



International Lake of the Woods and Rainy River Watershed Task Force

James Chandler (U.S. Co-Chair)
Melanie Neilson (Canadian Co-Chair)
Lee Grim (U.S. Member)
Gail Faveri (Canadian Member)
Lisa Bourget (U.S. Secretary)
Kelli Saunders (Canadian Secretary)

For: CAG and Public Meetings June, 2011

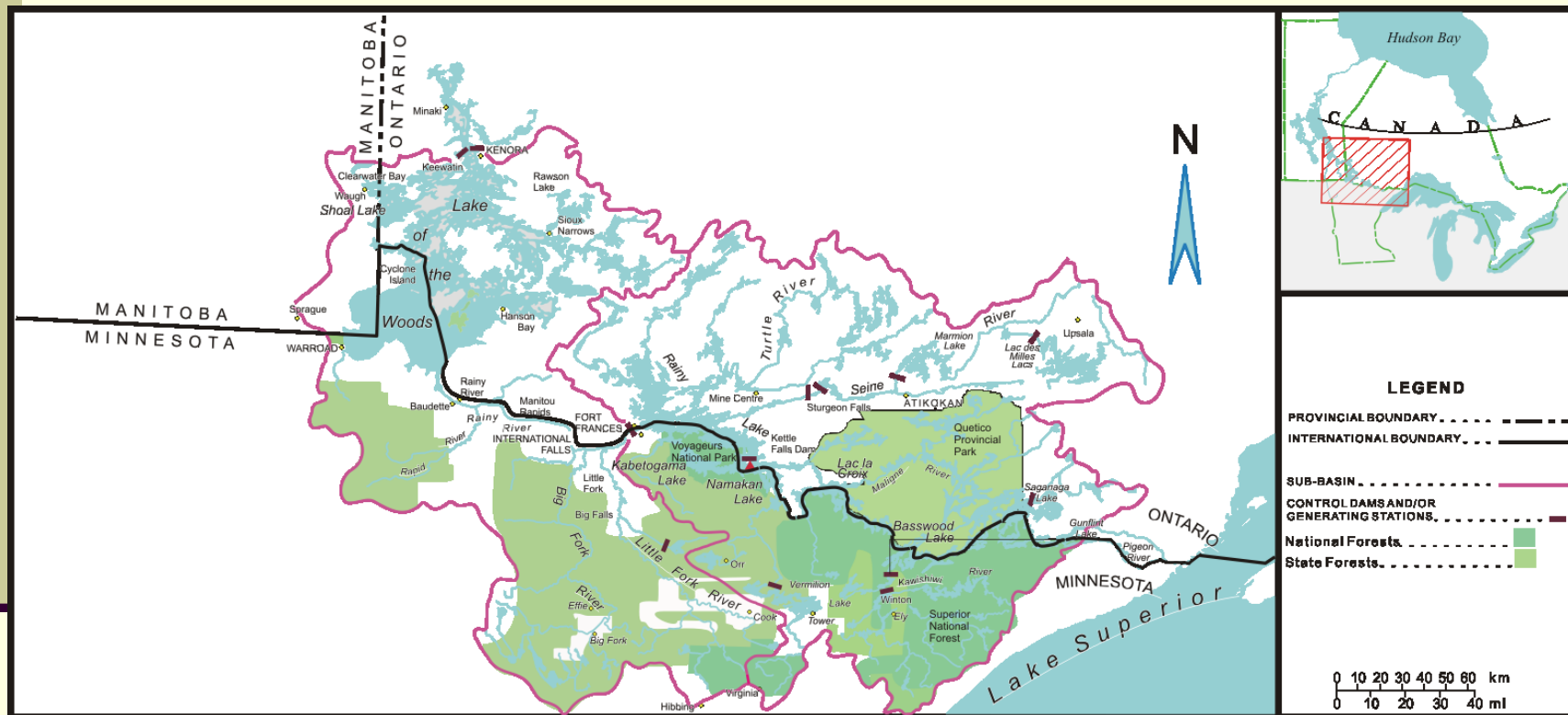
Overview

- **Task Force - provide brief overview:**
 - Task Force directive and approach
 - Priority issues in the watershed
 - Task Force observations
 - Recommendations for improved binational governance
- **Your feedback**
 - Do these recommendations seem reasonable for this watershed?
 - Do you see issues falling through the cracks?

Reference of June 17, 2010

- recommend binational governance structures or mechanisms for the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River watershed
 - identify priority issues or activities to be addressed
 - identify the IJC's potential role in binational management in the basin
 - align with IJC's International Watersheds Initiative
 - respect existing treaties, orders and jurisdictional authorities already in place
- ***Task Force undertook extensive engagement in order to develop recommendations***

The Watershed



Priority Issues in the Watershed

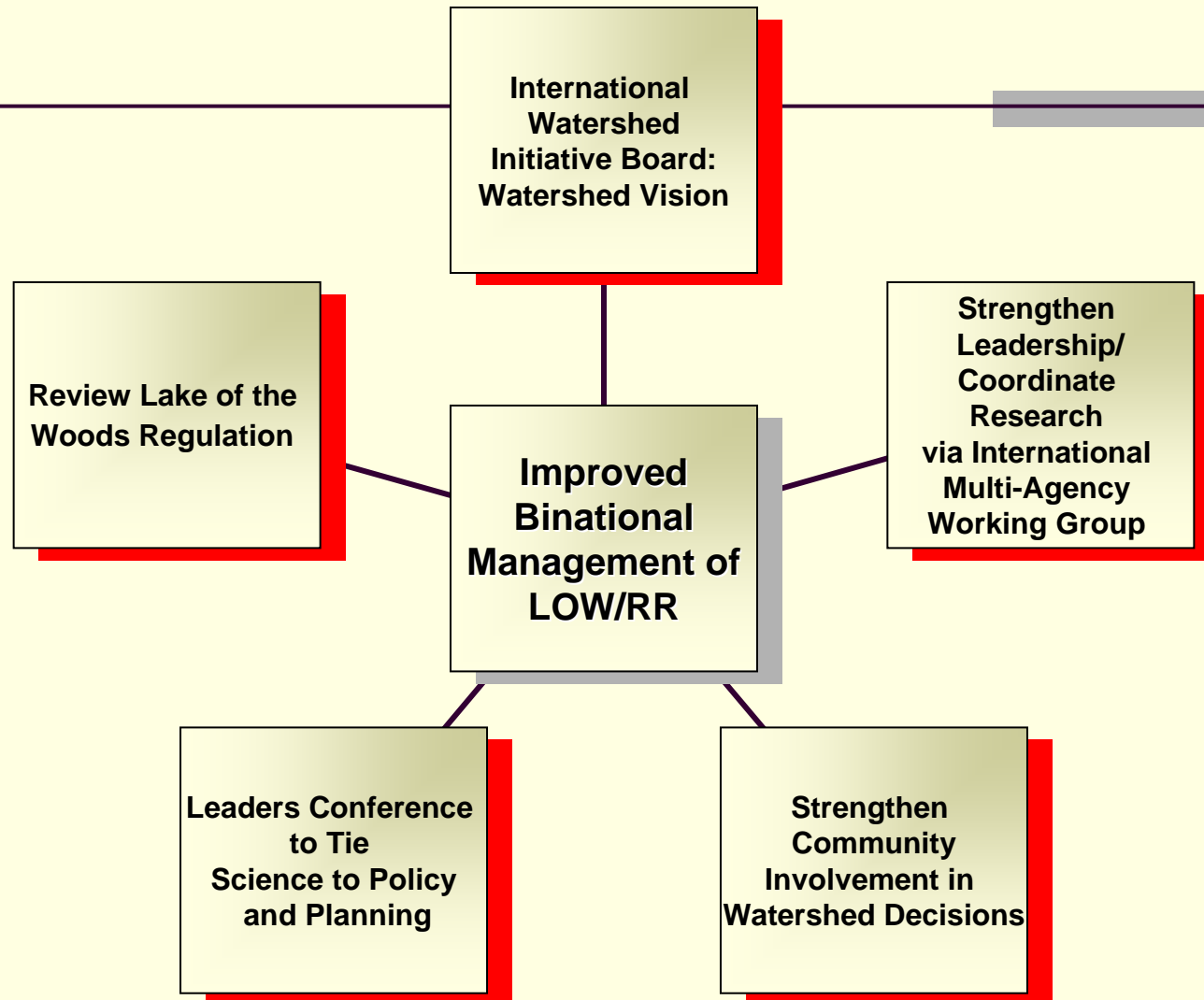
- Aboriginal representation
- Nutrient enrichment and harmful algal blooms
- Effects of climate change
- Impacts of water level regulation
- Watershed development
- Invasive species
- Communication



Observations

- Lack of Communication
 - Unawareness of issues upstream and downstream, across the border
 - Lack of understanding of how to engage in decision-making across watershed
 - However, annual Lake of the Woods Water Quality Forum an excellent venue for sharing information
- Shortfalls in governance
 - Lack of aboriginal representation: impacting everyone in watershed, as well as decision-making ability
 - IMA requires stable leadership and renewed commitment
- Lack of data and science regarding source of water impairment throughout watershed; limited long-term core monitoring
- No watershed plan for whole watershed
 - Multiple watershed plans in U.S.; lacking in Canada
 - Resource commitments to any strategy once defined

Themes of our Recommendations



Recommendations to Improve Binational Governance

- CDN Government continue efforts to resolve land and flooding claims, partner with First Nations and Métis in watershed governance
- CDN and US Governments issue an anticipated timetable early after receiving report from IJC for considering its recommendations
- IJC to review governments' progress in addressing recommendations three years after submitting report
- Appointment process to LWCB/ILWCB be streamlined; CDN Government ensure adequate budget for Secretariat to support bi-national activities (including with IJC boards); ILWCB provide courtesy copy of report annually to IJC

Create an International Watersheds Initiative Board under the IJC

- Merge IRLBC and IRRWPB into a watershed Board
- Continue water-level regulation mandate for Rainy and Namakan lakes
- Expand water quality mandate to include Lake of the Woods and boundary waters upstream of the Rainy River
- Provide alerting function for entire LoW-RR watershed
- Facilitate exchange of information for issues in watershed
- Review and update of bi-national alert levels in Rainy River
- Review existing monitoring – sufficient to assess future impacts?
- Track climate change indicators and Alien Invasive Species presence/spread/mitigation efforts
- Monitor progress against IMA-developed nutrient loading allocation targets

Strengthen Leadership/Coordinate Research via International Multi-Agency Working Group

- Purpose and Objectives for the Multi-Agency Working Arrangement would continue
- Leadership of the involved agencies to support and encourage timely completion of ongoing science
- Improve stability of IMA-WG: Secretary, Co-chairs
- Integrate the results of science to determine and apportion nutrient loadings for the entirety of Lake of the Woods
- Within the next six months, scope the effort required to design a joint core monitoring program

Organize a Leaders Conference to Tie Science to Policy and Planning

- IJC to convene a special conference among elected federal, state, provincial and aboriginal leaders in and governing the watershed, as well as key Government agency officials, to discuss:
 - Common vision for the watershed
 - Shared goals and objectives
 - Implementation strategies
 - Need for a higher-level agreement

Review of Lake of the Woods Regulation

- Canadian and US Government to issue a reference to the IJC to conduct a binational study to review water-level regulation impacts of Lake of the Woods (including Shoal Lake) and determine whether water level range still appropriate
- To consider:
 - riparian interests
 - shoreline erosion
 - water quality
 - wild rice harvesting
 - navigation
 - isostatic rebound

Strengthen Community Involvement in Watershed Decision-Making

- IWI Board to:
 - Include First Nations, Tribe and/or Métis member
 - Enhance outreach and communication efforts
 - Consider establishing a Citizen Advisory Group
- LWCB to:
 - Include a local member from the watershed
 - Enhance their outreach to include all relevant interests
 - Provide more convenient opportunities to share information
 - Establish a formal Advisory Committee for information, including traditional knowledge

Comments on report due by June 24th

Final report to be submitted to IJC by **July 15, 2011**

Submit comments to the Task Force website:

www.ijc.org/conseil_board/rainy_river_watershed

...or directly to the Task Force Secretaries:

Lisa Bourget, U.S. Co-Secretary

(703) 407-9502

Kelli Saunders, Canadian Co-Secretary

(807) 468-2732