

Science Committee members present: A. Applejohn, D. Livingstone, C. Wenman, M. English, B. Quinton, B. Sieben, J. Kanigan, M. Wilkie, Phil Marsh, E. Kelly, S. Gray

Regrets: K. Stevens, J. Baltzer, S. Carrière, S. Kokelj,

SUMMARY

- The opening of the new building in Waterloo went well and the building should be populated within the coming weeks.
- Application periods have passed or will soon pass for the new project liaison and field technician positions such that those positions should be filled with the successful candidate beginning work during the coming weeks.
- The regional research meetings in the Sahtu this week were fruitful with a research working group moving forward. WLU will be participating in follow-up meetings in Deline at the end of November.

ACTIONS

- Bill Quinton will work with new hires to ensure that they receive adjunct status.
- David Livingstone will follow up with ENR about the graduate student proposals
- Andrew Applejohn will confirm more details about the university partnership meeting and will communicate whether that should or should not impact the timing of the annual science committee meeting.
- In the interim, all SC members should pencil in the dates of January 14 and 15 for Science Committee meetings.
- Sally Gray and Mike English will look into whether WLU can contribute to the Sahtu meetings in Deline at the end of November.

MINUTES

1. Welcome and review of agenda – agenda accepted as drafted.
2. Review of minutes from last meeting; changes where needed. Minutes accepted as drafted.
3. Welcome Phil Marsh; Brent Wolfe stepped down from Science Committee
4. Review of action items from October Science Committee meeting
 - All actions were related to the building opening and have passed.
5. Report on building opening

Minister Miltenberger and Deputy Minister Ernie Campbell were in attendance and seemed happy with the way the event was organized. Mike English, Bill Quinton and others just returned from a tour of the two growth chambers, which allow for controlled temperatures and are worth a couple hundred thousand each. The systems allow adjustment for latitude and longitude, automatically adjusting the corresponding photoperiod. These can be programmed to replicate a spring melt in thawing cores or in other applications.

The main outstanding issue is a security one, at which point, people will begin to populate the building.

6. Science Committee annual meeting planning

The dates were set at the last meeting:

Monday January 13 2014 – travel

Tuesday January 14 and Wednesday January 15, 2014 – meetings

Thursday January 16, 2014 – travel

These dates should be penciled in to calendars and will be confirmed for certain shortly. There was some discussion that the Minister has also requested a meeting in February that would involve a number of universities to discuss future partnerships. This “Partnership Conference” however, would likely be targeted at the upper administrative levels of the university (President or other) so would not likely involve many of the science committee members, if any. Nonetheless, Andrew Applejohn is waiting to confirm a rough proposal of the meeting at which point he will report back to the Science Committee and decide if it is something for which it is worth rescheduling the annual Science Committee meeting.

7. Updates on hiring process – new liaison and technician positions

Bruce Hannah will be interviewed Monday afternoon. The committee that reviewed the applications asked the HR department at Laurier if it would be appropriate to interview only one candidate as they felt that the other applicants had substantial gaps in one or more of the areas of Science expertise / knowledge, community relations and/or partnerships with government departments. The research technician position closes on November 14th or 15th.

There had been some discussions with interested applicants if the title of the position(s) could be changed to research associates. The titles need to remain in order to satisfy the CFI funding requirements, however both successful candidates can be given adjunct status and can likely also be research associates. Bill will work with them to get adjunct status.

8. NWT employees pursuing gradates studies (standing agenda item, if updates)

Erin Kelly explained that this remains at the ADM level. David will follow-up.

9. Partnership budget, spending, equipment disbursement and lab space / use, (if updates)

No updates.

10. Committee member project updates

Erin Kelly

A number of ENR Water Division projects continue. These include: NWT water monitoring with multiple partners; the partnership with University of Saskatchewan with CWN in the Slave River Delta and a new knowledge transfer proposal that will be submitted to SCHRC as an innovation grant. This will be a Delta to Delta to Delta project combining knowledge learned in the Beaufort Delta and the Slave River Delta.

Andrew Applejohn

Andrew is involved in quite broad based discussions about the future of science in NWT. He is currently in the process of inputting into a scoping document, which may ultimately become more detailed.

Andrew just returned from 4 days in Tulita, as did Julian, where they participated in a research meeting, the outcome of which has been a largely community-based comprehensive research and monitoring network. The meeting was largely industry and government funded with all Renewable Resource Councils represented. Also present were representatives from Conoco Phillips, AANDC, Huskey among others. At some points, there were over 60 people in the room; 25 people came in from Yellowknife. A number of sentiments were emphasized by community representatives and the RRCs, namely that: they would like to be involved in setting regional science and research agendas; that there is anxiety about development in the region and that the Water Stewardship Strategy set a new standard of community participation that they expect to be adhered to moving forward.

The conversation was not only centred around shale oil development but development in the entire region with an emphasis not only on water but wildlife, land disturbance, food security and socio-economic issues.

A working group was established with the recognition that the Sahtu region has been traditionally underserved with regards to monitoring and research resources and that a regional initiative is needed, which gets people on the ground very quickly. The notes from the meeting are being written-up. Erin added that both prospective WLU graduate students from ENR have proposed projects based in the Sahtu.

Brian Sieben

Brian just finished the permafrost conference, which David co-chaired. Jenn Baltzer presented her research, which was well received. Steve Kokelj presented two talks, the first about regional landscape change in the Peel Plateau and Mackenzie Delta, the second jointly with Julian Kanigan about the work that they have done looking at permafrost thaw impacts to sumps.

There were 22 remote sites participating in the conference, each of which had up to 20 people attending. The participants were able to ask questions remotely in real time.

There were different groups involved in the conference with emphases on infrastructure, landscape research and community governance. The take home message was certainly that the change is real, present, dramatic, expensive and disruptive.

Julian Kanigan

Following up from the meeting in Tulita, there will be a second meeting in the Sahtu in Deline at the end of the month. Likely many of the same cast of characters will be present. The meeting is scheduled for November 27th and 28th. The CIMP, ENR, DFO results meeting is scheduled for December 10-12. Thanks to Mike, Phil and Bill who have agreed to do up a presentation that will sent the context of water issues for the water day.

CIMP this year told existing funding recipients who had already been approved for multi-year funding to not submit applications but rather just note any changes to expected budgets when they do their reporting. The thought had been that this would reduce applications but in fact, there were 40 new letters of intent. CIMP may approach members of the Science Committee to review applications and Julian asked that you please find the time in spite of busy schedules. There had been a particular emphasis in this call on TK proposals. Fifteen were received in total, 7 specific to TK and 8 with combined TK and Science.

Christine Wenman

Debbie Simmons has welcomed WLU participation in the second Sahtu meeting being organized for the end of November in Deline. It is already looking like Andrew Spring will be able to attend as he has an interest in pursuing his doctoral studies in food security issues in the Sahtu. This will be a particularly good fit as the next meeting is funded largely by the Northern Contaminants Program and CIMP and has food security issues as a focus of discussions. Other WLU participation would likely be welcomed and in particular, this would be a good opportunity for the new project liaison if he has started by then.

Sally and Mike agreed to look into whether WLU could provide some small cash contribution to the workshop. Mike has not yet been able to follow-up but will do so.

Mike Wilkie

Andrea is working on her data for the WLU component of the CIMP supported Tathlina Lake project. The data should be ready in the next month.

Sally Gray no updates

Bill Quinton

Bill has been participating in private industry meetings largely with the engineering field looking at partnerships. This will likely result in access to infrastructure and laboratory services.

The spending for CFI funds is due in December so there is pressure now to ensure that all funds are spent or else they will be lost. As this goes forward, the Science Committee is looking at purchasing a second partnership truck, which will require an amendment in the funding agreement. The newest of the three skidoos was swapped for a different kind that will be more reliable in the cold and the distant field as it is air cooled. It is a different model but of equal value. The licensing and registration will then need to be dealt with.

The old director of the Cold Regions Research Centre has stepped down so Jenn, Bill and Mike are currently sharing these duties and looking at becoming more active and promoting the work of the research centre including the partnership.

Andrew Spring is leading the organization of the next Taiga Plains workshop, which was very successful last year and is likely to further grow this year. Hopefully several NWT speakers will be able to participate. This will be roughly mid-January.

The building opening was quite successful with a great deal of media generated.

Bill will plan meetings in Fort Simpson with regional partners to coincide with the annual science committee meeting and has a flexible commitment from LKFN and JMR. He would also like to include Trout Lake.

Phil Marsh

Phil recently moved from Environment Canada to Laurier and became involved in the partnership. He has many years of experience working near Inuvik looking at the hydrology and ecology of the Mackenzie Delta as well as upland basins near Inuvik. He intends to continue building on that work with existing grants as well as grants that have been submitted looking at climate change and impacts, snow, permafrost, hydrology. He remains an emeritus scientist at EC. He will be working with some new sophisticated high-resolution

instruments and models. He will be testing one of the first models to look at subsidence due to melt of ice-rich permafrost in the Inuvik sites. The work is highly dependent on the existing 20+ years of data that Environment Canada has in the region.

Mike English

Mike will be traveling back up to NWT in January looking at caribou distribution and the role of snow and fire in lichen recolonization. Ideas are still conceptual and he continues to partner with ENR to decide how to test them.

He and students are currently working with three cores from Wekweèti looking at C-N ratios, C13 and N15 and they hope to get new cores from Daring, Baker and Wekweèti sites in April.

11. Communications – No updates.

12. Science Committee travel updates – no further updates.

13. Important Dates:

- Week of December 9, 2013 CIMP and partners' reporting meetings
- November 18-21, Geoscience
- January 14 and 15, 2014 WLU Science Committee annual meeting

14. Additional business

15. Next meeting date

Science Committee meetings will be the first Thursday morning of every month at 9am in Yellowknife, 11 am in Ontario.

The next Science Committee meeting will be on Thursday December 5, 9am / 11am.