

Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment

Minutes of meeting number 21 held on November 5th, 2003 in Abbotsford

Attendees

Margaret Eckenfelder
Bud Graham
Rich Hahn
Harry Vogt
John Patterson
Ed Woo
Mark Nairn
George Hamilton
Kim Sutherland
Dave Van Belle
Jennifer Dyson
Ted van der Gulik
Ron Bertrand
Ken Nickel
Terry Dever
Wray McDonnell
Philip Bergen
Len Bouwman
Steve Thomson
Janet Demarke
Rae Fawcett
Sylvia von Schuckmann
George Derksen
Brian Baehr
Allan Patton
Heather Douglas
David Borth
Henry Wiens
Jamie Alley
Alan Char
Marcel Grashof
Niels Holbek
Paddy Doherty
Randy Cairns

Affiliation

Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Department of Fisheries and Oceans
BCCA – BC Agriculture Council
BC Agriculture Council
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
BC Landscape and Nursery Association
B.C. Horticulture Industry
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BC Agriculture Council
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
BC Milk Producers Association
BC Agriculture Council
UBCM – City of Chilliwack
Horse Council of B.C.
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
Environment Canada
B.C. Agriculture Council - AEPI
BC Fruit Growers Association
BC Milk Producers Association
BC Cattleman's Association
BC Potato, Strawberry and Vegetable Association
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
BC Pork Producers – BC Agriculture Council
B.C. Agriculture Council
Community Agriculture, BCAC
Land and Water BC Inc.

The meeting was chaired by George Hamilton

Minutes

Minutes of meeting No. 20 held on June 11, 2003 in Victoria – adopted as circulated.

Items from Minutes

Bud Graham indicated UBC is still looking for funds to match the \$1.25 million commitment from MAFF for the UBC Chair for Agriculture and the Environment.

Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment – Terms of Reference – Draft Update

J. Alley reviewed the draft TOR circulated in advance of the meeting and reported on the discussion and recommendations from the subcommittee. The Committee responded to the issues raised by the subcommittee and provided direction on edits for inclusion in the next draft.

ACTION: – Circulate revised draft with minutes and finalize editing with the objective of having a final version ready for signing at the next meeting. This will serve as an opportunity for the partners to recommit. Members are to be in a position to have their organization sign at the next meeting. A final draft with any additional changes will be circulated in early January.

Other action items:

- PC minutes will be circulated in draft form. After 2 weeks an edited version of the draft minutes will be posted on the MAFF and BCAC web sites.
- UBCM participation on the PC will be pursued.
- LWBC will be added as a participant (signatory?) to the PC.

Agri-Food Policy Framework

P. Bergen reported that the contribution agreement is essentially done but the attached work plan still needs work. S. Thomson reported that a secondary agreement between Investment Agriculture Foundation and the BC Agriculture Council is still needed. He also provided an update on current and expected funds available to support environmental initiatives on farms.

National Land and Water Information Service (material in package)

R. Bertrand requested the PC members identify contacts/members for the working group. Liz Kenney (Federal lead), Richard Scott (MAFF, provincial lead), and Lynn Kriwoken (WLAP) were identified.

National Water Supply Expansion Program

P. Bergen described this non-APF program. It is a 3 year funding program with 3 tiers, an on-farm component, a multi-user component, and a component to support strategic studies. MOF, WLAP and MSRM are providing provincial in-kind matching contributions (for tier 2 only) to trigger the full federal funding available (\$5 million plus). A working group is being formed.

Environmental Farm Planning (material in package)

N Holbek reported on the planner training pilots just completed in Abbotsford and Kelowna.

Reports are very positive both re: content and presentation.

WLAP and DFO expressed concern that they had not seen the training material and therefore didn't know if their input had been used.

ACTION: WLAP and DFO to be given access to course material (but tight timelines might limit how many additional changes are included before the next sessions).

ACTION: One day EFP Awareness sessions will be needed by spring (target audience – agency staff, industry, etc.)

ACTION: Senior level 2 – 4 hour EFP Awareness presentations needed soon.

Nutrient Management

R. Bertrand reported that the pilots were completed and that work is on-track

Agriculture Environment Initiative Update (material in package)

B. Baehr led a discussion on the need to communicate success stories from projects funded.

G. Derksen pointed out the opportunity to report on AEI projects in workshops in the future.

ACTION: BCAC will include reporting successes as part of their larger communication strategy.

WLAP - Agriculture Code Compliance Strategy (material in package)

H. Vogt / Alan Chor / Rick Hahn described the ongoing audits in the vicinity of two aquifers in the Langley and Abbotsford area and inspections in other areas. Several information bulletins regarding these audits had been prepared by WLAP in consultation with MAFF, BCAC and the B.C. Milk Producers Association. A meeting scheduled for Nov. 6th will be postponed to allow more producers to take part.

Point of affirmation: WLAP agreed not to order producers in non-compliance to do environmental farm plans. WLAF further agreed to remind field staff (in WLAP's Environmental Protection Division) not to use the words "Environmental Farm Plan" in any Orders or other statutory directives so as to maintain the integrity of the understanding that EFP's are "voluntary and confidential".

Water Allocation

B. Graham / Randy Cairns described recent changes to the Water Act that may impact on this issue. It appears there may now be provisions (in the regulations) for recognition of stock watering.

ACTION: Randy Cairns to meet with BC Cattleman to discuss in more detail the drafting of regulations. Graham Strachan from MAFF to be invited to meeting.

Wildlife Compensation (material in package)

R. Bertrand described the provisions in the APF agreement for wildlife damage compensation. He presented the recommendation of the BC Agriculture Wildlife Advisory Committee and asked for PC support to pursue it further.

ACTION: There was general agreement to further “fleshing out” of the proposal.

Chilliwack Groundwater Protection Bylaw

R. Bertrand gave a status report on the bylaw and asked for an indication of interest from those who would like to review and comment on it.

ACTION: L. Kriwoken, S. Thomson, and K. Nickel were volunteered to review and comment. WLAP to solicit the involvement of a representative from the Ministry of Health.

Drinking Water

M. Eckenfelder indicated “source to tap” assessments are coming for water suppliers (2 or more connections to a single intake).

PC Question - as some farmers will be classified as water suppliers is there an opportunity to link to the EFP process to do one assessment only? The EFP process could serve as a “pre-assessment” tool to identify farms that need a full water supply assessment.

ACTION: A full presentation by WLAP and Min of Health on impacts of the new Drinking Water Protection Act.

ACTION: S Thomson to contact M. Eckfelder to jointly arrange information meetings on groundwater protection regulations.

Habitat and Farmland Subcommittee Report

E. Woo reported on progress on a draft Terms of Reference / Nov. 3 committee meeting.

Would like to see additional case studies developed from the stewardship projects.

He agreed that there needs to be a 1 – 2 day session on Environmental Farm Planning but also suggested other agencies could present similar sessions on their programs.

Ted vdG noted that 15 sensitive streams have been identified in BC but there have not been any recovery plans developed except for Black Creek. The Black Creek plan is not being implemented due to lack of funding.

ACTION: The committee needs to consider recovery plans and bring recommendations to PC.

Frustration over Fraser River siltation issue is rising rapidly. DFO is looking into a long term strategy with the Fraser Basin Council

ACTION: Have the Fraser Basin Council make a presentation at the next PC meeting.

Funding Partners

E. Woo reported that there are efforts being made to coordinate the activities of watershed planning funds on the ground. MSRM, WLAP and DFO are working together on watershed planning initiatives, beginning with 3 regional pilot planning processes: Salmon River, Henderson Lake, and Chilliwack River. Ed suggested we need to get more active in seeking funding partners involved in Environmental Farm Planning.

ACTION (suggested): E. Woo and B. Baehr reconvene the “fundings group”

DFO Salmon Recovery Teams

E. Woo indicated that species at risk require a recovery plan. DFO will eventually need multi-stakeholder advisory groups to assist in developing these plans.

BCAC expressed concern about their ability/capacity to support all the groups being launched.

Drainage, Riparian Management and Building Setbacks

T. van der Gulik provided update on status of these issues. They are all linked to the Environmental Farm Planning program.

ACTION: MAFF to provide a list of documents that are being prepared for the EFP Program and the deadlines for editing comments to WLAP and DFO.

Drought Strategy (Action plan circulated)

Linked to Drinking Water Action Plan. There is a Deputy Ministers' committee working on this

ACTION: Follow through on the letter by the BCAC to Gord Macatee and Jon O'Riordan that was identified in the previous meeting minutes.

Climate Change Strategy

There is a Deputy Ministers' committee working on an actions plan. This will go to public discussion soon. This is a cross-government issue with ramifications across the economy.

Replanting Burned Areas (material circulated)

Sulvia von Schuckmann presented the WLAP policy position on the use of native and non-native grass species to revegetate Crown land impacted by wildfires. . There is a group looking at species choice (Cindy Haddow WLAP; Brian Nyberg MOF). BCCA would like input as well as they see an opportunity for increased forage production.

Extensive Agriculture Program

T. Dever reported on changes approved by Cabinet Committee that will allow greater flexibility in developing Crown land for agriculture. Changes lower development requirements for purchasing land and provide a direct sale of land and timber option to overcome stumpage constraints.

Habitat Stewards

B.Baehr reported success in getting 4 habitat stewardship coordinators in place through bridge financing through AEI, MAFF and DFO. Will be looking to APF funding in the future for these Stewards.

Thank you to Ron Bertrand

The Chair expressed his thanks to Ron for his service to the Partnership Committee since its inception and wished him well in his retirement from MAFF.

Next Meeting

March 9, 2004 in Victoria. Details to follow.