

**M.D. of Bighorn**  
**Agricultural Services and Environmental Advisory Board**  
**March 11, 2011**  
**MD Administration Building, Council Chambers**

**In Attendance:** Jackie Gemmill – Chairman  
Bryne Weerstra  
Marla Hingley  
Penny MacMillan  
Dene Cooper

**Absent:** Erik Butters

**Alberta Agriculture  
And Rural Development:** Doug Macaulay, AARD

**Staff:** Dwight Tannas, Environmental Fieldman  
Will Davies, Assistant Environmental Fieldman  
Emily Smith

***Call to Order***

Meeting called to order at 9:01 am

***1. Agenda***

**a) Additions**

Add Summer Workshops under business arising.

**b) Approval**

**MOTION MACMILLAN THAT: the agenda is approved with the addition of Summer Workshop as item 5e).**

**Carried Unanimously**

***2. Adoption of Minutes***

**a) MOTION HINGLEY THAT:**

The minutes of the ASE&AB meeting January 14, 2010 are approved as presented.

**Carried Unanimously**

***3. Delegation:***

- a) Harvey Buckley of Action for Agriculture (A4A) and Mark Bennett of the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) joined the meeting at 10:00am. A4A is partnering with the BRBC to undertake the development of a tool that will measure and value the natural capital of the land in the Upper Bow River Basin. The purpose of developing this tool is to assist municipalities in understanding the value of their natural capital and consequently to balance development and preservation. Using the ALCES model approach, the tool will measure four key indicators in making its determination. This tool will deliver a qualitative rather than quantitative result. It is hoped that this tool could eventually be used provincially.  
A similar project has been undertaken in the Lake Simcoe region and is available online.

BRBC has committed to partner with A4A to see this project through to completion and will find the funds to ensure that it happens. Their commitment at this point is to undertake tasks 1-4 as outlined in the proposal circulated at the meeting. The final two tasks will require the commitment of a municipal partner. BRBC and A4A are looking at a number of funding sources to assist.

Their purpose of attending the meeting today is three-fold:

1. Create awareness of the project and the potential for the tool.
2. Request that consideration be given to support from Bighorn; this could be either in the form of funding or letter of endorsement.
3. Consider the possibility of Bighorn becoming a test municipality for the tool in tasks five and six.

The timeline of this project is fairly flexible, hope to have the funding commitments within the next 4-6 months. Hope to be complete by the end of the year.

Questions:

How did Lake Simcoe derive their figures? Did they use an economist? What input parameters did they use? – Not sure, will need to consult their report.

D. Macaulay mentioned a community he works with that has been trying to undertake a process to assess their natural capital and has developed a template. Doug will send the information to Dwight.

It was noted that the proposal indicates that the model will utilize the GIS dataset and landscape classification scheme provided by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. Bighorn would be very interested in having access to this dataset. M. Bennett agreed to make some enquiries on our behalf.

D. Cooper indicated that he is supportive of the project, however, had great concerns with the concept that the Bighorn should have to fund a model that would propose to protect the resource (water) that benefits hundreds of thousands east of us, but that we can't even get a license to use ourselves. It is time to create an awareness of the value of what the urban people have been getting for free.

J. Gemmill thanked the delegation for their presentation. Both H. Buckley and M. Bennett left the meeting at 10:35am.

*The board took a brief break at 10:35am and reconvened at 10:45am.*

b) Ghost Management Access Plan (GMAP)

Bighorn CAO Martin Buckley joined the meeting to provide updates on the GMAP and the management process. Clarification requested as to whether it is considered a multi-use area: M. Buckley reported yes, it is a multi-use area, but that the perception might be different. He noted that enforcement and reclamation continue to be challenges. There still needs to be more public information about which trails are open and their designated use. There are plans for increased signage and most trails have now been gps'ed. It was suggested that having a public presence, someone greeting trail users and providing direction would be extremely helpful in creating a relationship with users and clarifying what trails are open for what type of use. So far, the only

trail proposals that have come forward to the management committee are for motorized trails, but other user groups should be encouraged to submit proposals for designated trail. Friends of the Eastern Slopes has recently expressed an interest in becoming more involved in this part of the eastern slopes. Their focus has been on the YaHa Tinda area, but they want to be more involved in the whole Forest Reserve.

J. Gemmil thanked M. Buckley for the update on the Ghost Access Management Plan.

**MOTION MACMILLAN THAT:**

That the Agriculture Services and Environmental Advisory Board (ASEAB) send a letter to H. Buckley and M. Bennett thanking them for their presentation to the board and acknowledging the importance of the work that they are undertaking. Further, that the information presented to the ASEAB be forwarded through Bighorn's CAO to Council for consideration.

Carried Unanimously

**4. *Agricultural Fieldman's Report***

Report circulated in agenda package. The following update was provided.

Bow Corridor Invasive Plant Initiative met in the Bighorn office on Thursday March 10, 2011. It was an extremely well attended meeting and the following are highlights from the partners:

- Parks Canada
  - Have three new staff in the vegetation management capacity.
  - They have split their area into two sections.
  - Have hired a range ecologist.
  - Upping their weed initiatives in 2011.
  - Focus will be on natural habitats, so highways will continue to be a lower priority.
- Canadian Pacific Railway
  - Have contracted a sprayer.
  - Plan to target Banff National Park – which is new.
- Town of Banff
  - Has created a weed control program.
  - Challenge is determining whether they should follow provincial or federal Acts.
- Town of Canmore
  - Now has three weed inspectors
  - Decided to rescind their bylaw and follow the Weed Act.
- Cochrane
  - Has again hired a contract person.
- Provincial Parks
  - Implementing a new weed system and adding funds for work needed.
- Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
  - Their program is split into two parts; forest reserve and lease land.
  - SRD does not have human resources to undertake the full extent of work needed. They do provide resources to municipalities to support efforts.
- Alberta Transportation
  - Committed to adding funds to Bighorn and Rocky View for highway spraying.
  - Knapweed is an emerging issue
- Lafarge and Graymont

- Unable to attend the meeting, but have been working closely with Bighorn's Environmental Fieldman.

The meeting also provided an excellent opportunity for networking, promoting cooperation and continued work on the mapping program.

Canmore, Cochrane, Airdrie, Okotoks, City of Calgary, Wheatland County, Rocky View County, MD of Foothills, Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Environment and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (Health Canada) and Bighorn have formed an inter-governmental committee to work on weed issues in the Area.

T. Dietzler from Rocky View reported on the updating of the Weed Act and Regulations.

Both garden centres in Canmore are now ordering native seeds from an approved list.

T. Dietzler is compiling the notes from this meeting and adding new contacts.

## **5. *Business Arising From Minutes***

### **a) *Living in a Natural Environment (LNE)***

A complete event summary was circulated to the board. It was generally agreed that this LNE was one of our best ever. The attendance was excellent, the speakers amazing and the weather even cooperated.

The following are a few highlights from the circulated report:

- There seems to be mix of reviews on the theatre or the ABC rooms for the presentations.
- There were still a few glitches with the volume level for the speaker. Will need to make sure it is properly adjusted and the microphone adhered properly. Need to check volume with audience at beginning or stop the presentation if necessary.
- Still concerns expressed about starting early; strongly recommend pushing start time back to 5pm.
- Excellent strategy to move the bar to the foyer and keep doors to dining room shut until everything is ready; kept people circulating around displays.
- Good flow established by establishing one entrance at the east directly into the foyer.

Board comments:

Keep the ABC rooms over the theatre. Seats are definitely better, but need to have more seats and better spacing, utilize the room.

Need a light for the podium and to get all requirements from the speakers ahead of time.

Have a hand-held microphone available as a back-up.

Check to see if any upgrades have been made to the A/V system in the theatre.

Next Actions:

2012 Date – There are challenges with a number of the Friday dates around the beginning of February 2012. Board agreed to proceed with Friday February 24, 2012 and request the ABC rooms rather than the theatre.

The summary report included a number of suggestions for future speakers and recommendations from 2010 were included as well. The board will review the list and come back with some solid ideas for the next ASEAB meeting. Ideas for actual speakers to go with topics would be much appreciated.

### **b) Municipal Update**

Brief update provided by D. Cooper.

West Jumpingpound Roads – partially complete and waiting for appropriate weather. These roads will provide legal access to properties in the north and south. Final local improvement levy still to be determined.

Living in the Natural Environment – Congratulations to Emily and Dwight for a great event.

Four Rural Municipalities – The Reeve and CAO from the County's of Foothills, Rocky View, Mountain View and the MD of Bighorn are getting together to review the South Saskatchewan Plan. It is understood that the plan can be expected much sooner than originally anticipated. This plan will heavily influence user groups on the eastern slopes.

Bow River Basin Council/Ghost Watershed Alliance made a presentation on their research into the cumulative effects on the watershed.

MLA J. Tarchuk and Tourism/Parks and Recreation Minister Cindy Ady will meet with Bighorn in the near future. A large part of Bighorn is Park land and would like to build its relationship with this ministry.

Althabasca Plan – Is the first land-use plan to be released and there are huge issues as they realize that current environmental monitoring needs to be updated.

Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Review – coming on the heels of the Land Use Bylaw Review, Bighorn is now undertaking an MDP review process that is expected to take upwards of two years complete. The steering committee has been named and the terms of reference will be developed next.

### **c) Ranching Opportunities and Ladies Livestock Lesson:**

Ranching Opportunities – attendance was way back up this year, with about 185 attending and 50% of those students. There are 12 organizations on the steering committee and the group spent a great deal of time revamping the program.

Ladies Livestock Lessons – it is already on Bighorn's website and registration is open. There is a great mix of seminars planned and even a blog.

### **d) ASB Conference**

J. Gemmill, P. MacMillan, B. Weerstra and D. Tannas attended. J. Gemmill submitted a fairly extensive report on her experience and it was included in the board meeting package. An interesting note was the Minister's forum where the Prime Minister and a number of Ministers were in attendance to answer questions, there was a lot of feedback on Bill 10 – Amendments to the Land Stewardship Act.

### **e) Summer Workshops**

W. Davies is looking for input on the type of workshops that the ASEAB would like to see happening in the community. Rocky View and Mountain View County are both interested in partnering on workshops.

Dwight is working on getting someone to speak in the schools about weeds.

Tree Pests and Beneficials – D. Macaulay could easily do a presentation. He can also do presentations on bio-energy, waste wood, carbon offset, value-added forestry products – advantages of creating vs. selling the raw product.

W. Davies is again planning to conduct wildflower and weed workshops in the hamlets and will be looking for other ideas and is anxious to get things organized asap.

One note from the board was that it was important to balance the education and outreach with weed priorities.

W. Davies will prepare an outline of workshops and send it to the board for review.

## **6. New Business**

### **a) Saskatchewan River Basin Council**

#### **MOTION BRYNE THAT:**

Bighorn renew its membership in the Saskatchewan River Basin Council.

Carried Unanimously

### **b) ASB Grant Application and Proposed 2011 Budget**

The first part of the 2011 ASB Grant has been confirmed. This is the former AESA funding that has now been rolled into the same process as the ASB grant. This is to be used for environmental outreach activities. Bighorn had applied to undertake more workshops and communication initiatives, and increase the seasonal assistant fieldman to a full-time position. Unfortunately, we only received \$20,000 of the \$32,000 we'd requested, so adjustments will be made: this amount is what we will receive annually for the next three years. We still have not heard about the final amount for the primary ASB grant and will not likely hear for at least another month. When determined, it will also be an amount annually for three years.

Questions – Did we upgrade our bylaw relative to caraway? Yes

- What pests are we controlling? Pack rats, skunk, etc. We provide traps and advice on a variety of pests.
- Does public have access to pesticides? No

### **c) 2010 Year End Report**

No questions on report circulated as part of package.

### **d) 2010 Strategic Plan**

Strategic plan has been updated to show accomplishments. There have been no requests for Environmental Farm Plans. The Province has essentially taken over the process and is promoting it like it was in the past. Our ratepayers are frustrated by the complexity of the process and seem unwilling to participate.

### **e) 2011-2013 Strategic Plan**

This plan was completed as part of the new ASB grant application process. No dramatic changes from previous strategic plans, only some tweaking to meet the new environmental grant requirements.

### **f) Bill C-544**

On the agenda to note that this resolution was passed at the recent ASB conference, and that the Municipal District of Willow Creek is bringing the same motion forward to the spring Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMD&C) spring conference. Bill C-544 proposes to prohibit the import or export of horse meat for human consumption.

### **g) Reintroduction of Bison to Banff National Park**

Bryne attended a recent public presentation on the reintroducing Bison to Banff National Park (BNP). BNP would like to reintroduce bison to the park for historic reasons and argue that they were an integral part of the Park's historical culture. There are a number of issues to resolve before this can happen: migration, disease, safety, etc. The idea has so far, has not received an overly positive response from the Province.

**h) Land-Use Acts**

A backgrounder on Amendments to the Alberta Land Stewardship Amendment Act was circulated. This will be an important issue over the next year and will definitely be on a future agenda.

**i) Wolves**

This item was put on the agenda as an emerging issue in our municipality. We currently do not have a program to deal with wolves, but there are municipalities that do. One problem is the lack of commercial trappers. It was suggested that having some statistics of the size of the issue, the impact it is having on producers would be helpful. D. Macaulay noted that wolves are also an issue that is discussed at some of the northern meetings he attends; however, there is no formal plan for dealing with them. This issue will also be on a future agenda.

**7. Information**

Items circulated

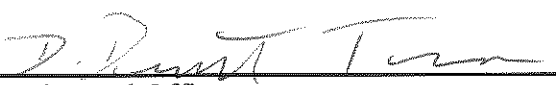
**8. Next Meeting**

Friday May 6, 2011, 9am at the MD of Bighorn Administrative Office in Exshaw.

**9. Adjournment**

**MOTION MACMILLAN TO ADJOURN the meeting at 2:00pm.**

  
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Chairman

  
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Designated Office