

Elk River Watershed Alliance – Annual General Meeting (AGM)

May 18th, 2022 6:30-8:00 P.M

DRAFT MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Attended by ERA Board (George Greene, Ashlee Jollymore, Stella Swanson, Nic Milligan, Jason Gravelle, Danielle Wiess); ERA Staff (Chad Hughes, Evgeni Matveev, Anne-Caroline Kroeger, Kaileigh McCallum); ERA members and other community members

18 in-Room participants (M=Member): Kaileigh McCallum, Chad Hughes (M), Evgeni Matveev, Alex McClymont, Nic Milligan (M), Glen Hutton, Ashlee Jollymore (M), Chirs Bush (M), Karen Bergman, Peter Harrison-Edge (M), Terry Nelson, Alana Block (M), Erin Richan, Gord Bunston, Stella Swanson (M), Bill Arling (M), Danielle Wiess, John Poirer.

9 additional zoom participants (George Greene, Anne-Caroline Kroeger, Allie Ferguson, Edwina Hanley, Andrew, Margaret, April Thompson, Jason Gravelle, Tim Davis)

1. Welcome and Introductions (George Greene, ERA Chair) (6:30 - 6:45)

a) Ktunaxa Territory Acknowledgement

The ERA acknowledges that it works within Qukin ?amak?is, the homeland of the Ktunaxa People.

Shared territory with

Yaqit ?a-knuqli 'it Tobacco Plains Band

Ktunaxa nation and peoples

ERA understands and respects the rights of the Ktunaxa Nation and peoples

ERA benefits from the opportunity to work in these shared territories

ERA is fortunate to be working with Tobacco Plains Band + Ktunaxa Nation

b) Welcome and Introduction/Housekeeping

- Reminder that the meeting will be recorded, and that any objections should be recorded. No objections to being recorded.

c) Rights and Obligations of Members

– The Chair presented an overview of Member rights and obligations under the ERA's constitution and by-laws

d) Approval of Agenda (*Member vote*)

a. Agenda moved by Nic Milligan, seconded by Stella Swanson.

b. Any comments on agenda: None from ERA membership.

c. 6 hands in favour (5 in person 1 online), none against; agenda approval carried

- e) Staff and board composition update (Chad Hughes, ERA Executive Director)
- Overview of ERA staff and main responsibilities, given expansion within 2021.
 - Overview of 2021 Directors and their volunteer contributions to various ERA activities.

2. Supporter and Volunteer Recognition (Chair and Executive Director) (6:45-6:55))

- Overview of donors (providing unrestricted funds used for organizational development)



- Dickhout Family Foundation funders (of specific projects and program activities)



and supporters (providing in-kind and other forms of non-monetary support e.g. equipment and supplies),



with a strong thanks and appreciation to all

- Thanks lastly to volunteers – 257 volunteers gave 775 hours of their time and were involved in 29 events during the year.

3. Annual Report on Activities (6:55 -7:45)

a) 2021 Activities and Alignment with the strategic plan (Executive Director /Board)

- Update from George:
 - o Discussion of what the ERA is doing currently in terms of programming.
 - o Chair (George) made it clear that the ERA is looking for feedback from members about these activities to make sure we are reflecting what the membership wants out of an organization.
- Update from Chad:

- Detailed overview of ERA activities and programs, emphasizing that the ERA is returning to pre-pandemic normal in terms of activities.
 - Emphasize the push for more long-term vision and opportunities that align with the ERA Strategic Plan and increase in funding that reflects as such.
 - Learnings include:
 - Desire to expand beyond Fernie to cover the full watershed;
 - Improve organizational focus;
 - Increase membership base;
- b) Monitoring Collaborative report (Stella Swanson, Director/Anne -Caroline Kroeger, Program Manager)
- Overview of talk by Anne-Caroline:
 - Currently have 5 signed letters of understanding to formalize partnerships with Teck, Living Lakes Canada, Canadian Wildlife Federation, BC Ministry of Environment and North Coal
 - Overview of interim working groups: Monitoring Working Group and Governance Working Group.
 - Comprehensive report on next governance and structure by end of 2022.
 - Overview of current funding - \$730,000 confirmed and projected
 - In process of shortlisting key questions that will guide monitoring design - want to start with one or two research questions to ensure success – example is temperature changes over time.
 - Living Lakes Canada chose Elk River basin as a subbasin within a larger hydrology program, resulting in increased funding.
 - Main goal of Living Lakes is to understand water balance – impact of climate change and land uses.
 - Comment from Stella Swanson that we need strong collaboration to be able to understand cumulative impacts.
 - Comment from George that questions need to meet both decision-makers and community needs
- c) ERA Member comments on ERA/state of watershed (Nic Milligan, Director)
- Nic – Broader conversation about Elk River and concerns about its health. These included:
 - Concern about cumulative impacts in Corbin Creek; including clearcutting, potential phosphorus mine; comments echoed need to protect watersheds and landscapes + and throughout the Elk River Valley

- Terry Nelson: Need for pressure on city to reinvestigate stormwater outfalls into river (sediment traps, pools, etc.) Also the need and opportunity to work more closely with the city towards natural solutions that improve the health of the river.
- Ally Ferguson echoed concerns regarding stormwater; also mentioned concerns about management of snow by city (snowpiles and what is in them); concern about Coal Creek and development within the valley; concern about development of wetland in Montane (what happened to wetland at Montane?)
- Risk of diminishing water supply - surface water downstream, aquifers

d) 2022 Workplan and Budget with alignment with strategic plan (Executive Director)

- Overview of 2022 Workplan and Budget (Chad). Comments and themes include:
 - Need for membership and volunteer engagement
 - Cottonwood Restoration project development
 - Elk River access improvement as part of the Fernie Sustainable Tourism initiative
 - Whirling Disease Education Monitoring
 - Budget overview with projected revenues and expenditures of approximately \$500,000

e) Discussion about what members expect from the Elk River Alliance (lead by Nic Milligan)

Comments:

- John Poirier: Really impressed with progress of ERA as to where it has gone.
- Peter Harrison-Edge: ERA needs to engage with city about whether there is sufficient water available for development, and need to engage with issues with sewage treatment.
- Bill Arling: Needs to focus on collaboration as there are incredible potential to have impacts on decision making in the valley. Need to pull more people in, and also gain access to more data sources (CP Rail, TC Energy, Canfor, Canwell, etc.)
- Comments from George around land use and impact on river; do we have enough water for current and future uses?

4. AGM Business (7:45-8:25)

a) Approval of Minutes of 2021 AGM (*Member vote*) (ERA Chair)

- Omissions and comments from membership: None
- Moved by George, seconded by Chris Bush
- All in favour (7 votes); none opposed; motion carried.

b) Financial Statement- Approval of 2021 Audited Financial Statement

(*Member vote*) (Danielle Wiess, Treasurer)

- Omissions and comments from membership: None
- Moved to adopt by Danielle Wiess; seconded by Nic Milligan.
- All in favour (5 votes); none opposed; motion carried.

c) Appointment of Auditors (*Member vote*) (Treasurer)

- Move to adopt GPI as ERA Auditor for 2022 by Danielle Wiess
- Seconded by Stella Swanson
- Omissions and comments from membership: None
- All in favour (5 votes); none opposed; motion carried.

d) Revision to Membership Structure – Amendment to ERA Constitution and By-laws

(*Member vote*) (Chair)

- Moved by Danielle Wiess, seconded by Nic Milligan.
- Comments from membership:
 - Will need to remind people to renew membership on a yearly basis.
 - Question: Do you need to be a member to receive the ERA newsletter? Answer: Right now everyone who is interested can receive it.
 - Comment that should have incentives to become a member:
 - o Ideas include - sponsor a watershed, a tributary, or a program as a means of a quantifiable way of showing where money goes (WWF example of sponsoring an animal).
 - o Allie Ferguson – sponsor an animal, add something quantifiable to donation (specify program, animal, etc.)
 - Comment to keep membership drives friendly, and also to not increase membership fees by a large margin over time (Chris Bush).
 - o Answer that this is not a fundraising activity, more about engagement. Need to engrain as a principle.
 - Question regarding honorary members: why can't they vote? Answer, because the membership is forever.
 - Will have to revisit this policy, as it is a first stab at having a more active membership; should have annual review of policy and can make amendment to by-laws to provide vote to honorary members – at the next AGM.
 - Note that community members can be part of community group
 -
- Vote in favour: 6

- None opposed, motion carried.

e) Board nominations and election of Board Members

(*Member vote*) (Ashlee Jollymore, Director)

- Motion to put up current roster of Board Member except for Ayla Bennet, who has stepped down as she will be heading summer camps.
- No other suggestions or members stepping forward from membership.
- Motion moved by Chris Bush, seconded by Danielle Wiess.
- All in favour (5 votes); none opposed; motion carried.

f) Additional comments from membership:

- Karen Bergman: Comment from Baynes Lake resident on low water situation in South Country.
 - Potentially not being filled by aquifer by Elk River due to hydro diversions, issue with low flows, issues with river not ‘refilling’ connected aquifers
- Erin Richan: Comment on having a symposium to showcase activities
- Allie Ferguson: Commendation for staff and board on high quality of communications from Elk River Alliance.

g) Community Concerns:

- Glen Hutton
 - i. Fertilizer/phosphate strip-mine near Corbin
 - 1. Thinks Canwel/Camphor is “raping and pillaging” the land
 - 2. Wants to preserve area for future generations
 - 3. Worried about cumulative effects of this, teck, North coal
 - 4.
- Terry Nelson, former City of Fernie engineer
 - i. Worked on re-routing stormwater outfalls
 - ii. Difference in sedimentation in North fernie versus riverside
 - iii. Stormwater outfalls – lots of plumes/discharge
 - iv. Concerned about outfalls – pressure city to examine them
 - 1. Upstream sediment traps, more sediment ponds
 - 2. Prelim design for outfalls exist already
- Allie Ferguson
 - i. Echoes Terry’s concerns
 - ii. Stormwater is a concern – flashiness of river and Coal creek, specifically
 - 1. Montane and logging developments up that valley
 - a . Concerned about wetland by montane development

iii. Management of snow in Fernie – lots of snow near boat launch

h) Expectations from ERA over the next few years:

- John
 - i. Already impressed, feels the elk river is in good hands
 - ii. Seen ERA since its inception
- Peter
 - i. Concerned about water use, Airbnb towel use, wash
 - ii. Wants ERA to see if enough water supply for new developments to come online
 - 1. Sewer system is not up to snuff
 - iii. Concerned with urban developments and water supply
- Bill Arling
 - i. Collaborative is most important – has the most potential for meaningful effects on community/river
 - 1. Pull more people in – include more data sources
 - a . CP rail, TC energy, canfor
 - b . All have impact, all have data – collab/ERA should take these into account

5. Meeting Adjournment (8:30) – Moved by George Greene (Chair)