

2014 - 2015

Mackenzie River

B A S I N B O A R D

REPORT TO MINISTERS

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Tombstone Mountains, Yukon



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Letter Of Transmittal



December 21, 2015

The Honourable Catherine McKenna

Minister of Environment and Climate Change
.....
Government of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

The Honourable Wade Istchenko

Minister of Environment
.....
Government of the Yukon
Whitehorse, Yukon

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett

Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
.....
Government of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

The Honourable Mary Polak

Minister of Environment
.....
Government of the Province of British Columbia
Victoria, British Columbia

The Honourable Shannon Phillips

Minister of Environment and Parks
.....
Government of the Province of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

The Honourable Wally Schumann

Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
.....
Government of the Northwest Territories
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

The Honourable Herb Cox

Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency
.....
Government of the Province of Saskatchewan
Regina, Saskatchewan

.....
Honourable Ministers:

On behalf of the members of the Mackenzie River Basin Board, it is my pleasure to submit the Annual Report of the Mackenzie River Basin Board for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Baraniecki', is written over a horizontal line.

Cheryl Baraniecki Chair, Mackenzie River Basin Board

Message From The Chair

This Report to Ministers describes the activities of the Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB) in Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

The Governments of Alberta and the Northwest Territories signed a Bilateral Water Management Agreement on March 18, 2015. This marks a significant milestone for the Parties and for the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*. On behalf of the MRBB, I congratulate Alberta and the Northwest Territories on the completion of this milestone achievement. The MRBB is considering how to support the implementation of this agreement and the other bilateral water management agreements as they are completed.

Congratulations are also extended to the Northwest Territories as they assumed responsibility for land and water management within their borders on April 1, 2014 through the implementation of the *Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement*. These changes in administrative responsibility and the changes in transboundary relationships within the Mackenzie River Basin will need to be considered by the MRBB as it moves forward.

Looking forward to 2015-2016, the MRBB anticipates that some bilateral water management agreements will be completed and progress will be made on the negotiation of other agreements. The MRBB will continue work on the next MRBB State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report. The MRBB is looking forward to an exciting new partnership that will enhance the Board's capacity to consider the needs and concerns of Aboriginal people, as directed by the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*. The Board will also seek Ministerial direction to guide the scope and objectives of an independent review of the MRBB and its operations.

The success of the MRBB depends on the work of MRBB Committees and the MRBB Secretariat. Committee members consist of Board Members, Alternates, or their delegates. Their work helps to ensure that the MRBB and the signatory jurisdictions meet their obligations under the 1997 *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*. The Board appreciates their professional conduct and dedication to the MRBB.



Cheryl Baraniecki Chair, Mackenzie River Basin Board

Message From The Executive Director

The Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB) had a successful year with a number of accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

The completion of the Alberta-Northwest Territories Bilateral Water Management Agreement ushered in a new era of water governance in the Mackenzie River Basin. The MRBB continues to support Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon as they negotiate the remainder of bilateral water management agreements. The MRBB looks forward to the completion and implementation of these bilateral water management agreements.

The MRBB State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) Steering Committee was in a state of transition during 2014-2015 as committee membership and human resource support changed after land and water management responsibilities were devolved from Canada to the Northwest Territories. The MRBB Members worked to balance their contributions to the SOAER project with their responsibilities to the other governance components of the MRBB.

The MRBB Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee worked in partnership with the University of Alberta, Government of the Northwest Territories and other national and international partners to develop and submit a funding proposal to collect Traditional and Local Knowledge in the Mackenzie River Basin. The MRBB anticipates that this project will enhance the Board's capacity to consider the needs and concerns of Aboriginal people, as directed by the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*.

The MRBB Communications Committee responded to a number of inquiries from the public, academics, and government agencies on behalf of the Board. In addition, the Committee also provided oversight of the content on the MRBB website.

The work of the MRBB depends on the human resource contributions provided by the MRBB Government Members and their staff and the MRBB Aboriginal Members. These contributions are very much appreciated.



Don Pittman Executive Director, Mackenzie River Basin Board

Introduction

This report summarizes the activities of the Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB), its Secretariat and committees for the Fiscal Year April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015.



Figure 1. The Mackenzie River Basin.

The *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*

Background

In order to address the fundamental issue of water management cooperation, the governments of Canada, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Yukon (the Parties) signed the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement* (the Master Agreement). The Master Agreement came into effect on July 24, 1997. The purpose of the Master Agreement is to

establish common principles for the cooperative management of the Aquatic Ecosystem of the Mackenzie River Basin (Figure 1), to establish an administrative mechanism to facilitate the application of the principles set forth in the Master Agreement, and to make provisions for bilateral water management agreements that address inter-jurisdictional water quality, quantity and related issues.

The Master Agreement Principles

Under the Master Agreement, Part C, the Parties are committed to:

Managing the Water Resources in a manner consistent with the maintenance of the Ecological Integrity of the Aquatic Ecosystem;

Managing the use of the Water Resources in a sustainable manner for present and future generations;

Resolving issues in a cooperative and harmonious manner.

The right of each to use or manage the use of Water Resources within its jurisdiction provided such use does not unreasonably harm the Ecological Integrity of the Aquatic Ecosystem in any other jurisdiction;

Providing for early and effective consultation, notification and sharing of information on developments and activities that might affect the Ecological Integrity of the Aquatic Ecosystem in another jurisdiction; and

The Mackenzie River Basin Board

Structure and Operations

The Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB) was established under the Master Agreement Part D 1a. The MRBB was given the responsibility to administer the terms of the Agreement and to serve as a forum where all governments can cooperate in an effort to maintain the ecological integrity of the Basin's aquatic ecosystem.

The MRBB has no more than thirteen members. Two members represent each province and territory (Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories). One of the two provincial and territorial members has been appointed to represent Aboriginal organizations in each respective jurisdiction and to provide an Aboriginal perspective in the work of the MRBB. Up to three members represent the Government of Canada and two federal members are selected from signatory departments (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada¹ and Environment Canada²). Health Canada provides advice and expertise on areas relevant to its departmental mandate.

The Board is unique because of this interjurisdictional partnership, the presence of members representing Aboriginal interests alongside representatives of the governments, and the commitment by all parties to maintain the ecological integrity of the aquatic ecosystem.

The Master Agreement also established a staff arm for the MRBB called the Secretariat, under Part D Section 2d. The Secretariat is tasked to carry out the programs, basic administrative duties and investigations required by the Board. Currently, the MRBB Secretariat consists of one

staff member, based in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories and is housed within Environment Canada.

The MRBB is not a regulatory or licensing board, and has no legal or policy basis to regulate resource use in any of the jurisdictions. However, the Board may inform regulatory decisions made in the various jurisdictions by providing factual material, such as the State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER), to inform development decision makers, or by participating in and influencing pre- or post-regulatory processes, such as planning, regional or cumulative environmental impact assessment processes.

The MRBB conducts business, shares information, and provides guidance to Board Committees and the Secretariat through a series of formal Board Meetings. Government Board Members typically submit Member agency reports during face to face meetings. These reports provide a mechanism for sharing water-related information amongst the jurisdictions and with Aboriginal Groups, and can support prior notification commitments. Aboriginal Members also share information about indigenous concerns within each jurisdiction.

MRBB Meetings also typically include updates from the Board Committees and the Secretariat. The Board also conducts annual Business Planning. Board Meetings provide a forum to share information on specific issues or projects.

The Environment Canada Board Member has chaired MRBB Meetings by consensus of the other Board Members since the Board's inception. The MRBB Secretariat is responsible for recording and distributing meeting minutes.

Finances

Under the Master Agreement, Environment Canada is responsible for managing the expenditures of the Board, the costs of which are shared equally by the parties. MRBB costs include staffing and operation of the Secretariat office, to provide working-level support for the Board, and ensuring effective Aboriginal participation by paying MRBB-related expenses.

The MRBB met twice in person at Yellowknife and Edmonton during the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015 and conducted its remaining business through teleconferences and electronic means.

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Peel Basin, Yukon



Status of Bilateral Water Management Agreements

The Master Agreement makes provisions for the provinces and territories to complete bilateral water management agreements (BWMA). The completion and implementation of the BWMA is one of the most effective ways to protect the aquatic ecosystem of the Mackenzie River Basin.

The BWMA will quantify commitments at key transboundary crossing points. The water management areas being addressed include Surface Water Quality, Surface Water Quantity, Groundwater, and Biological Components. The BWMA will commit the jurisdictions to be proactive and forward looking, and to facilitate

joint learning that will inform bilateral water management in the Mackenzie River Basin.

Many of the core elements of the BWMA will be common to all the agreements. However, each agreement will include provisions that are unique to the circumstances of each transboundary region.

The jurisdictions have adopted a risk informed management framework which will guide how the jurisdictions will work together, now and in the future, to manage risks to water quality, quantity, and aquatic ecosystem health.

Northwest Territories & Yukon

The Peel River Watershed BWMA was completed in 2002. Planning related to the management of transboundary water resources continued through the development of the Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy and the Peel River Watershed Planning Commission. This agreement does not currently include a risk informed management framework, and the Parties have committed to revisit the agreement in the near future.

Alberta & Northwest Territories

Alberta and the Northwest Territories completed their BWMA in March 2015. This concludes nearly four years of negotiations and consultations.

Alberta and the Northwest Territories will now focus on implementing the terms of the BWMA. The Parties will establish a Bilateral Management Committee to govern the agreement, and will also establish technical committees to support the agreement.

The Alberta/Northwest Territories BWMA includes all watersheds shared by the Northwest Territories and Alberta in the Mackenzie River Basin.

British Columbia & Alberta

Alberta and British Columbia have shared information, discussed their respective interests, and discussed the components for each section of the BWMA. Both parties are consulting in accordance with their specific obligations throughout the development of the BWMA.

The British Columbia/Alberta BWMA negotiations are ongoing, and an official target completion date has not been set.

The British Columbia/Alberta BWMA will include all watersheds shared by British Columbia and Alberta in the Mackenzie River Basin, with the main focus of negotiations on the Peace River.

Alberta & Saskatchewan

Alberta and Saskatchewan have shared information, discussed their respective interests, and discussed the components for each section of the BWMA. Both parties are consulting in accordance with their specific obligations throughout the development of the BWMA.

The Alberta/Saskatchewan BWMA negotiations are ongoing, and an official target completion date has not been set.

The Alberta/Saskatchewan BWMA will include all watersheds shared by Saskatchewan and Alberta in the Mackenzie River Basin.

British Columbia & Northwest Territories

British Columbia and the Northwest Territories have shared information, discussed their respective interests, and discussed the components for each section of the BWMA. Both parties are consulting in accordance with their specific obligations throughout the development of the BWMA.

The British Columbia/Northwest Territories BWMA is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2015-2016.

The British Columbia/Northwest Territories BWMA will cover all watersheds shared by British Columbia and the Northwest Territories in the Mackenzie River Basin, with the main focus of negotiations on the Liard River.

Saskatchewan & Northwest Territories

Negotiations on shared watersheds are expected to be initiated in 2015-2016.³

British Columbia & Yukon

British Columbia and Yukon have shared information, discussed their respective interests, and discussed the components for each section of the Bilateral Water Management Agreement. Both parties are consulting in accordance with their specific obligations throughout the development of the BWMA.

The British Columbia/Yukon BWMA negotiations are ongoing, and an official completion target date has not been set.

The main focus of the British Columbia/Yukon BWMA is the Liard River.

Looking forward

The provinces and territories will continue to negotiate BWMA's in 2015-2016. The MRBB anticipates that some BWMA's will be completed.

Alberta and the Northwest Territories will work towards implementing their BWMA. The MRBB will look for linkages between its work and the work being undertaken for the BWMA.

At the suggestion of Provincial and Territorial Members, the MRBB has agreed to reform the MRBB Technical Committee. The Technical Committee will work on science and monitoring issues that cut across individual bilateral water management agreements. This Committee will also engage the Government of Canada, which is not a signatory to the BWMA's. The MRBB appointed a Working Group to develop a terms of reference for the proposed committee, which will describe the Committee's membership, mandate and responsibilities.

³British Columbia and the Northwest Territories completed their Bilateral Water Management Agreement in October 2015.

MRBB Committees

The MRBB has created a number of working committees to help administer duties set out under the Master Agreement. The committees are comprised of members of the Board or their appointed delegates. Committee members are selected to promote and lead these activities

and support specialists from jurisdictions and federal agencies are tasked to assist with the work of the committees. Each committee is tasked with specific responsibilities. The activity level of individual committees varies over time according to need.

Table 1: Mackenzie River Basin Board Committees and Mandates.

Committees	Responsibilities
<p>State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) Steering Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage information Determine options for format of SOAER Establish process for report preparation and subsequent updates Determine recommendations for content of report Prepare and review SOAER reports
<p>Communications Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a communication strategy Prepare the annual report Arrange public forums as required Prepare presentation materials and literature for the general public
<p>Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships (TKSP) Steering Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Traditional Knowledge oversight Incorporate Traditional Knowledge into MRBB operations

MRBB State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report Steering Committee

The MRBB State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) Steering Committee was in a state of transition during 2014-2015. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) - Northwest Territories Region had led the SOAER Steering Committee and the work was largely driven by AANDC staff and the MRBB Secretariat. After land and water management responsibilities were devolved from Canada to the Northwest Territories, AANDC reallocated its resources. Board Members are considering options to replace this capacity.

Looking forward

Board Members will assess their capacity to provide human resource support to the SOAER.

Board Members also decided that the SOAER should be linked with the information that will be generated by the bilateral water management agreements, once they have been completed.

MRBB Communications Committee

The Communications Committee oversaw the completion of the *MRBB 2013-2014 Report to Ministers*. The Committee helped develop responses to information inquiries received by the MRBB. The Committee also guided the maintenance of the MRBB website and added a Questions and Answers page to the MRBB website related to the bilateral water management agreements.

Looking forward

The Communications Committee will oversee the revision of the look and feel of the MRBB Website. In addition they will update the website content as needed.

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Tomi Porcupine River



MRBB Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee

SOAER

The Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships (TKSP) Steering Committee scoped potential sources of Traditional Knowledge material for the SOAER. The Steering Committee also drafted two reports based on the 2013 Traditional Knowledge SOAER Indicators Workshop: a Workshop Report and a Recommendations Report for the SOAER. The workshop was held to help the MRBB scope report indicators and develop recommendations.

Tracking Change Traditional Knowledge Research Project

The TKSP Steering Committee worked in partnership with the Government of the Northwest Territories and other national and international partners to support the development of a University of Alberta research proposal to collect Traditional and Local Knowledge in the Mackenzie River Basin. If the project, titled *Tracking Change - The Role of Local and Traditional Knowledge in Watershed Governance*, is funded, the TKSP Steering Committee will become the main governance body. The proposal was submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

The research project is intended to gather new Traditional and Local Knowledge in the Mackenzie River Basin, provide advice on how the data should be communicated, and explore the role of local and traditional knowledge in informing watershed governance at multiple scales. This information will be available for future SOAERs, and could also support implementation of the BWMA.

The TKSP Steering Committee championed the completion of a Letter of Support between the MRBB and the University of Alberta that described the working relationship between the partners under the Tracking Change Project. The TKSP Steering Committee also provided input into the development of the proposal. The TKSP Steering Committee met with Tracking Change partners in August 2014 to help finalize the proposal and develop a plan to submit the project proposal to SSHRC.

TKSP Steering Committee Members also met with graduate students at the University of Alberta to discuss the project. Steering Committee Members also spoke to the students about the MRBB and some of the key issues that they see within the Mackenzie River Basin. This supported increased outreach, which TKSP members have identified as a critical priority.

Looking forward

The TKSP Steering Committee will support the gathering of Traditional Knowledge for the SOAER. The TKSP Steering Committee will also provide advice and guidance on how this information can be effectively communicated in the SOAER.

If the *Tracking Change - The Role of Local and Traditional Knowledge in Watershed Governance* research project is funded, the TKSP Steering Committee will work with partners to initiate the project and guide the project work.⁴

TKSP Steering Committee Members expressed an interest in developing communication and outreach materials in support of their outreach work on behalf of the MRBB.

⁴SSHRC awarded funding for the Tracking Change project in July 2015 valued at \$2.5 million over six years.

Strategic and Operational Review

The Master Agreement directs the MRBB to undertake periodic reviews. While the Board has in the past developed strategic and business plans, the Board has not undertaken a formal review since the completion of the Master Agreement in 1997.

The MRBB decided to initiate a strategic and operational review of the Mackenzie River Basin Board operations. In light of the upcoming completion and implementation of BWMA's, the Board saw a review as a timely exercise.

The strategic and operational review may include a number of topics:

- The effectiveness of MRBB governance structures in meeting all duties of the MRBB as set out in the Master Agreement,
- The effectiveness of MRBB SOAER reporting,
- The effectiveness of MRBB work to consider the needs and concerns of Aboriginal people through the provision of culturally appropriate communication, and the incorporation of their traditional knowledge and values,

• The potential role of the MRBB in the implementation the Bilateral Water Management Agreements, and

• The adequacy of resources provided to the MRBB for meeting its required duties.

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Lady Alexandra Falls, NT



Information Sharing

In 2014-2015 at the bi-annual meetings, Board Members shared Member Reports on activities and issues within each jurisdiction of the Basin, as per prior notification provisions within the Master Agreement.

Board Members were also briefed on:

- The implications of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement for land and water administration in the Northwest Territories. Further information on the Devolution Agreement can be found on the Government of the Northwest Territories Website (<http://devolution.gov.nt.ca/about-devolution>).

- A Northern Water Security project, sponsored by the Global Institute for Water Security, located at the University of Saskatchewan. This work is concerned with bringing together information from many long term monitoring initiatives to better understand changing climate and landscape at a variety of spatial scales.

- The proposed Amisk Hydroelectric Project. The Amisk Hydroelectric Project is a run-of-the-river hydroelectric project that has been proposed for the Peace River, near Dunvegan, Alberta.

Looking Forward

In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, the Mackenzie River Basin Board anticipates that its activities will be directed towards the following priorities:

- Several bilateral water management agreements will be completed and progress will be made on several others. The Mackenzie River Basin Board will discuss its possible role(s) in the implementation of these agreements, and develop communication materials in support of the completion of the agreements.

- The State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report Steering Committee and Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee will continue their work on the next Mackenzie River Basin State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report.

- The Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee will work with the University of Alberta, Government of the Northwest Territories, national, and international partners to support *Tracking Change - The Role of Local and Traditional Knowledge in Watershed Governance* Research Project, as per the MRBB Letter of Support for the project.

- The MRBB will move forward with its plan to conduct a strategic and operational review of its work.

Appendix I: Financial Report

Mackenzie River Basin Board Financial Report April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

Budget	\$260,121.00	Comments (As specified in the Master Agreement)
Carry Forward	\$280,264.00	2013-14 carry forward
Total	\$540,385.00	(In anticipation of SOAER and Strategic Review)
MRBB Expenditures		
Personnel	\$139,297.00	Wages and benefits for the Executive Director
Service Contracts	\$37,829.00	Honoraria and Expenses for Aboriginal Members
Transportation and Telecommunications	\$7,728.00	Travel, transportation, postage and telecommunications
Information Services	\$990.00	Publishing/Printing
Professional Services	\$0.00	Operational Contracts
Rentals	\$0.00	Facilities, vehicles and equipment
Purchased materials, parts and supplies	\$875.00	Miscellaneous
Total 2014-15 Expenditures	\$186,719.00	
2014-15 Carry Forward	\$353,666.00	

Appendix II: MRBB Membership on March 31, 2015

Alberta

Member: Brian Yee
Alternate: Tim Toth
Aboriginal Member: Cleo Reece

British Columbia

Member: Lynn Kriwoken
Alternate: Pieter Bekker
Aboriginal Member: Vera Nicholson

Northwest Territories

Member: Shannon Cumming
Alternate: Erin Kelly
Aboriginal Member: Sonny MacDonald

Saskatchewan

Member: Jim Gerhart
Alternate: Gary Neil
Aboriginal Member: Joseph Tsannie

Yukon

Member: Heather Jirousek
Alternate: Vacant
Aboriginal Member: Sharon Peter

Environment Canada

Member: Richard Smith
Alternate: Mike Renouf

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

Member: Mohan Denetto
Alternate: Jennifer O'Neill

Health Canada (Observer)

Member: Ward Chickoski
Alternate: Mary Frances MacLellan-Wright

Appendix III: Changes in MRBB Membership April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

Alberta

Tim Toth appointed as Alternate MRBB Member

Saskatchewan

Joseph Tsannie replaced Don Deranger
as Aboriginal Member

Northwest Territories

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

Shannon Cumming replaced Ray Case
as MRBB Member

Erin Kelly replaced Meghan Beveridge
as alternate MRBB Member

Mohan Denetto replaced Kathryn Bruce as
MRBB Member

Jennifer O'Neill replaced Robert Jenkins as
alternate MRBB Member

Yukon

Heather Jirousek replaced Jon Bowen
as MRBB Member

Environment Canada

Richard Smith replaced Cheryl Baraniecki
as MRBB Member

Health Canada (Observer)

No Change

British Columbia

No Change

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Mackenzie River, NT



Appendix IV:

MRBB Letter of Support

Tracking Change - The Role of Local and Traditional Knowledge in Watershed Governance Research Project.



The Board's Vision: A healthy and diverse aquatic ecosystem
for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mackenzie River Basin Board
PO Box 2310, 5019 52nd Street
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

October 24, 2014

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
350 Albert Street
P.O. Box 1610
Ottawa, ON K1P 6G4

Dear SSHRC Reviewers,

The Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB) supports the research proposal entitled "**Tracking Change: The Role of Local and Traditional Knowledge in Watershed Governance**".

The MRBB was established under *The Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*. The MRBB is tasked with the responsibility to administer the terms of the Agreement and to serve as a forum where all governments can cooperate in an effort to maintain the ecological integrity of the Basin's aquatic ecosystem.

The Board has 13 members, three representing the Government of Canada and two representing each province (British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan) and territory (Yukon and the Northwest Territories) within the Basin. One of the two provincial and territorial members has been appointed to represent Aboriginal organizations in each jurisdiction and provide an Aboriginal perspective.

The Board is unique because of this interjurisdictional partnership, the presence of members representing Aboriginal interests alongside government members, and the commitment by all parties to maintain the ecological integrity of the aquatic ecosystem.

The proposed research supports the following Duties of the MRBB, as articulated in the *Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement*:

- Providing a forum for communication, coordination, information exchange, notification, and consultation.
- Considering the needs and concerns of Aboriginal People through,
 - The provision of culturally appropriate communication, and
 - The incorporation of their traditional knowledge and values.
- Submitting to the Ministers a report on the State of the Aquatic Ecosystem.

The proposed research supports the following Goals of the MRBB Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Partnerships Steering Committee, as articulated in the Steering Committee's Terms of Reference:

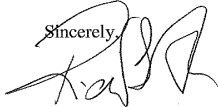
- To assist the MRBB in establishing common principles for the cooperative management of the Aquatic Ecosystem in the Mackenzie River Basin. This includes the collaborative application of Traditional Knowledge in appropriate reports and documents and ensuring full Aboriginal participation in the administration and application of these principles.
- To recognize the inherent value of full Aboriginal participation and governance in the Mackenzie River Basin Board activities and encourage the meaningful integration of Traditional Knowledge and effective engagement practices into the MRBB's activities.
- To provide an advisory function to the Mackenzie River Basin Board with respect to Aboriginal partnership functions and activities including those related to Traditional Knowledge.
- To monitor the jurisdictions' levels of Aboriginal participation and engagement in the Board's activities, providing advice and guidance when asked and when necessary.

The MRBB is interested in being involved in many aspects of the research process. The five MRBB Aboriginal Members will be members of the project's steering committee. The MRBB Secretariat will assist and provide logistical and administrative support. The research results will strengthen the ability of the MRBB to report on the state of the Mackenzie River Basin aquatic ecosystem. The MRBB estimates the monetary value of this in-kind contribution to be \$630,000 over the period 2014 to 2021. The MRBB is currently working with the University of Alberta to formalize this relationship through a Research Partnership Agreement.

Working collaboratively with the other organizations, governments and universities will be important to supporting the MRBB's vision for a healthy and diverse aquatic ecosystem for the benefit of present and future generations.

We look forward to supporting and participating in this work.

Sincerely,



Richard Smith
Chair, Mackenzie River Basin Board

c. Brenda Parlee



Mackenzie River Basin Board
P.O. Box 2310 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7
www.mrbbs.ca