects. Results from the HRRAM should be used in the LARP as a way to set mitigation strategies for land use over the long.

Finalization of Recreation and Tourism – Justin Ellis

Advice sheets have been combined to a single table format. Three broad intents – recreation/tourism only, recreation/tourism and other land uses, and recreation/tourism and biodiversity conservation (basically only the Richardson). Six main opportunity intents – primitive, semiprimitive, semiprimitive mechanized, roaded natural, rural and urban.

All of the proposed recreation/tourism areas together equal about three per cent of the LAR.

Lakeland Country concept requires a specific destination plan. Stakeholders will need to be engaged to create this destination plan during the implementation phase of the LARP.

Next Steps

February meeting – recap of all the information presented so far, with a goal of creating a preliminary set of advice to GOA by the end of meeting. RAC should review information over the next 7-10 days and prepare for the release of a new version of the Vision document. Meeting is February 11-12 in Fort McMurray, will go up to Fort McKay on Day 2, March meeting may move later in the month but currently scheduled for early March.

Closing roundtable:

- Would like to see more info on environmental goods and services and impacts on Aboriginal communities
- Haven't discussed linkage between biological and cultural diversity, a key component of Aboriginal culture
- Outstanding question on air threshold development, will discuss further in February
- Vision document – needs to get more depth, could maybe pull some existing work from Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA) to complement this
- Would like to see a workbook similar to South Saskatchewan Regional Plan made soon

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.



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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.

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c. Regional Planning Team

