

**NSRWRC Public Meeting**  
**Evening of Wednesday February 27, 2008**  
**Maidstone SK Legion Hall**

7:10 Phil Bruch, Golder Associates Ltd.

Welcomes everyone, introduces himself, goes over meeting "rules"

7:10 Steve McKechnie, NSRWRC Chairperson

Introduces himself and the committee: Ryan Bater, Brent Romanchuk, Bob Colliar, Dennis Gregoire, Derek Mahon, Elwood Scott, Glen Brandt, Don Dill, Dawn Rose

Missing from committee are Julian Sadlowski, Valerie Holowach, Vicki Dutton

He speaks about the history of the committee

- 2003 series of meetings, interest, formed committee
- 2004 first meeting
- 2005 application for funding
- 2006 received funding confirmation, Golder Associates contracted
- 2007 public meetings

He stresses that this is not a project but only a study.

7:15 Phil

Introduces Golder staff: himself, Mike Bender, Amy Langhorne and Tracy Abbs. He states a brief agenda and asks that people hold their questions until the end of the presentation.

7:15 Mike Bender, Golder Associates Ltd.

Begins presentation (to be posted on NSRWRC website).

8:11 Amy Langhorne, Golder Associates Ltd.

Introduces herself and her role in the project, then begins her part of the presentation.

8:27 Mike

Summarizes presentation.

8:30 Phil

Announces a 10-15 minute coffee break before reconvening for question and answer period. During coffee break, one gentleman suggested putting a mailing address on the final slide because some people don't have internet.

8:51 Phil

Asks guests to take seats while microphones are being set up. Small problem arises with wireless microphones, so the house system was used for floor microphone.

8:54 Phil

Sets out "rules" for questioning and announces NSRWRC address: 1202 – 101<sup>st</sup> Street, S9A 0Z8. If people want to ask questions, they are to come up and speak into the floor microphone. They are allowed one question and a point of clarification. Requested that people asking questions state their name and affiliation for the record.

8:55 Question Period

Panel answering questions includes:

Phil Bruch, Amy Langhorne and Mike Bender from Golder Associates Ltd

Steve McKechnie and Ryan Bater from NSRWRC

1. Sandra Finley, Leader of Green Party

What if people just have information to share instead of questions?

Phil – they are welcome to come to the microphone also.

2. Dale Awasis, Chief of the Thunderchild First Nations

He passed out documents. Thunderchild has not been consulted about any activities proposed. They have informed the Government of Saskatchewan about their stance. They own land along river on both sides, they pay taxes on land and are going to be directly affected with anything being proposed. First Nations of Saskatchewan have formed provincial alliance through FSIN. A resolution was adopted at that table May 29, 2007. NSRWRC and Golder have not fulfilled duty to consult. First Nations do not support construction of Highgate dam or any other part of the NSR diversion. There is court precedence that consultation must take place. They want to be involved in what happens in their territory. Thunderchild has already been forced to move once.

3. Eldon Okanee, Consultation Officer for Chief Awasis, Thunderchild First Nation

Thunderchild owns land, pays taxes, soon will have reserve status on traditional territory. They will be directly impacted by flooding. Thunderchild has a consultation policy passed by chief and council. Brad Wall, FSIN, and oil companies or others doing work on their land also have copies. They're asking for consultation. Other First Nations support their document. He read the letter that was directed to minister of environment stating that no consultation has taken place, and asking the government to properly perform consultation.

4. Elaine Hughes, Archerwill

There are developments of 12 refineries near Edmonton. What pressure is Golder getting from owners of these refineries to flood part of Saskatchewan?

Mike – Golder is receiving no pressure to flood valley for refineries. These companies are pursuing their own path forward, for example, the County of Strathcona is looking at constructing a large river intake to service existing and potential future refineries.

5. Joe Schmutz, Saskatchewan Environmental Society

*Highgate proposal is "dead" and people are skeptical of the dam proposal. People deserve improvements and other options have been presented. Landscape map showed that there are some areas along river with good potential. Currently 10 withdrawal sites within 200 kilometres – for irrigation? Steve's initial introductory remarks mentioned interest seeking meetings prior to starting this study. Was there a survey of residents? Shouldn't proceed with proposal until people will pay for the proposed options. What if we build it and they don't come? The other options should be investigated further.*

Mike – clarified that there are 10 licensed withdrawal locations within Highgate reservoir footprint and that not all are for irrigation.

Joe – there were interest seeking meetings?

Ryan - clarifies interest seeking meetings were specific to the dam because people suggested resurrecting PFRA dam study. The study has evolved into general water usage options.

Joe – will more interest seeking meetings occur?

Ryan – there could be, if the members want.

6. Hank ??, lives north on river basin

If government is remotely considering a dam, why are they letting oil rigs drill in the river valley? They will leak eventually. Recently there was drilling near his house, about 30 ft from the river?

Mike – can't speak for government, Highgate dam not on government radar screen

Hank – but government is involved in Highgate dam; they gave money to study.

Mike – matter of timing, process is so close to beginning, not far enough along to warrant stopping oil drilling.

7. Wayne Brown, freelance writer

Draw attention to heritage. Seems there is a lack of evaluation on historical sites along the river. Suggests lots of sites not investigated such as burial grounds, location of signing of treaties, etc.

Amy – Environmental Assessment and Heritage Acts require assessments and relative risks if there is a potential impact to heritage resource. River valleys are considered high heritage potential. In depth studies would have to be done along the river valley. This study identifies it as large scale effort.

Wayne – has Golder considered that there is Diefenbaker dam running north-south and potentially Highgate dam running east-west which segregates the province. For example, Kindersley and Biggar would have limited access.

8. Sandra Finley, Leader of Green Party

If she makes a reasonable and valid point about what needs to change, such as accuracy in accounting, could she expect a change in the report?

Mike – yes.

Amy – meeting notes are included in the report

Phil – wants accurate assessment to be presented

Sandra – Doesn't think Highgate dam option is "dead" and refers to the Oldman Dam proceeding despite recommendations not to proceed.

- Presentation should accurately reflect costs. The cost of the dam should not have two columns of charges: one with interest, one without interest charges. The government of Canada has debt load and dam would add debt to government; therefore, there should not be an analysis with no-debt charges.
- The cost of decommissioning a dam is huge and the public pays for it. The cost-benefit analysis should include decommissioning costs. That cost could be as high as construction costs.
- Failing to address cumulative impact and only looking at a narrow scope is a mistake that is most often made. What else is going on in the river system, such as large withdrawals to other industries? Must look at everything that is going on. She uses example of tar sand development cumulative impact such as acid rain.
- One should look at what's happening currently in the rest of the world when presenting info in a study. For example, Lake Mead behind Hoover Dam has increased water usage because of the water availability. People are dependent on it and Lake Mead will dry out by 2020. Also, if water levels go down, they will lose capability to produce electricity. Another example is the flow of water off the glaciers is already past peak flow, meaning less water available. Golder reports are lacking sound projection of what comes in the future.

Mike – debt charges – previous meetings showed cost estimate with finance charges, this is the first meeting showing non-finance charges. Meridian Dam cost estimates did not include debt financing.

Mike – decommissioning costs – it's true that Golder isn't showing decommissioning cost yet, and the study assumes a 100-year life span, and that will be clarified in the report including a decommissioning cost.

Mike – cumulative impact – water allocation framework in AB, SK, MB that account for cumulative impacts and our study has stayed within those guidelines

*Sandra – do you believe a 100 year life span is reasonable given the recent decommissioning of dams?*

Mike – yes, it is a reasonable life span. That is our assumption.

#### 9. Brian Zinchuk, Battlefords News Optimist

*Was Golder involved in Meridian dam study?*

Mike – yes, Golder did the study. The key study members from the Meridian Dam study are also involved in this study (i.e. Les Sawatsky, Dave Fernet, Deborah Chan-Yan), but Phil, Amy, or Mike were not directly involved in the Meridian Dam study.

Bryan – this study is similar to Meridian dam study. Did you find this process has same conclusions as Meridian study?

Mike – benefit-cost ratio very similar

Bryan – is there a recommendation from Golder to do or not do one of these options

Mike – Golder just studies the options and presents the information, we aren't making recommendations

10. Gil Pedersen, lives between Maidstone and Cutknife

The presentation said that a nuclear power plant can not occur without water storage. Concerned that Highgate will support nuclear power.

Mike – nuclear power not part of the study and not part of any of the options, although information was supplied to the committee about water requirements for nuclear power along with various other industries.

11. Marcella Pedersen, Cutknife

*What is the secretive long term goal for this project?*

Mike – there is no secret agenda from Golder

Steve – represents RM of Britannia, and the study doesn't have secret agenda, just interested in looking at the options. There will be an annual meeting of the committee prior to end of March, and the next board will be making decisions regarding this study. The long term goal is to investigate the options and that's why they hired consultants.

Marcella – there is a purpose that Highgate dam is being discussed, worried that hidden agenda is to sell water to Unites States.

Ryan – organization wants to maximize socio-economic benefit of the North Saskatchewan River. This is just a study, not a project.

Marcella – skeptical that project is getting money from government for some hidden reason.

12. Lyle Orchard

- Attended previous public meeting and noted that dam price as gone up since then. Why was Golder asked to pursue Highgate dam further when the other study options looked better?
- Doesn't agree with no-debt costing column for the Highgate dam options, that column should be eliminated.
- Off channel storage option – how does that work, if it works at all? His experience is that the side channel would silt up and ongoing dredging must occur. Is that option even feasible? Would the weir have to be extended across the entire river which would have greater impacts?

Mike - (All options were presented for the purpose of comparison)

Mike – weir is a concept only at this point; detailed studies have not been done.

Lyle – so then cost-benefit not that accurate if there hasn't been detailed studies

Mike – costing was done to include all potential infrastructure, including a weir.

Steve – committee decided to investigate the dam option further based on a board vote. In his personal case, since he represents the RM of Brittannia, he sought input from the RM councillors and voted as per their direction.

13. Katherine Finn, North Saskatchewan Source Water Protection

Question about dirt, where will dirt come from for the dam and will it have negative affects such as noise from trucking, excavation, impact to habitat? What are the risks?

Mike – borrow sources as shown on map as PFRA outlined in their report. No further study has been done on these sources

Amy – impact to habitat was part of their review of issues.

14. Wayne Brown, freelance writer

Glad not on board of Britannia because study is full of assumptions and how do they make decisions from these assumptions.

15. Don Stevenson, Saskatoon

He has the Westside Irrigation final report that is chasing the same money. Both are irrigation studies wanting the same money that would be pitting one side of the government against the other.

16. Vinessa Currie, Clearwater Canoeing Ltd.

Was tourism impact discussed?

Mike – not really discussed tonight, just that recreation would possibly be a net benefit from the dam reservoir

Vinessa – she is currently has a company running canoeing on the river. Isn't that part of the status quo option? Shouldn't tourism be included as a positive if the river was left as is?

Mike – status quo option was the reference or zero change option.

10:10 Derek Mahon, NSRWRC member

Thanked everyone for coming. Thanked First Nations for their comments. Thanked Golder.

Meeting attendance sheet attached.