



South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council

Meeting Notes - Meeting # 8

Date: March 29 - 31, 2010

Place/Time: Heritage Inn, Brooks, AB

Next Meeting: May 11,- 13, High River, AB

Attendees: Regional Advisory Council (RAC):

Jay Bartsch, Linda Bruce, Stanley Church, Lisa Fox, Colin Jeffares, Wolf Keller, John Kerkhoven, Georgina Knitel, Leah Lawrence (March 29th and 30th), Gord Lehn, Hugh Lynch-Staunton, Ron McMullin, Ralph Nelson, Daniel Smith, John Squarek, Bill Szabon, Kevin Van Tighem

Regional Planning Team (RPT):

Glen Tjostheim, Doug Olson, Judy May-McDonald, Andrea Dorrans, Leif Olson, Andrew Bjorn, Rob Stuart, Susan Friesen, Brian Hills, Hugh Norris, Justin Ellis, Heather Sinton, Barry Adams, Rob Dunn, Selena Cole

Lunch Guests:

Clayton Johnson - Deputy Mayor, City of Brooks; Molly Douglass - Reeve, County of Newell

Dinner Guests:

Oldman River Regional Services Commission (ORRSC): Lenze Kuiper, Mike Burla, Steve Harty, Jonathan Schmidt

Day One

Introduction

The South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council (RAC) chair, Colin Jeffares, called the meeting to order, introduced the agenda and requested acceptance of the February 09 and 10th meeting minutes. Based on input from the group, a revised agenda focusing on four to six key issues was put in place. It was decided that in the time remaining to them, the RAC will provide recommendations and advice on:

- valued landscapes – including biodiversity and conservation, and agricultural fragmentation;
- water – including headwaters, source water protection, wetlands and groundwater and water supply;
- economic development – including healthy communities and infrastructure; and
- recreation - on public lands and potential tourism and recreation destinations such as the Castle area.



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Presentation on Valued Landscapes Mapping – Doug Olson

- Mr. Olson provided clarification on the mapping model, which is intended to assist the RAC in identifying areas of best land uses, and areas where economic, environmental and social land uses conflict and pressure points exist.
- The RAC needs to identify valued lands spatially and related management intent.

RAC Advice on Native Grasslands – facilitated by Rob Stuart

- Native grasslands are found in the following Natural Sub-regions:
 - Dry Mixedgrass;
 - Mixedgrass;
 - Foothills Fescue;
 - Foothills Parkland;
 - Montane; and
 - Modified grasslands to tame species.
- The RAC began work on its advice to Cabinet regarding native grasslands as one of the valued landscapes. The discussion spelled out threats, considerations and values that need to be considered by Cabinet and tools that are needed to protect and manage native grasslands.
- Biodiversity and wildlife were also discussed in the context of native grasslands.
- A number of draft recommendations were made.

Presentation on Headwaters – Heather Sinton

- Ms. Sinton provided a very brief explanation of issues and concerns regarding headwaters and water quality, the water quality framework being developed, and clarified the role of watershed planning and advisory councils (WPACs).
- There was a brief discussion and the RAC decided that water would be placed on the agenda for the following day.

Castle-Crown – facilitated by Rob Stuart

- Discussion focused on the Castle-Crown area as an important headwaters area, having many uses and users, and requiring more effective management
- Issues and options for better management of this area were explored.



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- Recommendations on the management and development of Castle-Crown area were drafted.

Informal discussions over dinner were held with the Oldman River Regional Services Commission.

Closing: 9:00pm

Day Two

Introduction

Mr. Jeffares opened the session expressing his congratulations to the RAC for the amount of work that had been accomplished the day before. Draft advice on the native grasslands was compiled and prepared by the RPT based on the previous day's discussion.

Recreation on Public Lands – Justin Ellis

- Mr. Ellis, at the request of the RAC, provided a brief overview of the different lands managed by Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR) and Sustainable Resource Development (SRD), the range of park classifications and what they mean.
- The RAC reviewed the previous advice sheets on recreation on public lands and provided a number of refinements.
- Recommendations addressing management and compatibility were drafted.

Grazing and Water Quality – Barry Adams

- Mr. Adams provided the RAC with a short discussion on grazing, leases, and range management tools and principles.

Source Water Protection – Proposed Water Quality Framework – Brian Hills

- The RAC was provided with a brief presentation on the content of the framework, which discussed water treatment issues and technologies, as well as strategies and tools that can be used to reduce consumption of water.

Headwaters – facilitated by Rob Stuart

- The RAC began work on drafting recommendations on grazing and water quality



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as they pertain to the headwaters.

- More discussion on water quality will occur after other water and land based issues are discussed.

Calgary Water Resources – Wolf Keller

- Just prior to dinner, the RAC received a short presentation describing the history of Calgary's water allocation, the strategies Calgary has used to improve water treatment, reduce consumption and increase efficiency.

Closing: 8:00pm

Day Three

Introduction

Mr. Jeffares opened the session by thanking the RAC for its efforts, and a working agenda was approved. Discussions focused on setting weights and targets for valued landscapes followed by wetlands and riparian areas.

Valued Landscapes Weights and Targets – Doug Olson

- RAC members were asked to vote electronically using various classifications and valuations on a wide variety of maps prepared by the RPT.
- They were assured the results are not locked in, but will serve only as a visual tool to deal with the complexity of the region and to help move the discussion forward.
- During the process a number of changes were requested and some classifications simplified.
- The outcome of the results will be prepared and then brought back for the RAC's review and discussion.

Wetlands and Riparian Areas – facilitated by Rob Stuart

- Considerable discussion took place about the definition of wetlands, the concept of no net loss, and positive tools to support conservation and restoration of wetlands.
- The RAC reviewed previous advice sheets and made a number of additions and clarifications.

Wrap-up

- There was discussion about whether or not the RAC would be able to complete its work within the time they have been given. This will be reviewed at the end of next



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meeting.

- Some final instruction was provided to the RPT on preparing future advice sheets.

Closing: 12:25pm

Deliverables

- The Land Use Secretariat will investigate if Hon. Evan Berger has provided his constituents with an update on the Southwest Assessment.
- Mr. Jeffares promised that at a future meeting compatible uses (for grasslands), integration and conflict will be looked at.
- A recommendation on recreation user fees will be drafted by the RPT using the discussion at this session.
- The RPT will draft a recommendation on recreation on public lands based on the discussion.
- A RAC member is attending the National Mitigation and Ecosystem Banking Conference in Austin, Texas, May 3-6, and will bring a report back to the group.

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.