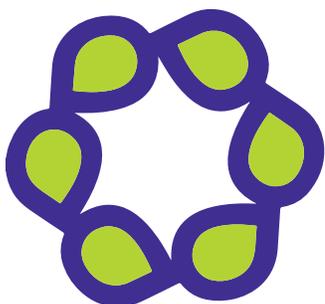


Alberta Environmental Network

# Report to Members

Fall 2018



alberta  
environmental  
network

The **Report to Members** highlights the actions and issues important to members of the Alberta Environmental Network.

The updates from the caucuses, working groups and members are used to identify priorities and common interests. This information is reviewed and synthesized in preparation for discussions with government officials. It is also shared with new members to introduce them to AEN's caucuses and working groups.

**Thank you** to the members who contributed with caucus, working group or member updates.

## Contents

AEN Mission and Goals.....	2
Executive Director's Remarks.....	3
Staff, Board, Caucus and Member Lists.....	4
Caucus Updates.....	6
Working Group Updates.....	12
Member Updates.....	18

## AEN Mission and Goals

### Vision

A healthy, sustainable Alberta with an influential environmental community and environmentally mobilized Albertans.

### Mission

To bring together and strengthen Alberta's environmental community

- To strategically and proactively address environmental issues in Alberta; and to
- Generate awareness and motivate action on environmental issues among Albertans and at all levels of government

### Strategic Goals 2016-2020

1. To build and sustain the organizational capacity of AEN
2. Create, maintain and improve relations among stakeholders to further shared environmental goals
3. To support the needs of AEN members and strengthen and expand the network. Build organizational capacity to serve our members
4. Develop an internal communications plan for internal use
5. Strengthen external communication and outreach

# Executive Director's Remarks

October 29, 2018

This report is a synopsis of just some of the work that AEN members have undertaken this past year. You have all done much more than is contained in this report. Many of you are volunteers and others are employees of environmental organizations who go above and beyond with their time and effort to sustain efforts to protect and enhance Alberta's ecosystems.

AEN members take part in caucuses, working groups, multi-stakeholder committees, councils and associations throughout the year. This past year has seen the revitalization of the AEN Water Caucus and the activation of both an AEN Cumulative Effects Management Working Group and AEN Methane Emissions Reduction Working Group. The creation of an AEN Climate Change Caucus and AEN Youth Council is underway.

This past year, while AEN members continued these activities, AEN staff — Natalie, Russ and Jeff — have been finding ways to support those efforts.

Communications are vital to effective environmental work. AEN staff have focussed on tightening up communications to members, government officials and the public. Russ Miyagawa, information & financial administrator, continues to work behind the scenes to ensure frequent, comprehensive AEN bulletins and a constantly updated website that features our members activities, as well as coordinating the Clean Air & Energy Caucus. To take things up a few notches, Jeff Wielher, communications specialist, joined the AEN team early this year. Jeff has been active in many areas including supporting the Water Caucus, creating and maintaining two new AEN online platforms: the Protect Alberta website and FB page, outreach to members to capture their concerns, priorities and objectives and compilation of this report. This information is also the basis for meetings with government officials.

We are focussed on strengthening and expanding the network. To welcome new members, we need to be aware that there are many environmentally-active Albertans who are not part of conventional organizational structures and we also need to be insightful about the barriers that exist to joining the Network. One important way to address this is making information about AEN members and their environmental issues more concise, clear and accessible.

Thank you to all the AEN members who contributed to this report and all the AEN members who took part in the work. We look forward to working with you to fine-tune future iterations of the report and sharing it widely.



**Natalie Odd**  
Executive Director

# Staff, Board, Caucus and Member Lists

## Board of Directors

Co-Chair: Melissa Gorrie (Ecojustice)

Co-Chair: Nikki Way (Pembina Institute)

Vice-Chair: Vacant

Secretary: Ann Baran (Southern Alberta Group for the Environment)

Treasurer: Rocky Feroe (HealthyYEG)

Director: Laura Hughes

Director: Kecia Kerr (CPAWS Northern Alberta)

## Staff

Executive Director: Natalie Odd (nodd@aenweb.ca)

Information & Financial Administrator: Russ Miyagawa (rmiyagawa@aenweb.ca)

Communications Specialist: Jeff Wiehler (jwiehler@aenweb.ca)

## Caucuses

Agriculture Caucus

Clean Air & Energy Caucus

Climate Change (new)

Municipal Caucus

Water Caucus

## Working Groups

Aggregate

Caribou

Cumulative Effects

Methane

Tailings

## Members

The AEN is comprised of 42 organizations and 8 individual members. The organizations are:

Organization	Location
Alberta Coordinated Action for Recycling Enterprises	Leduc
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation	Calgary
Alberta Green Economy Network	Edmonton
Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association	Edmonton
Alberta Native Plant Council	Edmonton
Alberta Wilderness Association	Calgary
Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area	Foothills No. 31
Bearspaw Residents	Bearspaw
Bow Valley Naturalists	Banff
Butte Action Committee for the Environment	Caroline
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Northern Alberta Chapter	Edmonton
Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists — Alberta Chapter	Lethbridge
Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition	Pincher Creek
Central Athabasca Stewardship Society	Fort Assiniboine

Organization	Location
CFUW Alberta Council - Advocacy Committee	Edmonton
Council of Canadians - Prairies & NWT	Edmonton
Council of Canadians - Edmonton Chapter	Edmonton
CPAWS Southern Alberta	Calgary
Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca	Athabasca
Ecojustice	Calgary
Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition	Edmonton
Environmental Law Centre	Edmonton
Healthy YEG	Edmonton
High Level Native Friendship Society	High Level
Inside Education	Edmonton
Keepers of the Athabasca	Athabasca
Keepers of the Water	Athabasca
Mewassin Community Council	Duffield
Next Up	Calgary / Edmonton
North Saskatchewan River Keepers	Edmonton
Notinto Sipy Conservation Authority	Ponoka
Pembina Institute	Calgary
Pesticide-Free Alberta	Edmonton
Prairie Acid Rain Coalition	St. Albert
Recycling Council of Alberta	Bluffton
ReThink Red Deer	Red Deer
Sierra Club Canada Foundation - Prairie Chapter	Edmonton
South McDougal Flats Area Protection Society	Sundre
South Peace Environmental Association	Debolt
Southern Alberta Group for the Environment	Lethbridge
Stewards of Alberta's Protected Areas Association	Sherwood Park
The Rockies Institute	Canmore

# Caucus Updates

## Agriculture Caucus

**Submitted by Ann Baran**

The Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) Policy Advisory Group (PAG) held their latest meeting on Wednesday, May 23, 2018. Following the October 2017 PAG meeting, a few staffing changes were announced; the most significant being Peter Woloshyn, the Chief Executive Officer of the Natural Resources Conservation Board as well as the co-chair of the Policy Advisory Group, was appointed as the Chairman of the NRCB in December 2017. His term will expire December 2020. Walter Ceroici of the NRCB has temporarily filled the position of CEO of the NRCB and co-chair of PAG until a replacement for the position has been officially appointed. As well, Mike Wenig, legal council for the NRCB, will be retiring; this was his last PAG meeting. Fiona Vance will be taking over his position.

Another significant change is the closure of the Fairview office; all complaints and applications for new and/or expanding confined feeding operations will be handled through the Morinville office. Additional staff have been hired to accommodate the increased workload.

Agriculture and Forestry (AF) has undergone a number of structural changes, including the reorganization of two divisions: Corporate Services and Food and Value Added Processing. AF is also reviewing a number of its programs to find efficiencies. These include its research, its grants, and its programs as well as how AF works with its partners through extension.

A multi-lateral agreement for the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) is in the process of being signed by the First Ministers. This agreement will involve a number of themes including environment, science and research and public trust.

The Government of Alberta has put an important focus on climate change. AF is working with Cabinet to assist primary and food processing sectors design programs that will reduce their emissions. Funding from both levels of government, federal and provincial, is being sought.

The Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change – Producer program has been developed to support producers in reducing negative impacts on the environment while enhancing sustainable production, managing climate change and increasing profitability in the agriculture sector. A number of programs have been initiated; some programs are still in the process of being finalized. A funding list for interested producers is available

The NRCB Manure Spreading Regulations have created a greater awareness in producers for the need to have a system for accurate record keeping. This requirement applies only to those producers who handle 500 tonnes or more of manure per year. Manure must be applied according to the soil nitrogen and salinity limits specified in the regulations or in a manure nutrient management plan approved by the NRCB.

In order to assist producers with this, the NRCB has created Manure Management Record Keeping Forms that can be accessed online to help producers keep their records up to date. A mobile application app called Manure Tracker has also been developed to assist producers with manure management record keeping and to reduce paper records if that is what they prefer. There are also factsheets available on Manure application equipment and road use requirements that provide necessary information on the legal requirements for road access including highway right-of-ways and culverts to accommodate the use of manure draglines or direct-flow manure application systems. Producers need to obtain permission from their local jurisdiction before they use public roadways.

Municipal Development Plans determine whether or not an application for an expansion to an existing confined feeding operation or an application for a new CFO can be approved by the NRCB for municipalities within the province. AOPA requires an approval officer to deny a permit application if it is not consistent with an MDP's land use provisions. For those who are interested in more information, the MDP Discussion Paper (June 2017) as it relates to the NRCB can be accessed on the NRCB website at <https://cfo.nrcb.ca>.

In 2018, from January to March, a 3 month time frame, the NRCB has received a total of 71 applications for either new or expansions to existing confined feeding operations – 60 of those 71 applications are for the central and southern Alberta regions. In comparison to previous years, a total of 141 applications were received in 2015, 167 for 2016 and 201 for 2017!

Information on the number of complaints relating to CFOs can be accessed at the above NRCB website. The information is broken down into the number of complaints/region/year, the type of operations involved, and the reasons for the complaint. Anyone visiting the website may find the information very interesting!

The next NRCB PAG meeting is scheduled for November 28, 2018 to be held in Calgary.

## **Clean Air & Energy Caucus**

### **Submitted by Ann Baran**

**Mission:** The AEN Clean Air & Energy Caucus is one of the action arms for the AEN. The caucus exists so that member groups can share resources and work jointly on shared agendas to propel action.

**Mandate:** The caucus provides a space to discuss important clean air and energy-related issues in which everyone has an opportunity to speak and have their views addressed. This space facilitates an iterative discussion as a part of a broader decision-making process that drives the AEN Clean Air & Energy Caucus.

**Operations:** Providing a space for members to collaborate and have an iterative discussion on clean air and energy-related issues are the strength of the Caucus. This space provides the opportunity for groups to collaborate and debate. The AEN Clean Air & Energy Caucus does not take positions nor speaks on behalf of the environmental community as a whole, however, positions developed within the caucus may be adopted by on a sign-on basis by any AEN member group that chooses to do so.

Another important function the AEN Clean Air & Energy Caucus serves is to provide a selection process for delegates to sit on multi-stakeholder groups. Therefore, participation from delegates like those in the Clean Air Strategic Alliance allow iterative discussions to happen that addresses views from the AEN Clean Air & Energy Caucus.

Delegates are not expected to necessarily represent the consensus of the AEN Clean Air & Energy Caucus as a whole. They are delegates to represent their organization; however, the philosophy and our approach is to involve everyone, give everyone an opportunity to speak, and incorporate the views of the Caucus. Thus, the delegate should inform, address, and reflect the concerns of the AEN Clean Air & Energy Caucus when possible.

If a disagreement exists in the AEN Clean Air & Energy Caucus, members should have offline discussions.

The Clean Air & Energy Caucus has been very busy since the AEN Fall cross-caucus meeting. With the amalgamation of the Alberta Water Council and the Clean Air Strategic Alliance under the "same roof", members of each caucus have had to adjust to not only sharing the same office space but also the new Executive Director, Andre Asselin as well as the Secretariat. As with any similar situation, both groups need time to adjust to the changing circumstances. Each organization will remain separate and distinct, only sharing facilities and staff.

At the December CASA Board meeting, it was decided to reduce the number of Board meetings from four per year to three with the understanding that additional Board meetings could be scheduled if there was a need to do so. The first meeting for 2018 was held April 12th. The next Board meeting will be a two day session: September 27th & 28th, the first day being the actual Board meeting and the second day will be a strategic planning session. Unfortunately Alberta Health and Alberta Energy will no longer have a representative sitting on the CASA Board. Alberta Energy feels Alberta Environment & Parks is responsible for dealing with air quality issues and Alberta Health will be indirectly involved through their government counterparts who are on the Board.

At the Board meeting, the Ambient Air Quality Objectives Project Team requested Board approval. The new proposed 24-hour average Alberta ambient air quality objective for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is 29 µg m<sup>-3</sup> based on health effects, a reduction from the current guideline of 30 µg m<sup>-3</sup>. The 60 day public comment period for the new proposed objective has been initiated with the comment period ending July 24th, 2018.

Note: The current 1-hour average Alberta ambient air quality guideline for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) will remain unchanged at 80 µg m<sup>-3</sup> to be used for monitoring and reporting of the Air Quality Health Index.

The Rover III draft project charter was presented to the Board for approval. Rover III is a vehicle testing program using remote sensing technology to test emissions from the in-use on-road vehicle fleet, including heavy-duty and light-duty trucks/vehicles. The focus of the work is intended to be diesel-fueled trucks but data will be collected on other heavy-duty and light-duty vehicles. The emissions of focus include NO<sub>x</sub>, VOCs, CO, CO<sub>2</sub> and particulate matter. Recommendations on managing emissions from the on-road transportation sector will be developed from the results of the testing. Reducing the above emissions will have the co-benefit of reducing other emissions.

The Charter was approved. The delegate selection process was initiated by the CAE caucus. Randy Angle, Ruth Yanor and myself, Ann Baran have been selected to represent the NGO sector on the Project team. The first meeting will be held May 30th, 2018.

CASA has hosted two webinars on the 5-year Air Quality and Deposition Monitoring Plan which is being developed by The Environmental Monitoring and Science Division of Alberta Environment and Parks; the first webinar was held in November 2017 and the second on March 12th, 2018. Post-webinar materials are available from the CAE Caucus for information, review and comments. Bob Myrick will be providing a status report on the developing plan and the input received from consultations on the report. A third webinar will be scheduled in the near future to present the final plan.

The Capital Region Air Quality Framework Oversight Advisory Committee have been working on the Industrial Air Emissions Management Program. Industry provided a report with their estimate of the impact of BLIERS on the Strathcona Industrial Association and the Northeast Capital Industrial Association members. They hope to have a 19% reduction in NO<sub>x</sub> without taking into account the BLIERS for reciprocating engines which are expected to have a larger impact on other Industrial sectors.

The new CAAQS for NO<sub>2</sub> are seen as presenting a major challenge for the Capital Region as well as for the entire province.

The OAC (Oversight Advisory Committee) will be moving in 2018 and 2019 to develop a broader air quality management response, building on the existing PM 2.5 management response, but assessing, updating and strengthening the PM 2.5 portion as part of this process which will also include NO<sub>2</sub> (and SO<sub>2</sub> as needed). Province-wide Phase IV of the provincial Air Quality Photochemical Modelling is to be completed June 2018. Work on the Industrial Air Emissions Management Program is proceeding.

On May 5th, 2018 an informal meeting was held with stakeholders who had been involved previously with the Electricity Framework Review. The meeting was held to find a path forward with the EFR. It resulted in the elements of a charter for the Electricity Framework Review being drafted. Alberta Environment and Parks hopes to move forward with an accelerated time frame for this review, similar to that of the Coal-to-gas conversion work done last year. A formal request from the Deputy Minister is expected in early June and it is expected the Executive Director, Andre Asselin will come forward to the CASA Board outlining the situation, proposing a process and looking for a way to approve the draft EFR charter electronically by June. Following approval of the charter by the CASA Board, a delegate selection notice will be posted by the CAE Caucus for NGO participants for the team.

Unfortunately Andrew Read, who has been very active with the CAE caucus has decided to leave the Pembina Institute. He was the NGO Industrial Alternate on the CASA board as well as an NGO representative on the Ambient Air Quality Objective Project Team. This leaves two vacant NGO positions that need to be filled.

Even though delegate selection notices have been issued for these two positions – CASA Board Alternate (NGO Industrial) and the CASA Ambient Air Quality Objectives Project team along with a third vacant position - the Capital Region Air Quality Management Framework Oversight Advisory Committee were issued, only one application was received. Benjamin Israel of the Pembina Institute will serve as the CASA Board Alternate (NGO Industrial) member. His organization, Pembina has stated they only have the capacity to allow Benjamin to fill one of the vacant positions so the other two positions are still vacant at this time. If anyone is interested in participating on one of these groups, please don't hesitate to notify the AEN Administration.

Wayne Ungstad has resigned from the Red Deer Fine Particulate Advisory Committee.

Directors have approved the extension of the Peace Airshed Zone boundaries to the municipality of Greenview, encompassing Fox Creek and Grande Cache. There are large emitters in the Fox Creek area as it is an industrial hub with light oil production from shale, longstanding shale gas production facilities and intense activity in the Duvernay shale region as well as a pipeline terminal, oilfield waste treatment sites and old gas plants.

Water quality and air quality concerns are still being expressed about the Swan Hills Waste Treatment Facility which treats and disposes of hazardous wastes. The plant was constructed in 1987 and is being operated by a company called SUEZ. Their current environmental permit expires November 1, 2018. Sediment core samples were taken in March to determine if any hazardous pollutants were detected. The samples are being analyzed by two separate labs – one whose sample analysis is being paid for by SUEZ and the second, a separate lab from British Columbia who has donated their services. There were requests to have three separate sample site locations for analysis but unfortunately two sites – one closer to Athabasca and the other, Fort Assiniboine were not tested. Keepers of the Athabasca have monitored the situation closely and have sent out a media release addressing their environmental concerns.

The AER (Alberta Energy Regulator) has released their new draft methane regulations. A thirty day comment period was given so that the public could provide their comments on the new regulations. The Methane Working Group sent a letter on behalf of a number of Environmental organizations expressing their concerns with Directive 60: Upstream Petroleum Industry Flaring, Incinerating and Venting and Directive 017: Measurement Requirements for Oil and Gas Operations. The draft regulations do not require companies to monitor their methane leaks routinely so without accurate measurement and reporting by industry, how can the Government of Alberta state with certainty that there are actual emissions reductions?

To be truly effective, accurate and verifiable measurement and reporting systems for methane emissions need to be developed in the regulations. The letter was sent to: The Honorable Rachel Notley, The Honorable Margaret McCuaig-Boyd, The Honorable Shannon Phillips and Mark Taylor, Executive Vice-President, Operations Division, Alberta Energy Regulator.

We need to recognize the importance of NGO participation in these various initiatives. If we don't get involved and provide input, then how can we ensure our interests are being represented? NGOs play an important role - we share the same interests and values as many in the NGO community. Our voice speaks not just for us but for NGOs all over this Province!

## Water Caucus

### Submitted by Carolyn Campbell

In October 2017, Water Caucus re-established regular monthly calls. We established monthly standing items, and discuss other issues as they arise. We had several additional calls to focus on a particular issue.

#### *1. Integrated groundwater-surface water cumulative effects management*

Received presentation by John Pomeroy from the Global Water Futures Project on Feb. 20, in person in Canmore and via webinar. Highlights include the potential for GWF research to predict significant flood and drought events and not just climate, inclusion of Indigenous communities in modeling and predictions, and follow up opportunities for connecting with project leads. Lots of information and research, but need to find ways to integrate the research into government decisions.

Reviewed preliminary findings of a WPAC-initiated 10-year review of approved water management plans for the Oldman, Bow and Red Deer rivers. Final review report is expected September 2018. Points being prepared for groups who want to submit a letter to the Alberta government: praise WPAC initiative in undertaking the review and ask for key environmental and capacity issues to be addressed.

Various members have engaged with AEP's Environment Monitoring and Science Division (EMSD) about EMSD's role in cumulative effects monitoring, including along the Elbow River and in oil sands monitoring. Caucus is requesting a Sept. 2018 meeting with EMSD watershed science director to discuss cumulative effects management, including groundwater/surface water accounting, SSRP activities, impact of reinstatement of HADD provision in the Fisheries Act.

#### *2. Oil Sands Process Affected Water Management / Tailings*

AEP Tailings committee - AEN had 3 delegates and alternates participating in this multi-sector committee, which met from May to October 2017. The scope was limited to providing advice on dealing with exceedances of planned fluid tailings profiles, though our delegates also raised broader tailings liability management issues. No decisions have been made by AEP. Although the main discussions occurred in the AEN Tailings working group, Water Caucus received updates.

AEP Integrated Water Management working committee - we have 3 Caucus delegates on that multi-sector committee, which meets quarterly. One is stepping back to only receive correspondence, so there is an opening for another ENGO delegate. Committee is reviewing draft work plan to June 2020 that includes pilot projects for release of oil sands process-affected water under varying 'treatment' approaches into the Athabasca River. Next meetings are scheduled for June and October. Scoping document is expected by summer 2018 and final regulations by 2022.

Keepers of the Athabasca attended a meeting hosted by ECCC on Feb. 28 to outline plans to develop regulations for oil sands effluent discharge under the Fisheries Act.

#### *3. Alberta Water Council*

AEN has 3 directors and 1 alternate participating in this multi-sector Council, which met October 2017 and March 2018. There was strong support from Water Caucus to voice frustrations with the AWC and request dialog. AEN submitted our delegates' letter in May 2018 to the AWC to express concerns about inadequate outcomes for advancing

aquatic ecosystem health. Delegates will seek change via a meeting requested with the AWC executive and at an upcoming Water Council strategy session in June.

The AWC requested sectors' feedback on their development of a 3-year business plan. Review of ENGO feedback reinforces how the AWC is falling short of its potential.

#### *4. Fracking*

Large renewal of fracking in central Alberta and companies are seeking to withdraw water from many unnamed water bodies and wastewater from rural municipalities.

AEN's Cumulative Effects Management working group is more directly focused on AER's area-based pilots for sub-regional fracking impacts, but Water Caucus is updated, including on an upcoming June 22 presentation to AEN on the status of AER's Upper Peace's MD Greenview pilot for fracking water management. South Peace Environmental Association participated in this multi-sector task force in 2016-17. AWA reported on their stakeholder meeting with Shell in April 2018, covering their west central Alberta pilot projects for reducing fresh water usage.

Caucus discussed AEP's Dec. 2017 draft directive for water use in hydraulic fracking. It is a step forward to emphasize term licenses over temporary diversion licenses, but many gaps remain. Some groups submitted letters to AEP; AEP responded with more detailed comments than usual, but final directive had little change from draft.

#### *5. Wetlands*

Oil Sands Wetland Monitoring Integration is one of the new programs in the joint federal-provincial Oil Sands Monitoring (OSM) Program. A federal-provincial MOU on OSM was renewed in December 2017. Water Caucus has asked AEP's EMSD for information on OSM governance and operations and will request an ENGO role. Two Caucus members participated in Oil Sands Wetland Monitoring Integration Workshop in December, focused on 'what' and 'where' to monitor, including deposition and human impact to wetlands. Expecting a draft oil sands wetlands monitoring program framework.

The SW Calgary ring road demonstrates the struggle to address wetlands policy in the White zone/settled areas of AB – preference for compensation instead of avoiding wetland destruction. The Minister's decision in January 2018 found that wetlands were assessed under old policy criteria, not the 2013 wetland policy criteria.

AWA is reviewing Alberta wetland policy implementation in Green zone/public lands.

#### *6. Aggregate/sand-gravel in flood plains (Coalition update)*

This is a standing item for any updates the Aggregate Coalition wishes to present.

#### *7. Other Items Discussed*

- Wapiti River management plan. Excellent multi-sector 'structured decision making' process wrapped up Nov. 2017 (Oct. 2017)
- Westslope cutthroat trout and north central trout recovery activities (Oct. 2017)
- Priority lake assessment in Peace; lake watershed mgmt in North SK (Oct. 2017)
- ECCC Coal mining effluent proposed regulations (Jan. 2018)
- Proposed changes to Fisheries Act and federal Environmental Assessment Act (Feb. 2018)
- Proposed Red Deer River water diversion for Special Areas water pipeline, proposed Terms of Reference (Feb. 2018)
- Pelican and Sundog hydro project proposals upstream of Fort McMurray on the Athabasca River. These proposals were withdrawn. Potential caribou habitat impacts from the distribution lines. The off-stream diversions could effectively have dammed River. Anticipating more hydro proposals as regulatory changes happen. (Feb. 2018)

# Working Group Updates

## Cumulative Effects Management (CEM) Working Group

Submitted by Carolyn Campbell

A Cumulative Effects Management Framework system in Alberta is urgently needed and long overdue.

The Alberta government definitions are: Cumulative effects are the combined effects of past, present and foreseeable land-use activities, over time, on the environment. Cumulative Effects Management is an approach that establishes outcomes for an area by balancing environmental, economic and social considerations and implementing appropriate plans and tools to ensure those outcomes are met. ([Alberta Environment & Parks, Land Use and Planning, Cumulative Effects Management](#))

AEN CEM members share an interest in cumulative effects management based on evidence and the precautionary principle so that sustainable human activity occurs within ecological limits.

*July 2017*

AEN members provided feedback to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) on the Draft Cumulative Effects Management Framework, which was at that time a very high level document. We have not yet seen an updated version.

*September 2017*

The AEN CEM working group met with Sarah Depoe, Alberta Environment & Parks (AEP) Director of Cumulative Effects Assessment Section, Planning Branch, Policy and Planning Division and with AER staff from their Environmental Science Group and Stakeholder Engagement department to discuss how AER and AEP staff are working together and what progress they are making on CEM. Specific issues of interest were how CEM fits in with sub-regional access planning on public lands in the LARP Moose Lake and South Athabasca sub-regions, SSRP's Livingstone-Porcupine and Castle, how ENGOs can help accelerate the process and what the timeline is for measuring enough indicators such that "cumulative" effects are being managed.

AEN members expressed the need to ensure that suitable thresholds and science-based ecological triggers are put into place. Further, AEN members would like to see the CEMF expand beyond land, air and water to include biodiversity and GHG emissions / climate change.

AER staff advised about organizational restructuring. They created and were building staff in a new Science and Evaluation Branch that is focused on CEM and led by Carol Crowfoot. Jil Macdonald reports to Carol Crowfoot, Chris Severson-Baker is the Acting Director and Scott Heckbert had been named as the new Chief Environmental Scientist.

AER's Science and Evaluation Branch meets regularly with AEP's Cumulative Effects Assessment section with the goals of ensuring that models are consistent, tools are selected together and they have access to datasets. "Open data" is not a set goal and the data choices are still being made. Data gathering through approval conditions is public information. AER recognized that they can improve on how they make this information available.

A major impediment to advancing the CEMF is that the Biodiversity Management Framework has still not been finalized and approved. There is also interest in a management framework based on Indigenous land use rights. It was suggested that:

- There would be an obligation to report every two years on status and that key indicators would be linked to approvals;

- All point and non-point source disturbances and all natural disturbance components would be considered in CEM; and
- Land disturbance thresholds under consideration for LARP are interior habitat indicator and fen indicator.

CEM decisions would be made using a support tool that would link overall cumulative effects goals to approvals. CEM decision tool triggers would be used to inform new approvals and also adjust requirements on existing approvals.

AER's and AEP's next step is to undertake a pilot project that could last for 1 or 2 years. The CEM pilot is expected to use the Biodiversity Management Framework (still not finalized) using Fen and interior habitat as the first indicators with the intention to include more indicators in future.

#### *October 2017*

Shannon White, then the Biodiversity Specialist for AEP Planning Branch, presented a webinar to AEN members about the Lower Athabasca, South Saskatchewan River and North Saskatchewan River Draft Biodiversity Management Frameworks and discussed their associated thresholds and indicators, specifically Fen and interior habitats and how they will be integrated into a potential CEM pilot.

#### *April 2018*

AEN members met with AER staff including Carol Crowfoot, Executive Vice President, Strategy and Regulatory Division and Jil MacDonald Vice President, Science & Evaluation, both new to their roles. AEN members introduced Ms. Crowfoot to AEN and explained the sustained efforts AEN members have made over a period of 4 years to move CEM forward at AER and that they have seen little progress.

Chris Severson-Baker, Acting Director of the Science and Evaluation Branch, delivered an update and held a discussion on CEM Implementation. He advised that CEM is a major objective of his branch. They have staffed the branch with experts in land, air, water and in integrating with understanding of sub-surface energy resource potential.

The next phase of their work is the selection of a pilot project area, followed by commencement of the pilot, with a goal to finish by March 2019. They will start with a few simple indicators as directed by AEP.

AER will continue to work closely with AEP's Integrated Resource Management Group. AER's progress is contingent on the pace at which AEP advances.

#### *June 2018*

Scott Millar, Director of Engagement Innovation, Indigenous and Stakeholder Engagement, AER delivered a virtual presentation to AEN members to update them on the transition of the Area-based Pilot project work that was undertaken by AER in the MD of Greenview from 2016 - 2018. Bob Cameron, AEN member, participated in the multi-stakeholder panel for the pilot project that produced 23 recommendations for AER and AEP. Bob reported a very positive experience working with other members of the panel but that there was disappointment that so few of the recommendations were implemented.

AEN members took part in a presentation and discussion with Dr. Carla Davidson about the Athabasca Region First Nations' (ARFN) perspective on the Draft Biodiversity Management Framework (BMF).

## Caribou Working Group

Submitted by Carolyn Campbell

### 1. Alberta

Helped members to align approaches/communications for:

- Northwest and west central caribou community meetings in fall 2017
- Draft provincial range plan released for comment by Alberta government in December 19, 2017.
- Oil sands tenure continuation review and caribou, winter 2017-18
- Three regional multi-stakeholder bodies in February and March 2018 (for central, north eastern and north western regions). The working group coordinated messages through all three bodies, and has followed up with AEP planners to discuss progress at least quarterly.
- Alberta government's announced April 2018 suspension of aspects of the range planning for further socio-economic assessments and May "delegation to Ottawa".
- Rally at Alberta legislature in October 2017 with news coverage and delivered letters from public to the provincial government.
- ENGO press conference held in February 2018 in response to forestry industry rally.

Representatives from ENGOs in the working group have jointly participated in meetings with the provincial government, including AEP and AB Energy officials, MLAs, deputy ministers.

### 2. National

Two ENGOs created joint campaign (Caribou4Ever.ca) including information resources and links to recent actions and articles.

Coordinated communications and messages calling for emergency protection order under SARA and the federal response to overdue provincial range plans.

Representatives from ENGOs in the working group attended meetings government officials, including parliamentary secretaries to Environment and Climate Change Canada, ECCC Canadian Wildlife Service officials, National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium subcommittee.

Coordinated messages in preparation for the North American Caribou Workshop held in Ottawa on October 29 to November 2, 2018.

### 3. Current priorities

Maintain communication and collaboration to continue developing better ideas for caribou range management through legal approaches, government relations, multi-sector discussions, and communications. Show support and rationale for improved caribou habitat management to public and to provincial and federal governments.

## Methane Working Group

Submitted by Jule Asterisk

### July 2017

AEN members took part in an AER methane regulations presentation in July.

### August 2017

9 ENGOs jointly submitted a letter with their position on methane regulations to the GoA's Climate Leadership Policy Committee, comprised of 5 Ministers, who were expected to approve methane regulations later that month.

The letter was accompanied by a table comparing the signatory organizations' proposed methane emissions reduction regulations to their best estimate of current draft AER regulations, CAPP's proposed regulations, the draft ECCC regulations and the best practices from other jurisdictions in North America.

The letter asks AER to enact world class methane emission regulations and that Alberta's legislators strive for:

- Conservation of hydrocarbons
- Minimization of methane venting
- Minimization on methane flaring
- Abatement of leaks
- Methane capture as the default requirement
- A carbon levy set at a threshold that makes methane reduction economically feasible and compelling
- Methane regulations that are "equivalency-agreement-ready" to avoid the need for significant future adjustment in order to achieve cumulative emissions reductions that align with federal regulations.

#### *December 2017*

Wayne Ungstad and Leonard StandingontheRoad, co-chairs of the Notinto Sipy Conservation Authority, traveled to attend a CAPP presentation in Bonnyville on behalf of the AEN Methane Working Group. The CAPP presentation was an "update on the 'state of our oil and gas industry with a focus on the proposed methane reductions' and how they will affect investment in the Lakeland Region." Wayne and Leonard provided a report back to the working group. At the end of 2017 no draft methane regulations had been released.

#### *March 2018*

16 ENGOs and community groups signed an open letter, dated March 15th to Rachel Notley, Minister Phillips and Minister McCuaig-Boyd asking for mandatory methane regulations, soon.

The Methane Working group created a new website under the name Protect Alberta that provided a platform for people to sign and send methane regulation letters to the Premier, Ministers and MLAs.

A Protect Alberta Facebook page was also launched as a platform for public awareness and discussion about the methane campaign as well as other campaigns.

#### *April 2018*

On April 24th, AER released the long awaited draft methane emissions reduction regulations, know as Draft Directive 060 and the Draft Directive 017. Their release triggered a month-long period during which AER would accept feedback from the public on the regulations.

The on-line system for providing feedback was found to be problematic in that it required a high level of technical knowledge to make separate and specific entries for every element of the directives. There was also an option to submit comments by email, which AEN members did.

#### *May 2018*

May 28, 13 Alberta ENGOs jointly submitted a letter about their position on AER's draft methane emissions reduction requirements to Premier Notley, The Honorable Margaret McCuaig-Boyd, Minister of Energy; The Honorable Shannon Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks and the Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office; and Mark Taylor, Executive Vice President, Operations Division, Alberta Energy Regulator.

The thrust of the letter, which was also sent out as a press release, stressed that the draft methane emissions regulations proposed by AER do not compel the oil and gas industry to measure or report their methane emissions accurately. This fundamental flaw risks failing to achieve the targets set by the Climate Leadership Plan in addition to not attaining equivalency with the federal methane regulations. The letter pointed out with supporting data that methane emissions are grossly underreported by industry in Alberta with emissions likely being 25 to 50 per cent higher than currently reported. Without accurate measurement and reporting by industry the GoA cannot state with certainty that emissions are being reduced.

Further, the draft regulations don't require companies to regularly monitor their operations for intentional and unintentional methane leaks. To have any effect, real, accurate and verifiable measurement and reporting systems for methane emissions must be developed in the regulations. Otherwise we risk continuing to not have accurate data and reporting, and therefore no way to claim reductions of methane emissions with scientific certainty.

A representative from Premier Notley office acknowledged receipt of the letter and advised that the Minister of Energy would respond. As of October, despite additional requests, there has been no communication from the Minister of Energy.

#### *June 2018*

Jule Asterisk, interim Executive Director for Keepers of the Athabasca, traveled to Bonnyville on behalf of the Methane Working Group to attend a CAPP presentation on the province's updated regulations regarding methane emissions. Jule provided a report back to the working group.

#### *October 2018*

The federal government has finalised its methane regulations which require provinces to achieve the same or a higher level of methane emissions reductions in their own legislation as the federal regulations (equivalency). No finalised provincial methane directives have been released. The AER has stated that it expects to present finalised methane directives to the GoA "later in 2018."

On Thursday, October 25, the Alberta government announced subsidies to small and medium companies to help them purchase methane emissions reduction equipment. Up to \$250,000 per company per year is available for companies producing under 40,000 barrels per day. The AEN Methane Working Group has questions about this program including: Who will be measuring and monitoring their methane reduction when industry has shown that it can not do this accurately? What about the large emitters?

#### *Background information on methane*

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas. Its impact is 25 times greater than carbon dioxide over a 100-year period. Reducing methane emissions is widely recognised as the most cost-effective way to increase greenhouse gas reductions.

The GoA's stated objective, as part of the Climate Leadership Plan, is to reduce methane emissions from oil and gas operations by 45% by 2025.

According to the Government of Alberta, the oil and gas industry is the largest source of provincial methane emissions; methane emissions from this sector in 2014 were 31.4 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents, an amount that represents 70% of Alberta's methane emissions and 25% of all emissions from the upstream oil and gas sector.

The source of emissions from the oil and gas industry are:

- 48% from direct venting or venting from equipment
- 46% comes from fugitive emissions or leaks
- 6% from flaring or other sources

The Government of Alberta has stated that they will achieve methane reductions using these approaches:

- Applying new emissions design standards to new Alberta facilities. Applying standards at the planning stage will be less expensive.
- Improving measurement and reporting of methane emissions, as well as leak detection and repair requirements.
- Developing a joint initiative on methane reduction and verification for existing facilities, and backstopping this with regulated standards that take effect in 2020, to ensure the 2025 target is met. This initiative will include Alberta industry, environmental groups and Indigenous communities.

## *The Roles*

### Policy Direction

The Government of Alberta sets the policy direction - the methane reduction goal and approaches to achieve the goal.

### Development of Regulations

Based on GoA methane policy direction, the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) develops regulatory requirements, specifically Directive 060: Upstream Petroleum Industry Flaring, Incinerating, and Venting, and Directive 017: Measurement Requirements for Oil and Gas Operations.

### Implementation

New oil and gas methane standards will be implemented jointly by AER, Alberta Energy and the Alberta Climate Change Office

## **Teck Frontier Oil Sands Mine Update**

### **Submitted by Nikki Way, Pembina Institute**

The Frontier Oil Sands Mine is the most northern oil sands mine proposed in northeastern Alberta. It is located within the traditional territory of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and the Mikisew Cree First Nation. It is within 30 km from the Wood Buffalo National Park - a UN designated world heritage site. If built, the project would begin operation as early as 2026 and operate until 2067. The project is proposed by Teck Resources Limited, traditionally a mining company with coal mining projects in British Columbia, United States and globally. They are partial owners in the Fort Hills but are full owners of the proposed Frontier Oil Sands Mine.

The Frontier Oil Sands Mine review panel announced in June 2018 that the review would proceed to hearing through a joint review process by the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA). The project review was initiated in 2012 and went through a series of Information Reviews (IRs) and comment periods before proceeding to this stage.

The hearing commenced on September 25 in Fort McMurray and is still ongoing with weeks of evidence and cross examination from various community members, First Nations, and ENGOs including AEN members Council of Canadians, CPAWS Northern Alberta and Keepers of the Athabasca, in addition to the Pembina Institute as a member of the Oil Sands Environmental Coalition (OSEC) and Ecojustice as counsel for OSEC.

As one of the largest oilsands mines proposed in history, the hearing has focused on a wide variety of issues including impacts to species at risk (including the Whooping Crane, bison and nearby herds of woodland caribou); impacts to nearby communities from air and water emissions; the contribution of this project to increased carbon emissions; the economic viability of this project given potential future demand for oilsands in a decarbonizing world and contrasted with risks of potential unsecured liability created by this project that will remain outstanding for decades.

The final arguments for all parties at the hearing are proposed to be scheduled in December, which after completed will mark the end of the content review of hearing process. The panel will then have three months to make its recommendations for the hearing and then it will go to the Governor in Council at the federal level for the final decision. This means that the final decision may fall just before the provincial election, and it is very likely to be concluded in advance of the federal election if it is called in fall 2019.

The issue has not received much broad attention although it has been mentioned by national environmental groups (such as Stand.Earth and 350.org). It has the potential to become a polarized issue in Alberta given the timing of the election and the positioning by various political parties to support the oil and gas industry.

# Member Updates

Updates from AEN members have been submitted in September 2017 and October 2018 with information on current priorities and issues. The updates have been used to identify emerging trends or environmental concerns.

## October 2018

### **Council of Canadians - Prairies & NWT**

**Submitted by Bronwen Tucker**

Environmental issues, concerns and priorities:

- Just transition to 100% renewable energy in line with the Paris Agreement
- Building a coalition in opposition to the Teck Frontier mine
- Challenging fossil fuel extraction expansion more generally (including Line 3, TMX, and promoting alternatives)
- Blue Communities campaigns for local governments to adopt the right to water, pledge to keep water public, and ban bottled water sales on city property.

### **Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition**

**Submitted by Kristine Kowalchuk**

The Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition (ERVCC) currently has one main short-term priority and a number of longer-term ones:

Short-term:

- Preventing the rezoning of river valley parkland and the locating of an EPCOR solar power plant in the river valley. We enthusiastically support solar energy, but not in the river valley; this is an inappropriate location and many appropriate locations (on rooftops and in brown fields) exist elsewhere.

Long-term:

- Ensuring better trail management in the river valley. This means higher ecological management standards, better public education on respectful use and appreciation of nature, and more enforcement.
- Urging better clarity on what “essential” means in the River Valley Bylaw (bylaw 7188) so that the river valley is more stringently protected, in the spirit of the bylaw. How is a funicular “essential”?
- Shifting the city’s current focus on “access” and infrastructure in the river valley instead toward ecological education, programming, protection, and restoration.
- Creating a reinstated municipal Natural Areas Office to guide river valley parks planning.
- Creating a river valley advisory group for the city.

In another capacity (ie. a group that we formed before forming the ERVCC) we had serious concerns about the lack of provincial involvement regarding river valley development (and especially the Valley Line LRT route—which, as its name implies, runs right through the river valley). We believe the province should have been involved as per the Capital City Park Agreement, established in approx. 1975, which stated that any river valley development would need to be signed off by the provincial environment minister. In 2016, a judge determined that this agreement is still active. We tried many times to set up a meeting with Shannon Phillips’ office and were met with silence over a period of more than a year. The office never accommodated our request for a meeting.

While our coalition is focused on Edmonton, the North Saskatchewan River Valley is an extremely important regional watershed and corridor. Its management should not be left up to the city; it would be such a wise move to have two

levels of government overseeing this area. We would like to see the province meeting its responsibility and exercising its authority as outlined in the Capital City Park Agreement.

## **The Rockies Institute**

**Submitted by Laura S. Lynes**

Our focus at The Rockies Institute is on building resilience to the effects of climate change through adaptation projects.

We would like to see funding for core operations made much easier for this kind of work. Funding streams have not caught up to the societal needs to address climate change. There are a number of specialized post-secondary for arts, for example, but not for climate change resilience. We would like to see core funding so that we can get off this un-sustainable wheel of trying to raise enough funds just to deliver programming.

September 2017

## **Butte Action Committee**

**Submitted by Dale Christian**

Priority concern: Serious, adverse cumulative effects of gravel mining

SWBAP Aggregate Policy and risk-based decision making were developed without full public consultation and scientific rigour are environmentally and socially deficient.

Alluvial aquifers, our water security, should be protected and recognised as integral and critical in surface water decisions. Gravel excavation should not happen in river valleys.

We do not support non-renewable resource extraction being self-regulated. There should be arms length baseline data, third party monitoring, continued reporting, follow up and maximum enforcement.

The Water Act needs to be respected and enforced across the board, not subject to various interpretations across ministries and policies.

Alluvial aquifers are being permanently removed. Natural flood and drought mitigators are being sacrificed. The water act has been disempowered. Gravel excavation should not happen in floodplains.

Grandfathering of gravel pits needs to end. The CAP levy works against people's health and safety. Municipalities must be held accountable for environmental and social impacts of decisions.

## **Central Athabasca Stewardship Society**

**Submitted by Donna Mendelsohn**

Priority concern: Serious, adverse cumulative effects of gravel mining go unabated

In Alberta, gravel mining has a cumulative footprint roughly three times that of coal mining. Regulation and oversight are ineffective. Alberta's water bodies and nearby communities are being / damaged at accelerating and unsustainable rates on a massive scale. There are simple, practical and proven solutions but they are not implemented due to industry and government interests.

Targeted engagement to review gravel mining regulation and SWBAP implementation was very poor. SWBAP serves only to promote mining of water bodies, including but not limited to floodplains.

## **Cochrane Ecological Institute**

**Submitted by Clio Smeeton**

Priority concern: The government's approach to wildlife rescue is particularly primitive and uninformed

The AEP has, without scientific basis, banned a wide swath of indigenous wildlife from rescue.

Canada is overseeing a die-off amongst our wild species; globally wildlife populations have fallen by 58% since 1970 (<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-37775622>).

Alberta's government has the opportunity to act now to rescue the wildlife we have. It is a simple matter to reverse the ban on the rescue of certain of our indigenous wildlife species imposed by the P.C.s in 2010, to the pre-2009 Schedule A Conditions (2003 example attached) on Wildlife Rehabilitation Permits and involves no legislative changes.

AEP's Wildlife Management Policy Branch are totally against the rescue, rehab & release of bighorn sheep, mountain goats, black & grizzly bear, lynx, bobcat, cougar, wolf, coyote, raccoon, and will only permit the rescue rehab & release of pronghorn antelope, fox, skunk, bat species, and amphibian species if it is undertaken using protocols developed by AEP. Aside from whitetail and mule deer fawns, AEP is in a complete muddle as far as the requisite and approved Protocols for other prohibited species are concerned. AEP Approved Protocols are not posted online but they should be.

There have been no meetings with AEP and Alberta Wildlife Rehabilitation Association since 2012.

If AEN can possibly influence the thinking of the Deputy Minister Andre Corbould to make the 2018/19 Schedule A Terms & Conditions the same as those of 2003 it would be beyond good.

AEP (formerly AESRD) has never undertaken any research on post-release survival of rescued, rehabilitated and released injured or orphaned wildlife, including bear species. International research on post release survival and absorption into the wild of rescued, rehabilitated and released wildlife, peer reviewed and published in scientific journals has proven that captive-reared bear cubs, including Black and Grizzly bear cubs when released back into the wild are successfully reabsorbed into the wild population. This fact illustrates that it is not solid science which drives the AEP policy makers, but some perception of political expediency.

Shannon Phillips on April 2, 2017: "Due to the risks posed to human safety as well as the risk of disease transmission, many species, such as bears, raccoons, adult skunks, coyotes, wolves, cougars, mountain goats, bighorn sheep and amphibians, are restricted from possession and rehabilitation." This too is an unsupportable statement. Again AEP does not provide the solid scientific evidence that, in Alberta or even elsewhere, disease has been transmitted to humans from bears, raccoons, adult skunks, coyotes, wolves, cougars, mountain goats, bighorn sheep and amphibians.

## **Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition**

**Submitted by Kristine Kowalchuk**

Priority concern: Growing concerns about approval of projects / conservation of Edmonton's North Saskatchewan River Valley

The Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition formed this year due to growing concerns regarding conservation of Edmonton's North Saskatchewan River Valley, and that we are looking to the province to respect the Capital City Recreation Park Agreement of 1975—which last year the Court of Queen's Bench determined is still active—and ensure provincial approval of all river valley projects in order to provide an extra layer of environmental protection. We would like to thank and encourage the Environment Minister in her consideration of Woodbend/Big Island Provincial Park. We ask that she ensure that the planning of this park prioritize conservation and public education, that park access be of a low-impact and low-maintenance design, and that human use be focused on respect and restoration.

## **Keepers of the Athabasca**

**Submitted by Jule Asterisk**

Priority concern: Bitumen liability, environmental and health impacts

Full financial liability for bitumen mines tailings reclamation should be much collected much sooner to prevent public paying if there is a walk out or accident

No new Approvals for new bitumen mines until an independent health study is completed: now called for by the Cancer Board and also the AER

Concern about an Imperial Oil expansion near Marie Lake, where the caprock was broken by CNRL in 2009 and bitumen leaks continue to the surface almost 10 years later

Swan Hills (hazardous waste) Treatment Centre: has been operational for 30 years now, with many questions about the reach of contaminants from this plant. In our challenge to their Approval, we have asked for 3 sediment core samples to be taking in lakes at about a 70 km distance from the plant. They (SUEZ Environmental, international waste management company who operates the plant) insist on only doing one.

Faust Osmose plant: toxic site since 1970 needs an independent literature review, as locals are opposed to municipal plan to turn this area into a 'public park' with warning signs.

## **Stewards of Alberta's Protected Area Association**

**Submitted by Patsy Cotterill (Board Secretary) on behalf of Hubert Taube (Board President)**

Priority concern: Lack of new Parks Act jeopardizes areas with less protected status

The absence of regulations and zoning that would comprise the long-promised new Parks Act, Parks' staff and Parks' Volunteer Stewards cannot adequately protect the ecological integrity of areas with lesser protected status such as Natural Areas, Ecological Reserve and some Wildland Provincial Parks.

Where there are regulations and zoning, monitoring is insufficient to prevent abuse, particularly by all-terrain vehicles? What is being done to develop regulations and / or other alternatives that would more effectively protect these areas?