

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 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, Agri-Enviro. Branch	Doug Edwards
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Ehren Lee
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
B.C. Ministry of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Branch	Steve Matthews
B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Ops.	Conrad Pryce (alternate)
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Mark Watt
City of Vernon	Rob Dickenson
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ruta Fluxgold (alternate)
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Kelowna Fish and Game Club	Doug Flintoft
Oceola Fish and Game Club	Lorne Davies
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	Howard Neufeld
Regional District North Okanagan	Jennifer Miles (alternate)
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Okanagan College	Douglas MacLeod
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Gwen Bridge
Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society	Mark McKenney
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
South Okanagan Real Estate Board	Kevin Kole
Urban Development Institute	Robert Evans
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Communications and Research Coordinator	Corinne Jackson
OBWB, Water Policy and Research Intern	Michelle Cook

GUESTS:

Astral Media, AM 1150	Phil Johnson
B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Ops.	Solvej Patschke
Black Press – Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Environment Canada	Chris Lee
Forrex	Suzan Lapp
Global TV – CHBC News	Julia Wong
Simon Fraser Univ. – Adaptation to Climate Change Team	Deborah Hartford
SFU – ACT, UN Water for Life Decade	Robert Sanford
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Steve Matthews

Seconded by Lorraine Bennest

“That the agenda for the Nov. 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 Oct. 13, 2011, at the Best Western Inn, Kelowna.

A small change was noted.

Moved by Brian Guy

Seconded by Evelyn Riechert

“That the minutes from the Oct. 13, 2011 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported on the last board meeting, noting it was the last before local municipal elections are held. Last election, she added, resulted in a number of changes on the Water Board which could happen again.

The board has forwarded a letter to the federal government with a recommendation to not approve the uplisting of the Rocky Mountain ridged mussel to “endangered” under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). The recommendation does not mean the OBWB does not support the need for recovery efforts for the mussel, but rather non-support for the proposed SARA strategy for the recovery.

The board also received and approved forwarding a report to the International Joint Commission that includes an Okanagan solution and recommendations for the renewal of Operating Orders for Osoyoos Lake. The recommendations protect water sovereignty in Canada while addressing the water needs of fish on both sides of the border. The report and a covering letter in support of the recommendations has also been forwarded to local MPs.

5. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Pryce: B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) is undergoing some attrition with new staff learning water issues which will take some time.
- Ms. Fluxgold: Environment Canada is continuing to monitor the buoys on Okanagan Lake. The Water Stewardship Council’s regular EC representative, Dan Miller, is retiring soon. And, as the alternate, Ms. Fluxgold is taking on a new assignment for a few months and will be replaced by Chris Lee who will be attending council meetings on the agency’s behalf.

Phil Johnson entered the meeting at 1:18 p.m.

- Ms. Riechert: RDOS issued a news release regarding the start of work on the OK Falls treatment plant and the assistance with OBWB funds. The regional district’s biodiversity conservation strategy is almost complete for South Okanagan permitting areas.
- Ms. Jackson: The Slow it. Spread it. Sink it! homeowner’s guide is completed and now available on the Okanagan WaterWise website (www.okwaterwise.ca). Other recent communication initiatives

staff are involved with include providing OBWB/WaterWise information for Okanagan regional district calendars and utility newsletters, and promotion of the Water Board's Climate Change Adaptation Tools Workshop set for Nov. 22-23.

- Dr. Warwick Sears: There has been a lot of attention given to water governance, with a conference in Vancouver, with the Water Act Modernization. Staff have been working to ensure that water remains on the province's agenda.
- Mr. Jatel: Staff have been working with various council committees on a number of projects including: a hydrologic connectivity study, the continuation of work on groundwater monitoring wells including the recently drilled Hullcar well in Spallumcheen.
- Ms. Cook: As the OBWB's Water Policy and Research Intern, research is being done on real estate and water licencing, shoreline management guidelines, and an Agricultural Water Reserve.
- Mr. Matthews: As head of FLNRO's Fish and Wildlife Branch for Okanagan-Thompson, work is being done to ensure that licences on dam structures are up to standard. Water flows around Oliver's Okanagan River Restoration Initiative (ORRI) project this year has caused gravel bars to develop providing healthy habitat for kokanee.
- Mr. Edwards: Well-owners workshops are being put on Nov. 21 to 23 in Vernon, Kelowna and Cawston together with the BC Groundwater Association, B.C. FLNRO, Interior Health and the Okanagan regional districts.
- Mr. Lee: APEG will be presenting PIEVC case studies as part of the Water Board's climate tools workshop Nov. 23.
- Mr. Birtles: Like many OBWB staff and ORRI representatives, Interior Health also met and spoke with students who toured the Okanagan with the Canadian Water Network (CWN) Oct. 18. A few more Okanagan source protection assessments have been completed.
- Bauer: Post-grad students, from across Canada, and who participated in the CWN workshop, heard about collaboration, networking, negotiating through economic and political systems, and about the WAM process. It is expected that the province will be releasing draft legislation re: the amended Water Act - which is not normally done - but they are looking for final input before a final act is adopted.

Mr. Watt entered the meeting at 1:47 p.m.

6. GUEST PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Hydrologic Connectivity / FITFIR

Brian Guy – Summit Environmental Consultants

Dr. Guy presented a table that illustrates hydrologic connectivity in the Okanagan and how the current First-in-Time First-in-Right system works within it.

The modeling, he explained, looks at what would happen if Okanagan water licencees used what they are actually licenced for (which, currently, is less than they actually use). It also shows what would happen if the Okanagan was to use priority licencing to supply all downstream requirements and what that would like under maximum demand. If this were to have occurred in recent years, there would have been mining of Okanagan Lake, affecting kokanee shore spawners and the lake would not have been able to meet the downstream needs in the valley (e.g. some wineries in Oliver would have had problems), Dr. Guy noted.

The modeling, using WEAP and MIKE SHE, allows researchers to change the priorities for water to ensure the lakes are working within their limits.

After some discussion, Chair Bauer noted that the research will be helpful in planning for future drought, allowing the OBWB to run scenarios and know what the implications of decisions will be.

6.2 Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACT) report on climate change and water in Canada

Bob Sandford – UN Water for Life Decade and ACT report lead policy author

Mr. Sandford noted that ACT's climate change report focused in on three areas in Canada: Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories and the Okanagan in B.C. The report provides recommendations for immediate, medium (3-5 years) and long-term (5-10 years) solutions.

Mr. Sandford noted that his work with FLOW (Forum for Leadership on Water) will include a 16 city tour with this report, encouraging ways to improve water management. The OBWB, he said, stands as an example of how solutions can be practical and durable.

Climate change is real and the effects have already been substantial, he continued, noting the melting in the arctic, the flooding in Manitoba and Saskatchewan – affecting agriculture, and the economy. Managing water is a way to adapt to these effects.

Our infrastructure was developed in a way that encourages water-wasting, and which is too costly to maintain and replace. In turn, our water leads us to squander energy, contributing to greenhouse warming, which then pounds our improperly designed infrastructure, built under a different climate regime.

This research shows that there are no legal, legislative or bureaucratic obstacles to addressing these issues. Our governance structure could provide the change we need.

The OBWB is expected to have considerable input regarding WAM, Mr. Sandford continued. The Okanagan example is being noticed by the Province of B.C. and has the support of the UN Water for Life Decade in its efforts to address water management.

Following some discussion, Mr. Sandford noted that the impact of past decisions is catching up to us; that the effects of climate change are having costly consequences but that it is also going to become more difficult to adapt down the road. The reforms that are required are more important than they may appear.

Chair Bauer thanked Mr. Sandford for his support of the OBWB's work and his presentation.

6.3 Managing Agricultural Irrigation in the Okanagan Ted van der Gulik – B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Mr. van der Gulik began his presentation noting that 85% of water used in the Okanagan is used on irrigation – and a lot of this is inefficiently used. One of the tools available now to address this is the Okanagan Irrigation Management web-program (OKIM). It has been piloted in three Okanagan communities and allows farmers to see their allocation, how much they've used, and how much of their allocation is left.

Mr. van der Gulik noted that, given the amount of water agriculture uses in the Okanagan, the OKIM program could be of great benefit, especially if we experience the dry years that are expected, not unlike 2003.

In an effort to share more information on the OKIM system, Mr. van der Gulik offered to provide a three hour workshop in the Okanagan, similar to ones being held in Victoria, the Lower Mainland and Kamloops.

Ms. Miles noted that RDNO is one of the pilot areas and is very happy with the program, adding there is interest from their farming community.

Noting interest from the council members, Mr. Jatel offered to work with Mr. van der Gulik to organize a workshop.

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Discussion: Water licences and real estate transactions in B.C.

Ms. Cook provided an overview of a discussion paper regarding water licences and B.C. real estate transactions.

Mr. Neufeld added that oftentimes, people don't know what it means to have a water licence, the requirements upon them and that there is a priority sequence in licences.

There was a suggestion that a checklist for realtors, that includes water licences, might be useful.

Mr. Lee added that, if a list is being produced, other relevant water issues should perhaps be added, including what it means to have property that in a riparian area.

Chair Bauer asked staff to do some additional research, including work on a strategy to move forward.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS & DISCUSSION

8.1 Agriculture Water Reserve Committee

Mr. Jatel reported that the committee is researching what an AWR would look like in 2-3 Okanagan subbasins. An Ag Food Canada funding application was unsuccessful and the committee is looking at next steps.

There was some suggestion of potential candidate areas including Penticton Creek, Mission Creek and the north end of Okanagan Lake.

8.2 Source Water Protection Committee

Mr. Jatel noted that a source water discussion primer is being developed. Also, staff are doing some initial research on an Okanagan Lake management plan project charter.

8.3 Okanagan Groundwater Committee

Mr. Jatel reported that there have been discussions on groundwater. However, any development of policy is difficult right now with the province redrafting its Water Act. Once a draft of the new act is made available, the committee will be able to speak to it and move forward.

8.4 Hydrometric Monitoring Committee

Mr. Jatel noted that a charter for the Hydrometric Monitoring Project has been developed. The committee is now reviewing it. There is keen interest in the re-establishment of hydrometric monitoring stations, however details regarding ongoing operating costs now need to be discussed. There is initial interest in Lake Country and possibly with Southeast Kelowna Irrigation District.

The committee is looking to develop a cost-sharing agreement between the federal, provincial and local government for the stations, similar to the groundwater well monitoring stations.

Ms. Fluxgold, Mr. Chris Lee and Ms. Miles exited the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

8.5 BC Water Act Modernization

Dr. Warwick Sears invited council members who are part of an industry group to consider writing a

letter to the province, noting the importance of the WAM process continuing and its connection to jobs.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held December 8, 2011 at the Best Western Inn, Kelowna, followed by holiday celebration at the home of Dr. Warwick Sears.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Moved by Rob Birtles

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

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director