

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2011, AT BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	Ted van der Gulik, Vice Chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
B.C. Ministry of Environment, Resource Stewardship & Parks	Ken Cunningham
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Mark Watt
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Dan Millar (alternate)
Kelowna Fish and Game Club	Doug Flintoft
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Okanagan Nation Alliance	James Pepper (alternate)
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark (alternate)
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
South Okanagan Real Estate Board	Elden Ulrich
Water Supply Association of BC	Toby Pike (alternate)

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Doug Edwards
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
B.C. Ministry of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Branch	Steve Matthews
Oceola Fish and Game Club	Lorne Davies
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Okanagan College	Douglas MacLeod
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	Howard Neufeld
Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society	Mark McKenney
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
Urban Development Institute	Robert Evans

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Communications and Research Coordinator	Corinne Jackson
OBWB, Interim Office and Grants Administrator	Melissa Tesche

GUESTS:

B.C. Ministry of Environment, OWSC Source Protection Cttee.	Vic Jensen
City of Kelowna, Infrastructure Planning	Fred Shaad
District of Coldstream	Maria Besso

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Brian Guy

Seconded by Evelyn Riechert

“That the agenda for the March 10, 2011 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held Feb. 10, 2011, at the Best Western Hotel, Kelowna.

Two small amendments were noted.

Moved by Elden Ulrich

Seconded by Hans Buchler

“That the minutes from the Feb. 10, 2011 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears presented her board report, noting the deadline for Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants was Feb. 21. Some 35 applications were submitted with a total request of \$703,000 and \$300,000 available.

Chair Bauer added that there was discussion by the board that perhaps the OBWB should set priorities for funding since the program is so over-subscribed. He noted that council has set priorities for the coming term (i.e. water for agriculture, source protection, groundwater and the Water Act modernization) and asked if these should be forwarded to the board. Mr. Dan Millar suggested that the grants should fit within the Sustainable Water Strategy which outlines the priorities of council. Staff noted that this could be included in the grant's Terms of Reference.

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that Natural Resources Canada approved funding to reprint the Okanagan Waterscape poster. A small number of copies from the first printing are still available on request.

The board was interested in knowing how the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study is being used in the valley, she added. A report was provided noting a number of projects including Lake Country's Master Water Plan, the Regional Growth Strategies being conducted by the regional districts of North Okanagan and Okanagan-Similkameen, and several other projects. A copy of the report will be provided to council members. Chair Bauer asked members to forward the report to others in their agencies, letting them see how the study can be used in their own organization.

Vice-chair Ted Van der Gulik further suggested providing the report to funders. Dr. Warwick Sears agreed.

The board discussed a letter to the International Joint Commission and Okanagan MP Stockwell Day regarding the renewal of operating orders on Osoyoos Lake and concern around the potential for minimum flows to be negotiated. The letter to Mr. Day asks that he stay apprised of negotiations and aware of the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum Sept. 18 to 20. The letter will be discussed later in this meeting, added Dr. Warwick Sears.

Chair Bauer added that the board also discussed the possibility of the Water Board writing position

papers on various issues and posting them to the OBWB website. Suggestions are welcome, he added.

5. SUSTAINABLE WATER STRATEGY REVIEW

Mr. Nelson Jatel provided council members with copies of the Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS) Review final draft, focussing attention on the four priorities identified by council for this term: groundwater, source water protection, an agricultural water reserve and Water Act Modernization.

Mr. Don Dobson noted that in most parts of the Okanagan source water assessment plans are being conducted but they're not actual plans at this time (see page 7).

There was discussion that any investigation of a possible Agricultural Water Reserve (AWR) needs to include talk of an Environmental Water Reserve (EWR) – that they can't be looked at independently. The comments were noted and Dr. Warwick Sears added that these issues are recognized as going hand-in-hand.

It was also suggested that, while no issue can be studied in complete isolation of other areas, there is a need to prioritize and focus council efforts.

Ms. Margaret Bakelaar entered the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Mr. van der Gulik spoke to the need for a network to be developed that will hold the various water information that is being collected. The province is interested in proceeding on this and will be going to the federal government for funding. Letters of support will be needed, he added.

There was general consensus on the need to connect this information. Drs. Brian Guy, Denise Neilsen and Chair Bauer offered to discuss how to move this forward to Canada's Treasury Board and integrate the efforts with the Water Supply and Demand Study.

There was discussion around publicity of the SWS report. Dr. Warwick Sears suggested a news release when the report is made public. Chair Bauer added that it is important to note that the SWS is not a guidebook for the OBWB alone. It is also intended to guide other government offices, community groups, the business community, and citizens in advancing water sustainability in the basin.

It was noted that it might be beneficial to look for common barriers to action for the SWS recommendations. If common barriers exist, they could potentially be addressed together. It was further suggested that it might be useful to have the news release identify these common barriers to action and how the strategy requires the efforts of every citizen to make progress.

6. SOURCE WATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

With some members of the Source Water Protection Committee unable to attend the meeting, Mr. Jatel provided an overview of its efforts so far. The committee is looking at holding a community workshop and look at moving beyond source water assessments to plans – similar to what is being done at the Regional District of North Okanagan. An intern is being hired to help develop a framework to do this, with an emphasis on building trust among stakeholders.

The committee is also looking at the potential to expand the OBWB's Sewage Facilities Grants program from upgrades to facilities to include urban stormdrain work and other infrastructure projects that improve water quality throughout the basin.

While there was talk in favour of an expansion of the program (e.g. recognizing the benefit to the environment as well as source water protection), it was also noted that the current program's attention to replacing old infrastructure is still needed as well.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that any expansion of the program will still require that projects benefit the entire valley. This can be discussed further at the Strategic Planning Session with the Board of Directors in May.

Mr. Dobson added that it is important that the program not only look at drinking water quality in urban areas but also supports less organized areas with source protection issues.

7. PRESENTATION: INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

City of Kelowna, Infrastructure Planning: Fred Shaad

Mr. Shaad presented a report to council noting some of the history of infrastructure planning in the City of Kelowna. The community's Master Drainage Plan was done in 1989, he said, adding that landscape level basin plans were done, examining individual watersheds, and was completed in the 1990s. A further detailed basin plan of minor systems was completed in 2001. Basin plans will now be updated as needed and are anticipated to occur at 10-year intervals.

Urban development has had a tremendous impact on the city and seemingly a constant impact to drainage, Mr. Shaad said.

Planning for storms:

The city is planning for significant rains using storm run-off analysis. However, it is recognized that stormwater issues are going to intensify with climate change. This is going to require the municipality to think about how it could manage rainwater better, Mr. Shaad added. A 1-in-10 year storm is now considered a 1-in-5, he said.

Detailed basin planning:

Rain gardens and porous pavement, which are often suggested to deal with heavy rains in coastal areas, are not going to work as well in Kelowna, said Mr. Shaad, adding that the ground is frozen here in winter and significant run-off is an issue here in the spring.

Stormwater Storage

The city recognizes the need to sink the rain into the ground quickly, rather than letting it run-off, carrying pollutants. It is also interested in harvesting rainwater (e.g. for agricultural use). Farmers could store and release water as they need it. It would allow water suppliers to have greater control of flow rates and flow volume.

Stormwater Management

The city has 66 detention ponds; 17 oil and grit separators; 4 pump stations; and 8,500 catch basins (which are cleaned once a year). Funding for stormwater management comes from general taxation revenue. However, needs that are created as a result of development, are paid for through Development Cost Charges.

Mr. Shaad noted that the city has adopted new landscape and irrigation bylaws that require new developments to use proper topsoil, put in drought tolerant plants and properly calculate their water needs.

Mr. Pike and Dr. Guy exited the meeting.

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Launch of Water Stewardship Council blog

Mr. Jatel invited people to visit and participate on the blog now set up on the OBWB website, adding it is intended to encourage council members to provide input on issues of importance to them.

8.2 Letter to International Joint Commission (IJC) – US/Canada flow requirements

Mr. Jatel asked for comment to the letter going to the American and Canadian chairs of the IJC.

Chair Bauer provided some background noting that it is expected that the U.S. will ask the IJC and its Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (OLBC) to renew operating orders on Osoyoos Lake for 2013. Currently, the orders ensure certain lake levels, however, there is some discussion around the possibility that the U.S. will ask that the IJC ensure certain flow rates.

One of OLBC's Canadian representatives, Brian Symonds, was invited to speak to OBWB Board of Directors. After hearing from Symonds, the board agreed to send a letter to the IJC voicing its concerns about flows and that there is not enough information to be able to make a decision on this. Another letter is going to MP Stockwell Day and others saying please stay apprised of this and ensure the protection of Okanagan interests.

Chair Bauer added that the OBWB needs to be careful not to become adversarial. For example, protecting our needs also means having to protect the fish in the south, he explained.

Ms. Renee Clark said that she wanted the letter to include the need to ensure water for agriculture is protected. Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the board made the same recommendation.

Mr. Millar, who sits on the OLBC for Canada, said that it is unlikely that the IJC will put flows in the order if both sides don't agree. If Washington wants to pursue this, he added, they would probably have to negotiate this with the B.C. government. Still, he said, if anyone has a concern they can write a letter to the Chairs of the OLBC and the IJC chairs, and also make a submission at the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, set for Sept. 18 to 20.

9. ROUND TABLE – MEMBER UPDATES AND OWSC FEEDBACK

As Mr. Jatel began the round table portion of the meeting, he asked council members to also comment on how they felt the council was operating.

Dr. Warwick Sears asked that comments regarding the operating of council be provided in writing, in addition to the verbal response here, to ensure suggestions are tracked.

- Mr. van der Gulik: Update – Work is underway to expand the Irrigation Scheduling Calculator to the prairies and elsewhere across Canada. OWSC feedback – Believe there should be more presentations from council members and that using the expertise around this table is important.
- Mr. Buchler: Update – BC Agriculture Council has provided comment on B.C.'s Water Sustainability Act and is suggesting that the water volume suggested is too low. OWSC feedback – It will be important for council to discuss water markets, priority access and whether or not FITFIR is working and what other options exist; Maybe there should be outside presenters only every three months to ensure more discussion from members; Agree position statements are important, and while we may not find consensus it is still important.
- Mr. Matthews: Update – There is some merit to bringing resource sectors together with the newly formed B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to ensure balance between the environment and other issues. A meeting was held between Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans and provincial fisheries and Okanagan Nation Alliance to discuss policy and fisheries in the Okanagan. ESSA presented their findings on water for fish flow needs, conducted as part of the OBWB's Water Supply and Demand Study. OWSC feedback – Senior government and others are recognizing the OBWB and WSC as informed organizations; At the same time there is need for a more focussed approach at the WSC table; While presentations are important, there doesn't have to be one every month.
- Mr. Birtles: Update – Interior Health is currently going through an internal audit. OWSC feedback – The OBWB is well-positioned to look at source protection (quantity and quality), and because of the knowledge basis here we are well-positioned as council to provide position statements for the

OBWB; Would like some form of notes as to direction we are taking after meetings; Like having speakers each month because it increases my own knowledge on various issues.

- Mr. Jensen: Update – B.C.'s Ministry of Environment retained Environmental Protection. Recent work has focused on sampling in the North Okanagan to determine impact of land uses and whether water stewardship targets have been met. The stewardship society for the Lower Shuswap helped set the priorities of the Water Stewardship division and have negotiated a federal/provincial monitoring station for the Shuswap River. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between MoE, RDCO, Kelowna and Summerland to work on collaborative monitoring. ONA was awarded the contract. Mr. Jensen invited discussion on how people would like the increased monitoring reported out.
- Mr. Dobson: OWSC feedback – Agree with priorities set by council; Would appreciate receiving some of the information provided to council sooner so it can be reviewed before members are asked to discuss it; Also, agree it would be helpful to have a reporting out on the results of meetings and next steps.
- Ms. Clark:Update: RDNO has put in hydrometric stations and are working on an agriculture metering program, source water protection and planning, and she hopes they can share lessons learned, and learn from others in the group. OWSC feedback – Noted that she is the alternate for Regional District of North Okanagan, so she does not attend all meetings; The regular council member, Laura Frank, is currently involved with sustainable planning, but Ms. Clark attends as a regional district employee; RDNO is primarily interested in stormwater and source protection; While she agrees with the priority, one of the biggest challenges being faced right now is improvements to drinking water quality; Maybe there should be discussion around the table about the challenges each of the stakeholders are facing.
- Mr. Ulrich: OWSC feedback – As a member of the B.C. Real Estate Board, the open discussions at council provides valuable information that can be taken back to the association; Also, the REB was invited to participate in discussions around the Water Sustainability Act and the information provided through the Water Stewardship Council was very useful; Water conservation and education is being pushed to property owners and REB members are taking it to their clients.
- Ms. Neilsen: OWSC feedback – The priorities that have been set are fine and the priority setting exercise was useful; Agree that there needs to be more time for open discussion, but would like the discussion to be a little more focussed, deciding on a deliverable ahead of time; The OBWB is doing well at achieving its mandate, and the importance of the WSC was stressed; The OBWB is seen at the federal level as an example of how complex problems should be solved; There is increasing interest by the Similkameen in following the OBWB model with the WSD study.
- Mr. Watt: Update – Kelowna's mayor has asked the province for more opportunity for input to the Water Sustainability Act, like the OBWB has requested. Interior Health and city staff are conducting lake water risk analysis for various issues. The city and Kelowna Joint Water Committee partners are working on creating an integrated water system, trying to create the best and lowest cost solution for drinking water in Kelowna, and are using the WSD study as part of the modelling. OWSC feedback – Concentrating on certain items will ensure the people that should be attending on those issues turn up and provide input; Would like speakers oriented to those specific topics so time can be used better.
- Mr. Hesketh: Update – Fraser Salmon Watershed is holding a stewardship conference March 15 to 16 in Lumby. Travel grants are available for those interested in grassroots level work on stewardship. The annual tour of Silver Hills is June 4. Everyone is welcome.
- Mr. Dickinson: Update – Phase one of the Liquid Waste Management Plan is complete and is being brought to Vernon council. OWSC feedback – Think WSC is effective, but would like a bit more time for discussion, making sure that there is a common goal with a deliverable; The need for source water protection and drinking water protection are top issues in Vernon right now; All the outlets right now will be Coldstream's responsibility, but should be the responsibility of the whole basin; Would like to see the speaker more closely tied to the subject to be discussed that day.
- Ms. Bakelaar: Update – Regional District of Central Okanagan has been working on Foreshore Inventory Mapping and an Aquatic Habitat Index. The results show our impact on lakes, and the AHI rates the value of areas and shows the most fragile habitats. OWSC feedback – Agree with council's four priorities, but would like to see eco-systems also brought into it since they are

connected; Like the presentations but believe they should be restricted in time, allow time for discussion, and should be related to what is being discussed at that meeting; The open discussion is very valuable and the connection between science and policy is not always easy and we have the ability to do it at the council table; Agree with need for products and outcomes noted and not just discussion.

- Ms. Besso: OWSC feedback – As a councillor for the District of Coldstream and a guest, the openness of the group is appreciated and the high calibre of members around the table is noted; On the political side, would like to see more data-driven decision making; Like the priorities that have been set; Would like to see the Agricultural Water Reserve addressed in a timely fashion, however, it was noted that some politicians may need to be brought up to speed with the problems surrounding this issue; Keeping Coldstream council members properly informed on important water issues is sometimes difficult, she added; It's possible that improved communication might have to happen through the Water Board.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: Update – OBWB staff have been talking about how to improve facilitation of this council and provide more feedback. We are looking at getting an intern who can work with the committees and do some background research so the information coming back to council is richer. If know of a suitable candidate please let us know.
- Ms. Riechert: Update – RDOS is developing a new Official Community Plan for area H and is putting in a watershed zone to limit permitted uses. This is new for us. OWSC feedback – Agree with the priorities and more focussed discussion would be helpful; As a planner with RDOS, finds she is more interested in science and policy and its affects on planning; Learning a lot and who I can go to with questions; The presentations may not be necessary each month and more time for discussion is important.
- Mr. Flintoft: Update – BC Wildlife Federation has been involved in the Water Act Modernization process. OWSC feedback – Agree with the need to consider eco-systems as part of our deliberations; Find the meetings informative.
- Mr. Millar: Update – Environment Canada is looking to have a bigger presence here in the Okanagan and is lobbying to have more money brought here recognizing its unique challenges. OWSC feedback – Would like to see more focus on water conservation as a form of demand management. This is important because this is a water short area; Enjoy the speakers, but could be improved if there were themes for each meeting that the speakers fit within.
- Ms. Tesche: Update – Staff are working to compile a document of what challenges members are facing so they know who they can talk to for more information.
- Ms. Jackson: Update – World Water Week will include the annual panel discussion. New however, is a series of conversations on Okanagan water issues airing on AM1150, Monday to Friday during WWW. Staff have also created an Okanagan WaterWise contest for young people, encouraging them to learn more about Okanagan water issues with the chance to win a pool party in the North, Central and South Okanagan. The challenge will run throughout WWW to Drinking Water Week in May to reach as many youth as possible and piggyback on the awareness raised through both of these weeks. The board has proclaimed DWW, May 1 to 7, and will be asking other communities to join them and consider holding events in their communities. City of Kelowna, Summerland and RDNO are interested in holding open houses. Anyone interested in holding an event is encouraged to contact Ms. Jackson. A website analysis of the WaterWise and corporate OBWB site were conducted. In particular the OkWaterWise site will be improved to increase its visibility. One of the recommendations made was the importance of getting the website linked to other trustworthy and busy sites. Ms. Jackson asked council members to ensure their agency has a link to the WaterWise website.
- Mr. Jatel: Update – The OBWB's World Water Week panel on March 22 is being hosted at the Bohemian Cafe in Kelowna and the topic is "water in an urbanized world." Oliver Brandes of the Polis Project (UVic) is on the panel along with Dr. Warwick Sears, Toby Pike, local farmer Domenic Rampone, and UBCO's Dr. John Janmaat and Dr. John Wagner. The current council and the entire Water Management Program is in place until Dec. 31, 2011, but then it is up for review and we will need to have buy in from all three regional districts to continue.
- Mr. Bauer: Update – UBC-O's application for Agriflex funding was unsuccessful.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held April 14, 2011.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Moved by Rob Birtles

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of March 10, 2011 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director