

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2012, AT
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, vice-chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Agri-Enviro. Branch	Doug Edwards
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alternate)
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Ted van der Gulik
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource)	Ken Cunningham
Canadian Water Resources Association	Dwayne Meredith
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Rob Palmer (alternate)

Regrets

B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Fish/Wildlife)	Mike Burwash
City of Kelowna	Mark Watt
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Kendall Woo
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Aaron Deans (alternate)
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Communications Director	Corinne Jackson
OBWB, Office and Projects Manager	James Littlely

GUESTS:

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada	Monica Hadarits
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada	Richard Rieger
Associated Engineering/CWRA	Rod MacLean
Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens	Eva Antonijevic
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
South Okanagan Real Estate Board	Pamela Hanson
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Zoe Kirk
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
Urban Systems	Michelle Cook
Urban Systems	Glen Zachary
Western Water Associates	Laurie Welch

1. ALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Hans Buchler

Seconded by Don Dobson

“That the agenda for the Oct. 11, 2012 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held Sept. 13, 2012, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

A small amendment was noted.

Moved by Ken Cunningham

Seconded by Doug Edwards

“That the minutes from the Sept. 13, 2012 joint meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council and Okanagan Basin Water Board be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported on the previous board meeting, noting a presentation by Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations staff on changes at the ministry related to enforcement around boat docks and other foreshore alterations that impact habitat.

There was discussion around the Osoyoos Lake Board of Control’s annual meeting, held Sept. 24, and the possible creation of an International Watershed Initiative. A feasibility study is being looked at, added Dr. Warwick Sears.

Water Board directors adopted the Irrigation Efficiency Position Paper and were provided with a communications update.

There was discussion around groundwater analysis work being done by UBC Okanagan’s Craig Nichol and the board approved a groundwater modeling project using Water Evaluation And Planning System (WEAP).

The board approved a letter to Canada’s Department of Environment and Fisheries and Oceans requesting urgent action on zebra mussels including inspection systems, recognizing the invasive species is one of the biggest threats to our water systems. Next week, the BC Invasive Plant Society is holding a workshop in Kelowna on zebra and quagga mussels.

Vice-chair Dobson noted discussion around a water licence issued to a lease lot holder in Lake Country. The potential for a Watershed Management Plan was also discussed, he added.

Chair Bauer noted that the board’s approval of the council’s Irrigation Efficiency paper is significant, adding that it is now an official position of the agency and is the starting point for the development of policies that support it.

5. GUEST SPEAKER: BC Water Act 101

Randy Cairns, B.C. Ministry of Environment, Water Policy Advisor

Mr. Cairns gave an overview of the B.C. Water Act – its history and how the act has evolved, and an update on the modernization process.

FUNDAMENTALS:

Mr. Cairns noted some of the fundamental principles within the Water Act including: Crown owns the water, water use and licencing is based on FITFIR (first in time, first in right), licence rentals are paid annually to the Crown and can be cancelled, no bulk removal is allowed.

CONCEPTS:

B.C.'s Water Act provides a comprehensive scheme for licencing the diversion of and use of surface water, but it is also the only jurisdiction in Canada that doesn't regulate the use of groundwater. Rights are granted based on beneficial use; and highest and best use, added Mr. Cairns. A licence, approval or permit passes with the holder of the land/owner (the owner of the land is the licensee). When land with a water licence is sold, the province is supposed to be told. The rights and obligations of that licence are passed along to the new owner.

In response to questions, Mr. Cairns noted that neighbouring licences with the same priority date are ranked by purpose (most significant to least: domestic, water works, mineral trading, industrial, etc.). In looking at the ranking of various purposes, it was suggested that some might argue with the order. Mr. Cairns agreed and said it has been discussed.

SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION OF LICENCES:

Currently, a licence will be suspended or cancelled if a licensee fails to pay for three years. This is going to be changed to one year, said Mr. Cairns. It can also be cancelled if a licensee lies about their use of the water. Once you lose your licence you lose your priority. A cancelled licence can be appealed, he added.

The granting of a licence is determined based on a supply and demand calculation of the source and a review of the reliability of the source.

WATER ACT MODERNIZATION

There have been two rounds of public engagement as well as meetings with various sectors which are continuing. The updated legislation is referred to as the Water Sustainability Act (WSA).

The proposed act has 7 new policy directions:

- 1) Protect stream health and aquatic environments
- 2) consider water in land use decisions
- 3) Regulate groundwater use
- 4) Regulate during scarcity
- 5) Improve security, Water Use Efficiency, and Conservation
- 6) Measure and report
- 7) Enable a Range of Governance Approaches

B.C. Minister of Environment Terry Lake has said that a White Paper will be available in the spring.

During his presentation, Mr. Cairns had noted that a provision was made in 1960 to extend the Water Act to groundwater but this was never done. In response, he was asked if it was possible that a new policy direction, including #3 on groundwater, does not necessarily mean action on this item will be taken. Mr. Cairns responded that there seems to be a will to act, but ultimately it is up to the will of the legislature and that government can pass a bill but only bring certain sections into force.

6. DROUGHT TOURNAMENT DEMONSTRATION

Richard Rieger and Monica Hadarits, AAFC

Mr. Rieger and Ms. Hadarits provided some background on the drought tournament simulation exercise, and then led the council through a sample exercise. A similar, but day-long tournament will play out on Nov. 16.

7. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Ms. Clark: RDNO looked at source protection on Kal Lake and is now developing a response plan for the lake. The regional district is also developing a Water Master Plan.
- Mr. Meredith: The CWRA is holding a conference March 5-7 in Vancouver.
- Ms. Kirk: RDOS work on its wastewater treatment plant is moving ahead. Naramata water metering is also underway.
- Ms. Masters: Work on a socioeconomic valuation on Okanagan River is almost complete.
- Mr. Hesketh: BC Cattlemen's Assoc. has its convention in Vernon in spring. As the person responsible for the education component, contact will be made with the OBWB to involve the agency.
- Mr. Cunningham: B.C.'s River Forecast Centre has determined that we are in Drought Level 2. A lot of water use is dropping but we still need to be aware.
- Ms. Bakelaar: RDCO leak detection and pump improvements has resulted in a reduction in water waste. The board has voted to fund septic facility improvements in Lake Country. The regional district is developing a foreshore structures bylaw. Joe Rich Creek restoration work is continuing. A forum in October with elected officials will look at Regional Growth Strategy policy directions.
- Mr. Davies: There are concerns that kokanee numbers in Wood Lake are down and work is underway to address factors in the decline.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: BC Water and Waste Association has put out a call for abstracts for its annual conference.
- Mr. Dobson: APEG has its annual conference Oct 25-26 in Victoria. As part of the Water Stewardship Council's source protection committee, a meeting was held with Interior Health Authority's Rob Birtles, who is now in charge of small water systems, and we are looking to initiate meetings with FLNRO re: source water protection. As part of the WSC's committee looking at hydrometric monitoring stations, we are looking to re-establish a station with Water Survey of Canada, Ag Canada and District of Lake Country.
- Mr. van der Gulik: The Irrigation Industry Association of BC and the OBWB/Okanagan WaterWise are hosting a seminar Dec. 5 on "What the Okanagan can learn from Las Vegas." Register through the IIABC.
- Mr. Edwards: AAFC, along with the OBWB, the province and local governments are continuing to drill monitoring wells - 11 of 15 proposed are now in place.
- Chair Bauer: UBCO is holding a meeting next week on water with the Okanagan Sustainability Institute and is applying for funding through the RBC Blue Water Initiative. Work is getting going with UBCO's Water Research Chair John Janmaat.
- Ms. Jackson: Communication efforts recently have included outreach with the Topsoil Toolkit, the Dec. 5 "What Can We Learn from Vegas" workshop, and assisting with the upcoming drought tournament. Staff attended the WaterSmart Innovations Conference Oct. 3-5 which provided a great sharing of communication and outreach ideas around water.
- Mr. Jatel: Staff have been busy working on several projects including the Drought Tournament.
- Mr. Littley: Local government reps were asked to please consider the milfoil operators when (re)designing parks, boat launches, etc. and the impact this can have on the ability of the machines to get in and clear the weed.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held Nov. 8, 2012 at the Best Western Inn.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Moved by Don Dobson

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of October 11, 2012 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director