

**International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board  
Summary of Discussion**

**Tuesday March 7, 2023  
1:30pm - 3:00pm CT (2:30pm-4:00pm ET)**

International Falls, MN  
Chair: COL Eric Swenson

**1. Welcome and Administration**

**U.S. Member Participants**

COL Eric Swenson  
Theresa Haugen  
Pam Tomevi  
Mike Hirst  
Kelly Sjerven  
Joshua Jones  
Doug Franchot  
Shelly Patten  
Ryan Maki  
Jim Stark  
Scott Jutila  
Rebecca Seal-Soileau  
Abby Moore

**International Joint Commission**

Mark Gabriel  
Kathy-Lee Galvin  
Rob Caldwell  
Alexandria Farrell

**Canadian Member Participants**

Mike Goffin  
Greg Chapman  
Megan Garner  
Matt Myers  
Todd Sellers  
Karen Cederwall  
Teika Newton  
Wellsley Hamilton  
Maria Jawaid

**Additional Participants**

Felicia Minotti (Global Affairs Canada)  
Colin McLeod (Consul - Consulate General of Canada in Minneapolis)  
\* Note: The record was lost of the several people who participated through ZOOM.

COL Swenson opened the meeting in International Falls, MN with a land recognition. The agenda was approved by Board members. A meeting summary of the January 11, 2023, Board meeting was sent to Board members ahead of this meeting and Board members were asked to review and send edits and/or approval via email.

**ACTION:** Board members to review and approve January Board meeting minutes

**ACTION:** Board members to email Secretariats to confirm which Action Items from the Jan 11 meeting are in progress or completed.

**2. Debrief from IAG-CAG Meeting with the Board**

The key takeaway from the IAG-CAG meeting with the Board (March 7, 2023, 12:30pm – 1:30pm) was that there is a communication gap between the public and the Board, WLC, and IJC.

In response to the 2022 flood, the CAG wrote a letter with recommendations to the Board. The WLC discussed these recommendations with the CAG at their February 24<sup>th</sup> CAG meeting. While CAG appreciated WLC responses to some of the recommendations, CAG co-chairs felt that all recommendations need a response even if they fall outside of the mandate of the Board. The WLC was actioned to follow up with the Board on CAG recommendations and CAG co-chairs are working with the CAG to prioritize their list of concerns.

CAG co-chairs also asked about the status of Emergency Preparedness Recommendations that were sent to the Board in 2021. The Secretariats were actioned to go back in records to see where the item stands, and Board co-chairs recognized that this item has been overlooked.

**ACTION:** WLC to follow-up with Board on CAG 2022 Flood Recommendations

**ACTION:** Secretariat to check status of CAG 2021 Emergency Preparedness Recommendations

### 3. Adaptive Management Committee

The AMC brought their (annual?) work plan to the Board for approval to move forward with IWI proposals. IWI proposals by the AMC do not require Board approval if they are covered by the workplan, however, the workplan must be approved by the Board. A motion to approve the work plan was passed.

The AMC also provided an update on the status of current projects. The AMC was formed to advise how to adaptively manage the rule curves, however, the AMC has not been able to access the original model used in the Rule Curve Study. The AMC is currently working on converting the model to an open-source format, which will allow access and provide more control on usability. Ongoing projects include a medicinal plant study, whitefish monitoring, walleye spawning, submerged vegetation, and working with the USGS on a flood visualization tool.

The AMC is also working on updating performance indicators to fill in data gaps and incorporate Indigenous traditional knowledge. The basin is losing knowledge keepers and it is important to facilitate discussions before it is too late. An AMC IWI proposal is being drafted to begin development of these performance indicators with First Nations. A Board member was concerned that the IWI proposal was biased to Ontario First Nations as it did not include either the Metis Nation of Ontario or Minnesota Tribes. The AMC co-chair acknowledged that the IWI proposal was specific to First Nations, but confirmed there will be parallel efforts for Metis Nation of Ontario and Minnesota Tribes. The Canadian IRLWWB co-chair recognized that efforts to engage Indigenous peoples should be more inclusive (i.e., engaging in an equal manner, around the same time, and while respecting distinctions).

The Board was informed that new AMC Co-Chairs will need to be appointed. The current chairs may have conflicts related to funding and project decision-making.

**ACTION:** AMC to develop IWI proposal for Indigenous engagement to develop performance indicators with Metis Nation of Ontario and Minnesota Tribes.

#### 4. Water Levels Committee

The WLC gave a summary of the Virtual Pre-Spring Engagement held on February 27, 2023. There were 77 total participants with presentations on current basin conditions and forecasts by the LWCB Secretariat, NWS Duluth Office, and NWS North Central River Forecast Center. Participants were invited to ask questions and share their basin observations. The WLC will be hosting a follow-up virtual engagement on spring conditions on April 11 to reassess basin conditions and forecasts for spring. The WLC informed the Board they will be hosting a public meeting to provide an overview of the post flood report the evening of March 7, 2023. The NWS Duluth Office will deliver a brief presentation on CoCoRaHS just before the public meeting.

The WLC will be posting the post flood report on the Board website on March 10, 2023, for a public comment period ending April 3, 2023. This will provide the WLC time to compile comments and make edits to the report as necessary before submitting and presenting to the IJC at the Spring Semi-Annual Appearances.

In response to a WLC request letter, on March 3, 2023, the IJC issued a Temporary Supplementary Order to amend the 2018 Supplementary Order for regulating the level of Rainy Lake and of other boundary waters in the Rainy Lake watershed. The Temporary Order eliminates the distinction between the regular and high flood risk rule curves for Rainy Lake, creating one broadened rule curve through the spring period. A permanent change will be considered once WLC advises the IJC on how the broadened rule curve worked for the 2023 freshet and the public has had an opportunity to provide input.

The Board then discussed the need for a formalized communications strategy to inform the public on what the IJC does and does not do in terms of emergency management in advance of future emergency situations.

One of the IJC Advisors observed that the potential freshwater impairment from the flooding not being addressed by Board activities as water quantity is, is an example of Governance Fragmentation and that the Board may consider having a role in defragmenting the existing framework so that water quality issues are also addressed in the future.

**ACTION:** WLC to prepare letter to the IJC regarding the efficacy of the supplemental order combining the rule curves.

**ACTION:** IJC to conduct listening sessions or other solicitations for public input on the broadened rule curve.

#### 5. Aquatic Ecosystem Health Committee

The AEHC deferred discussion on the proposal for the Phase II Objectives and Alerts and technical scoping of the Core Monitoring Program to after the meeting.

## 6. Roundtable and Closing Remarks

The IJC Advisors listed current IJC watch items for the Board including: the post flood report, WLC activities and engagement, Phase II Objectives and Alerts in conjunction with the IAM, IWI proposal review of Lake of the Woods South Shore Erosion, AEHC terms of reference changes, AMC modeling support for rule curve review, and recent Board appointments/term renewals.

The IJC Advisors provided a number of administrative comments/updates including: the call for IWI proposals ends April 5, but proposals are welcomed for submission year-round, the IJC Semi-Annual Appearances will be held April 24-27, the Board website needs to be updated with current membership, the Board should consider keeping a virtual option for all meetings, even those in-person, and that the IJC will be sending the request for MECP representation on the Board to MECP shortly.

The status of the Lake of the Woods nutrient target work in Canada was discussed during the roundtable. Public, stakeholder, and Metis engagement has been completed and ECCC is working with First Nations. ECCC will be working with the provinces on setting targets once engagement with First Nations is complete.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to update Board and committee membership on website.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to circulate the IJC Semi-Annual Appearances agenda and information to Board members.

**ACTION:** Continue supporting virtual presence at meetings.