

**RCEN Water/Oceans/Fisheries Caucus Meeting**  
**September 24, 2005**  
**8:00am to 10:00am**  
**Centre St. Pierre, Montreal**

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**Chair:** Martha Kostuch

**Minutes:** Manon Crôteau

**1. Introductions**

Round table: Martha Kostuch (Friends of the Old Man River), Margaret Coutts (co-chair AEN), Glen Koroluk (Manitoba Eco-Network), Aftab Erfan (Youth Round Table on the Environment), Allister Marshall (First Nations NS & Administrator and Fisheries Officer), Anne Lindsay (Manitoba Environmental Network), Joseph Prymak (Consumers for Responsible Energy), Bruno Marchoccio (Sierra Club of Canada), Doug Badger (RCEN Board of Directors), Gino Lévesque (Comite de valorisation de Beauport), Maggie Paquet (Citizens' Stewardship Coalition)

**2. Review and Revise Agenda**

The agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

**3. Review Water Caucus**

Objectives of the caucus were reviewed.

- Discussion on listservs across the country
- Separate funding is not currently available to the Water Caucus
- Focus is both national and regional (ex.: National Water Policy/Strategy)

**Action Item:**

- Glen Koroluk to obtain information on Listserv and will send to Barbara Schaefer and other Water Caucus members.

**4. Action Plan**

The Action Plan was reviewed.

2 top-priority issues: Ground Water and Watershed Management

Other issues discussed:

- 1. Federal water policy (Fed government held hearings and came up with a federal water policy, however jurisdiction was split between provinces and federal)
- 2. National water policy (Federal and provincial water policies/strategies, all jurisdictions involved)
- Web address to distribute a Primer on Source Water Protection:  
[www.pollutionprobe.org/publications/swpprimerdwlnldpage.htm](http://www.pollutionprobe.org/publications/swpprimerdwlnldpage.htm)

**Solutions to current problems** on the Action Plan document were discussed.

Other solutions or action the RCEN Water Caucus can undertake:

- It was noted that resources are extremely limited for the Caucus
- Aftab provided an update on Watershed Management in NS: Coastal Coalition of NS, pushing for a provincial/coastal management plan. DFO and provincial government are in the process of coming up with an Oceans Strategy, need to

- bring this together with other provinces. If this goes through in NS, this might be a good model for other provinces, might be something to explore. Suggestion from Glen to begin the initiative and invite DFO to participate.
- Watershed Mgt in AB: Following public consideration a strategy was devised by the Alberta Water Council, a multi-stakeholder Council (only 1 ENGO in group), watershed groups working on 3 objectives (high quality drinking water, healthy ecosystems and adequate supply of water for needs), engaging on research, still in beginning stages. Wetlands policy is currently being looked at. May be completed by the end of 2006. Having difficulty with implementation 'Water for Life Strategy' (Water Use Efficiency and Productivity strategy).

**Action Items:**

- Aftab to explore this [Manon, what was Aftab going to explore further?] further and see if there is currently any national interest and will send a note to the Water Caucus.

**5. Report from Prairie Water Symposium**

Glen Koroluk provided an update and synopsis on the Prairie Water Symposium.

Main points:

- Discussion took place with ENGOs around National Water - Policy as tool for the next election.
- Focus on partnerships and shared responsibility were discussed at the symposium
- Lake Winnipeg trying to establish a plan for restoration
- Conference Board of Canada developing a water strategy, with Ag Canada.
- NRCan developing a water atlas for Canada.
- Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources presentation regarding aboriginal treaties in terms of water, suggesting that water rights must be acknowledged.
- CCME trying to establish a Water Commons Network in the future.
- Adele Burley presented Monk Centre's coordination of cross-country consultation process to renew Canada's federal water policy.
- Presentation by Lloyd Axworthy: Conflict Resolution lacking in bi-lateral agreements with U.S. suggested a prairie water policy and suggested public participation.
- Presentation from individual in Minnesota (most elaborate ground water plan)

**Anything RCEN Water Caucus can do to help develop this?**

- Monk Centre may seek regional partners, which could involve Regional Affiliates and RCEN. Glen Koroluk to keep updating us on this issue.
- Aboriginal Rights Forum, representation from across Canada, connections with this group may assist the RCEN Caucus. Allister to keep the RCEN informed on this through his connections with the Water Protection Committee.
- Phone call to the Privy Council to introduce them to RCEN? Contact: Ian Campbell.

**Action Item:**

- Glen Koroluk to send the report on the Prairie Water Symposium to Barbara Schaefer

- Allister to keep the RCEN informed on Aboriginal Rights Forum through his connections with the Water Protection Committee

## **6. Other Water/Oceans/Fisheries Issues**

Top Issues were explored by Round Tables

**Bruno Marchoccio:** Proposed changes to new Fisheries Act

**Joseph Prymak:** Clean, accessible drinking water

**Allister:** Develop a national water accord

**Gino:** Watershed

**Aftab:** Watershed planning

**Martha:** Fisheries Act Changes and letters of advice DFO

**Margaret Coutts:** Source Water Protection

**Glen Koroluk:** Seismic noise in marine environment

**Anne Lindsay:** Inter-basin transfers

### **Discussion on Changes to the Fisheries Act:**

- Fed government considering changes to the Act
- Concerns that habitat protection will be overlooked
- Habitat protection
- Martha had recent discussion with ADM who confirmed that changes are underfoot, suggested DFO discuss with the RCEN for consultation processes
- Letters of advice are currently given by DFO without going through legislation
- Latest DFO report to parliament available on their website
- Fisheries enforcement officers cut down from 80 to 6 for inland provinces
- Water Caucus needs to attract attention to ensure consultation with the RCEN
- Action Alert has been sent out through the RCEN Water Caucus
- DFO considers stakeholders to be commercial fisherman
- Margaret Coutts will try to contact her senate representative as well
- Wastewater effluent under CEPA will have an impact on the Fisheries Act
- Suggestion of having a Fisheries organization on the Water Caucus Steering Committee
- Suggestion to use auditor general's petition process to request information (government must respond within 120 days)
- EPA Caucus is looking for ideas for strategic legal issues, Water Caucus could look into this.

### **Discussion on Drinking Water**

- Private control vs public, Basic human right
- Need more planning and testing, Suggestion to focus on education component
- Chlorination: synergistic effect of chemicals in personal and household products used
- Safe Drinking Act in MB, suggestion to verify if this may be used on a national level
- Fluoridation: Fe [or Fay, I'm not sure.] Ash (sp?) in Calgary working on this, may be willing to work with the Caucus regarding this,

- Suggestion to have volunteer students to gather information regarding the issues.
- Suggestion to contact Paul Connett regarding the issue of fluoridation for a meeting with the RCEN Water
- National Water Quality Index (CCME): drinking water, aquatic life, etc. are included on a spreadsheet. Suggestion to have someone review this
- Atlantic education programs for children in NS could be a model elsewhere
- CCME has a distribution list which anyone can be added to.
- MB government testing of flood waters, suggestion to have this instilled elsewhere, have the process easier for general public
- Various kits for private wells must be able to be tested for free

### **Discussion on National Water Accord**

- Suggestion to develop a new national water accord, could include all stakeholders across Canada, could request signing by ministers (Phil Fontaine)
- Accord would include water quality standards
- Need to have organizations or members groups to implement this and obtain additional federal funding
- Water Commons Network has a principle statement which acts as an accord, hopefully this will be implemented in the future

### **Watershed:**

- Quebec situation: moving quickly in the last 5 years, as the Government has changed. Funds for national watershed policy have been reduced but workers still working very hard.
- Problems with progression in Quebec, want to match the urban planning with watershed management, not yet done because it is different ministries, which don't communicate regularly
- In two years, there may be a new change as a result of a provincial election
- Obstacles: farmers, export of groundwater, etc.
- Under NAFTA, when water is sold, it becomes a trade issue: Concern for QC, but pressure comes from QC businessmen
- Au Courant: Lobby group, have established 33 priority rivers.

### **Source Water Protection:**

- AB: Red Deer River not being looked at presently regarding source protection.

### **Seismic Noise in Marine Environment:**

- DFO introduced mitigation of seismic noise in marine environmental statement of Canadian practice (review of seismic noise impacts, however missing a great deal of information and environmental impacts, etc.)
- Confliction with previous statements from DFO
- Several groups submitted their protest of the seismic noise, no response from DFO yet
- Dumping of chemical warfare into waters may disturb testing of seismic waters.

### **Action Item:**

- Bruno Marchocchio to send the report on Seismic noise to Barbara for her to send to the Water Caucus

**Other Action Items:**

- Joseph to seek contact with Fisheries organizations to invite them to join the Water Caucus
- It was noted that any additional information or suggestions regarding the above issues should be sent to the RCEN Water Caucus
- Anne Lindsay to send note to Barbara regarding volunteer students to help organizations working with water issues.

**7. Funding for Caucus**

Anyone with any ideas on funding for the Caucus to email Martha or Barbara.

**8. Sector Sustainability Tables**

Not discussed.

**9. Nominations for Steering Committee and Chair or Co-Chairs**

Anyone interested in being part of the Steering Committee can add their name to the flip-board in the meeting room before leaving (Does anyone have this list?)

**Action item:**

- **Barbara to send out a request for nominations to caucus members (to add to the list from the meeting) and will then arrange for voting electronically (if necessary). Caucus Elections will take place early November 2005.**

**10. Other Issues**

None discussed.

**The meeting was adjourned on Saturday, September 24, 2005 at 10:15am EDT. Cross-caucus meeting with Water Caucus and Agriculture Caucus to take place at 10:30am EDT.**