



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: May 6, 2010

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The next regular meeting of the OBWB is scheduled for 10am on June 1, 2010 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Endocrine project shows low levels in treated wastewater: Early results of the Okanagan Endocrine Disruptor Study were presented to the Water Board, showing low concentrations of estrogen compounds in treated wastewater coming from Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton treatment plants. Dilution into local waters and degradation of these compounds over time are key factors in the low levels, noted the study's authors, UBC-Okanagan's Dr. Jeff Curtis and graduate student Tricia Brett. At chronic high levels, Endocrine Disrupting Compounds (EDCs) have caused feminization of male fish and amphibians, and the collapse of fish populations. Dr. Curtis stated that EDC measurements from Okanagan treatment plants were much lower than those found to affect fish health. The study will continue for another year and focus on seasonal effects on EDCs. The study is funded by the OBWB, Okanagan Indian Band, Interior Health, BC Ministry of Environment and Health Canada.

Presentations on water aim to reach wider audience: A pilot project to increase communication about contemporary water management issues is being developed and will include a multi-media library of presentations made by water experts to the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council. The OWSC, a technical advisory committee to the board, often has high level officials present on emerging water issues. Presentations by Dr. Ron Griffin (University of Texas), Dr. Henning Bjornlund (University of Lethbridge), and Dr. John Janmaat (UBC Okanagan) will be among those available on the OBWB website in early summer.

Canada-U.S. NASA project gaining momentum: Discussions between the Okanagan Basin Water Board and a team of approximately 20 U.S. project partners are underway to develop a joint proposal to NASA. The proposal, in part, is to use satellite data to further develop the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand models, as well as improve hydrometric monitoring. The lack of data on low and mid-elevation snowpack and water levels was recently flagged by the Water Board, recognizing that one cannot properly manage water needs without knowing what is available.

Okanagan WaterWise public education program ramps up: The Water Board has hired two temporary staff to help launch the agency's Okanagan WaterWise program. The program will encourage homeowners, businesses and schools, throughout the Okanagan valley, to adopt water conservation and protection measures.

For more information, please visit: www.OBWB.ca