

Minutes of the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin (WCSB) Workshop of Provincial and Federal Geological Surveys

Friday June 7th, 2002
Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, Calgary, AB

Chair: Rick Richardson, Head, Alberta Geological Survey

Present: Stefan Bachu (recorder) and Reg Olson - Alberta Geological Survey; Carol Martiniuk and Michelle Nicolas - Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines, Petroleum Branch; Ruth Bezys - Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines, Geological Survey; Fran Heidl, Eric Nickel and Steve Whittaker - Saskatchewan Industry and Resources, Exploration and Geological Services; Derek Brown and Mark Hayes - British Columbia Ministry of Energy and Mines, New Ventures Branch; Mike Cecile, Terry Poulton, Kirk Osadetz and Tony Hamblin - Geological Survey of Canada – Calgary; Jim Davidson - National Energy Board; and Rob Galant - Nexen Canada Ltd.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Rick Richardson welcomed the guests, who introduced themselves.

Agenda was approved as submitted.

2. Program Review and Update

Copies of the Power Point presentations and final minutes will be sent under separate cover on a CD-ROM.

2.1 [Geological Survey of Canada – Calgary\(Mike Cecile\)](#)

- GSC is moving toward an “issue” orientated program
- GSC is in the process of defining and focusing its program, to be approved by January 2003 for implementation in the next fiscal year
- Focusing on the north (north of the semi-continuous permafrost line), for resource development and with participation of the locals
- Difficult to initiate projects in the “south”
- Clean environment (groundwater)
- Climate change: focus on adaptation
- Metals in the environment: in its last year, except for coal in AB and BC
- Safe communities: earthquakes and landslides
- Sustainable development of natural resources: a) get the existing information out, b) cooperative mapping; c) mapping of the sea floor; d) targeted geoscience initiatives (TGI) winding down this year; e) gas hydrates

Rick: WCSB is not in the program, how it will fit ?

Mike: It is not clear at this stage, unsure if any proposal for work south of the permafrost line will be accepted.

2.2 *Alberta Geological Survey (Rick Richardson)*

- Mission and responsibilities to provide industry, government and the public with information needed for sustainable development
- Program in Energy and Minerals
- Energy projects: Oil Sands; Coalbed Methane; Hydrogeology in support of energy development; Deep injection of acid and greenhouse gases
- Minerals projects: regional surface and bedrock mapping, focused on northern Alberta; Targeted geoscience initiatives (potential for MVT Pb-Zn deposits in N. Alberta and Northwest Territories; Athabasca basin; Geochemical Surveys); Thematic studies (e.g., kimberlites; RADARSAT); Aggregate and industrial minerals.

Kirk: Any comments on the Framework for Cooperation on Groundwater, led by GSC ?

Rick: The framework is progressing well at this stage, addressing technical and political issues. AGS focus is on the resource side of things. Problems may arise in getting the resources needed to do the work.

Kirk: Expressed concern that GSC's/Framework work may duplicate the work done ~20 years ago by the Alberta and Saskatchewan Research Council(s)

2.3 *Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines, Petroleum Branch (Carol Martiniuk)*

- More regulatory focus, less research oriented
- Looking for opportunities for synergies
- Interested in assembly of data bases (data integration)
- Development drilling
- Geological storage of CO₂: a few companies are looking into it, but the government not yet
- Regional mapping

2.4 *British Columbia Ministry of Energy and Mines, New Ventures Branch (Derek Brown)*

- Activity in BC focused on geoscience in support of revenue-bringing sectors, shifting from minerals to oil and gas
- Changes in the Ministry still being implemented for the next 2 years
- Geoscience initiatives: Interior basins resource assessment; Unconventional hydrocarbon potential in NE BC (shale gas, tight gas); Offshore resource assessment; Geological lab in Ft. St. John
- Acid gas disposal projects

- Code of practice for CBM produced water

2.5 *Saskatchewan Industry and Resources* (Fran Heidl)

- 500K increase in budget in 2000 and new staff hired
- Developing 5 and 10 year plans
- Petroleum Geology projects: Weyburn CO₂ storage; Devonian mapping and hydrocarbon potential; Shallow gas; Lower Paleozoic; Mississippian; Special Projects (e.g., standard grid of cross sections; stratigraphic correlation chart; digitizing and putting on the web old reports)
- Mineral Resource projects: CBM; Potash; Diamonds

2.6 *Manitoba Geological Survey* (Ruth Bezys)

- Quaternary and bedrock mapping
- Industrial minerals
- Aggregate
- Closing projects: Red River valley; Southern Prairie NATMAP; Capital region area
- Continuing projects: Fox River; 3D model of the basin; Black shale
- New projects: SBZ (?); Devonian stratigraphic map compilation in GIS; mafic and ultramafic industrial minerals
- Future plans: bedrock compilation mapping (1:250K); Quaternary mapping; Extension of the Capital region project; Devonian outcrop mapping; Extension of the 3D model into Saskatchewan; Mineralization (Prairie type; MVT; Carlin type); geophysical compilation

3. Progress Review

Mike: Lots of things went on, but nothing happened on the technical side as a direct result of this group's workshops one and two years ago, but rather as a result of individual efforts within the respective organizations. The communication strategy has changed within GSC. The Director of GSC Calgary (Mike) is meeting individually with CEO's and VP's of oil companies in Calgary, often accompanied by Rick (AGS).

It was suggested to have meetings with industry where relevant ministers or deputy ministers would be invited.

4. Review of Objectives

Mike: - Having the opportunity to meet and exchange information is very powerful, we should attempt to involve industry

Derek: - It has to be more than just to exchange information
- Need to understand the challenges

Kirk: - Successful in getting the TGI in Alberta and NWT
- Expressed frustration in seeing how the provinces manage to advance their programs, while the GSC changes the process every year and has no project funding

Reg: - Some of the activities impact both Energy and Minerals, notwithstanding that the resources in the basin are predominantly energy

Stefan: - In the last two years the workshop drifted from technical objectives (e.g., 7 technical projects identified at the first workshop), toward communications and political objectives (only 3 technical projects identified last year)
- The original focus of the workshop was the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin, not the 4 western provinces, and it should stay focused as such

Ruth: - There is need for cooperation to achieve the larger objectives

Derek: - One initial objective has been to help GSC to set its own objectives and priorities, but this seems to be overridden by the GSC top management

5. Identification of Areas of Common Interest

6. Improvement of Inter-Agency Cooperation and Industry Involvement

These two agenda items were blended in **Discussions**

- a. It was agreed to stay **focused on the basin**, including the deformed part and the basement, and addressing all resources (energy, minerals, potash, groundwater, etc.)
- b. The workshop should have **two focus lines**, which may/should be separated and probably handled differently in debates and presentations:
 - **Technical**
 - **Communications and political**Need to identify the technical area(s) of common interest, and then identify the means to support them, make them happen
- c. The various surveys face **different challenges**, such as:
 - Limitations of areas and subjects of work (GSC)

- Inability to accept funding from private sources (AGS)
 - Restructuring and re-orientation (BC)
 - Organizational separation of the Energy and Minerals in different branches (e.g., BC, SK) or of the Geoscience and Regulatory aspects (e.g., AB, BC, MN)
- d. Of the three projects identified last year: Tectonic Structure; CBM and Data Integration, it was agreed that:
- the Tectonic Structure is of interest to all organizations;
 - CBM is of importance to BC and AB, of lesser importance to SK, and no importance to MN;
 - Data integration is harder to achieve and “sell”, and CGKN (Canadian Geoscience Knowledge Network) may provide a vehicle to obtain funding (**Terry Poulton** will pursue it)

Devonian carbonates were also identified as of potential common interest.

After discussions, it was agreed that we should pursue a single project on which we should focus. If we don’t achieve progress within a year, then we should re-examine our objectives and role.

The identified project is “**Tectonic Structure of WCSB**”.

The goal is to: 1) organize the project, 2) garner industry support and 3) define deliverables/products.

Kirk Osadetz and **Ruth Bezys** volunteered to organize the project (convene a workshop, define the project, etc.), the Surveys should identify participating staff.

e. On Communications and Political

Mike suggested that the committee should report to CEO’s and VP’s with a summary of activities, rather than a detailed project list or description. Project specifics should be presented to chief geologists and technical staff that then would, hopefully, support and/or promote them to their top management.

Action Item: **Mike Cecile** will organize these presentations, with participation from the provincial surveys and using a single, uniform and consistent template.

Thus, the Committee decided to pursue in the coming year only the following two themes, one technical and one communications:

- a. Structural setting of the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin, from the Precambrian to the surface.
- b. Ongoing advancement of the 'Communications Initiative' recommended by Jan Boon at the May 2001 WCSB Workshop in Regina.

7. Draft Brochure

Rick presented a draft brochure (flyer) about the WCSB committee. After some discussion, it was agreed that:

- we need to produce it
- there is need to upgrade the quality, make it more attractive and eye-catching; the cost can be managed
- it should be targeted mostly at the technical level (geologists)
- we should add something about the \$ value of the resources, reduce the number of pictures

Action Items: - everybody will look at the draft (text, graphics) and provide feedback to Rick by the end of June
- AGS will produce the brochure

8. Closing

Decision: as a group, lobby the GSC to work in the south as well, not only in the north, because that's where the sustainable development takes place, that's where the industry is active, and that's where the jobs are.

Action Item: Rick, as current chair, will take it on.

Next year's meeting

- Organizer: BC (Derek)
- Place: Calgary, in conjunction with the CSPG Convention, it is very handy.