

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 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
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft
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 (alternate)
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O’Keefe
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson

Regrets

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 Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Fish/Wildlife)	Mike Burwash
City of Kelowna	
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Kendall Woo
Interior Health Authority	Judi Ekkert (alternate)
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Aaron Deans (alternate)
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck

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:

BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alternate)
District of Coldstream	Maria Besso
Ecoscape Environmental Consultants	Jason Schleppe
Forrex	Suzan Lapp
Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens	Eva Antonijevic
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Zoe Kirk
Technical Writer	Craig Baptie
Water Supply Association of BC	Toby Pike (alternate)
Western Water Associates	Laurie Welch OBWB,

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Don Dobson

Seconded by Evelyn Riechert

“That the agenda for the Nov. 8, 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 Oct. 11, 2012, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

A small amendment was noted.

Moved by Ken Cunningham

Seconded by Don Dobson

“That the minutes from the Oct. 11, 2012 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported on the Nov. 6 board meeting and the adoption of its 2013-14 budget, noting there is little change from the previous year.

Of particular interest for the board is the importance of continued public outreach and education. The board approved a new communication effort in the coming year around zebra mussels in light of the potentially devastating environmental and economic impact.

5. OKANAGAN WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN AND DISCUSSION

Mr. Jatel introduced discussion around a Water Management Plan (WMP), noting that the concept came out of comments around the council table that it may be the next logical step to take following the development of the Sustainable Water Strategy in 2008 and a follow-up review of the document.

WMPs have been attempted in other parts of the province without success, but the benefits of developing such a plan for the Okanagan are significant, filling an existing gap in the work of the council, Mr. Jatel added.

Mr. Pike entered the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Chair Bauer noted that a recent analysis of the Water Board and Council, conducted by members of both groups at a recent Water Stewardship Council meeting, suggests a WMP could be helpful in guiding the work of the agency, ensuring it is staying relevant and on track. The OBWB and the council are also in a very good position with the capacity to do the work and be successful.

Vice-chair Dobson added that a WMP can be very complicated and there would be difficult discussions based on competing interests for water, but it is an important discussion to have.

There was some talk by council members regarding the name of the plan and the implications regarding statutory authority.

There was also mention of those regions that had difficulty getting their plans approved by the province and how they provided lessons to the OBWB as to potential issues.

Dr. Warwick Sears suggested that a WMP would be a good way to integrate all of the OBWB's projects on conservation, allocation, drought planning, and even the province's work on the Water Act.

It was noted by many that the types of discussions that would result from the development of a plan would be very useful, helping each other understand the various issues each are facing. It would also allow for a comprehensive look at several complicated issues, and then frame them within a larger and more extensive context, ensuring that each issue is considered in a wholistic manner.

Additional comments:

- consideration of the geographic scope and that the council be very clear on the scope of the work so it doesn't become unmanageable;
- make sure that those with the authority to implement are in support;
- the OBWB is the agency that should lead this, however, the onus can't be put on an agency that doesn't hold the purse-strings;

Vice-chair Dobson exited the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

- goal-setting can be helpful here – where do we want to be in 5,10 years and what do we need to meet each of these goals;
- the development of a sound model built on consensus from the start is important;
- the plan should include an education component that considers why are we doing this;

One council member noted that monitoring and understanding water issues is important but is a WMP needed. The general consensus was that it was worth looking at.

- might be useful to look at particular issues because of the number of stakeholders;
- there may be an opportunity to encourage groups to do some of this planning through the OBWB's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program. For example, Mission Creek did a study looking at ground and surface water interactions, and other issues. These water use plans may help tease out what the issues are.
- if the OBWB starts small, there may also be better initial buy-in from local governments

6. GUEST SPEAKER: ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS AND FISH

Jason Schleppe, Ecoscape Environmental Consultants

Mr. Schleppe spoke to the council, providing a biologist's perspective to the issue of environmental flows and fish.

How flow is managed has a direct impact on fish, he noted, adding people often consider fish in drought situations, but high water flow can also affect them at various stages in their life cycle – during spawning, but also at the juvenile stage, and migration stage. But managing flow, moving water from here to there, can also have unintended consequences and it's important to be aware of this, Mr. Schleppe added, giving an example.

In Texas, there was a case of a stream going dry for only a month, and yet, this impacted the riparian area, where brush and trees died. This then destroyed the habitat for the birds that nested there. This could happen in the Okanagan, he added.

Environmental flow needs to consider fish, but also other species, and perhaps ranking them in order of importance would be useful. It would also shed light on the importance of a balanced ecosystem. Ultimately, he noted, we don't need to manage fish – we need to manage ourselves. People are the greatest risk to our eco-system, added Mr. Schleppe, noting education is important.

We have a better understanding today that our decisions and the long-term consequences of our

actions are much greater nowadays. If we care about the environment, it might require that we rank our priorities and build in adaptability as we figure things out. But managing people will be key, he concluded.

7. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Hrasko: Kelowna Joint Water Committee went to Kelowna council with its Kelowna Integrated Water Supply Plan; a pump station for Glenmore Ellison Irrigation District is underway and will meet the city's long-term plans.

Mr. Hrasko exited the meeting at 3:29 p.m.

- Mr. Davies: The BC Wildlife Federation is working with the OBWB on a plan for wetland rehabilitation; Ocoela Fish and Game Club is also reviewing the recent Cohen Commission results which looked at issues facing the Fraser River sockeye. The club is looking at how some of the learnings may be applied to Okanagan sockeye.
- Mr. Dickenson: City of Vernon is completing its Liquid Waste Management Plan.
- Mr. O'Keefe: Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board is noting some interesting trends with house sizes dropping, and a drop in the number of houses being built, and prices going down.
- Mr. Meredith: The Canadian Water Resources Association is calling for abstracts for its 2013 conference.
- Ms. Welch: Western Water is working on a pilot project, integrating groundwater into hydrologic modeling for the OBWB.
- Ms. Antonojevic: Summerland Ornamental Gardens conducted a water audit and is now looking at ways to conserve and be more water efficient.
- Ms. Riechert: Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) has taken on the West Bench Water District which is currently on a boil water notice until system upgrades are completed in 2013; Apex Ski Hill water supply is also on a boil water notice; the Ok Falls treatment plant work should be completed by 2013.
- Ms. Kirk: RDOS's West Bench and Sage Mesa areas are being metered and Naramata is doing pilot metering; the RDOS is also participating in the Tap by Tap initiative, offering residents home water-saving kits.
- Mr. Littley: OBWB staff attended a zebra and quagga mussel workshop in Kelowna put on by the Invasive Species Council of BC. Great to see the number of agencies working on this issue, including Canadian Border Services. A report will be coming out and will share.
- Mr. Pike: The province is requiring dam safety reviews every 10 years and is looking to set standards for the work; A proposal to borrow funding for upgrades to the South East Kelowna Irrigation District was voted down by residents. The district is now looking at alternate solutions to address the needed upgrades; KJWC's Kelowna Integrated Water Supply Plan has been adopted by all five Kelowna water utilities.
- Mr. van der Gulik: The Partnership for Water Sustainability is piloting its water balance model – homeowner version in Surrey, North Vancouver, and possibly elsewhere; Talk is underway with Okanagan College to hold a Water Balance Model forum; Water demand modelling is being expanded to several areas including the North Thompson, Metro Vancouver, and Vancouver Island; The Irrigation Industry Association of BC is holding a special "What can the Okanagan Learn from Vegas" workshop Dec. 5. Early bird registration deadline is Nov. 20; Okanagan College is offering a certified irrigation technicians course.
- Mr. Baptie: Research for the OBWB, using WEAP modeling is suggesting the need more hydrometric stations and that there is a large gap in knowledge around groundwater.
- Mr. Jatel: Staff are working with AgCanada to bring a drought gaming exercise to Kelowna on Nov. 16.

- Chair Bauer: UBC Okanagan is applying to the RBC Blue Water Initiative for funding for a project that would create a stronger water information database.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: RBC Blue Water is turning its attention towards urban water issues (e.g. stormwater issues) which may be of interest to some council members.
- Ms. Jackson: OBWB staff are continuing to work with Fortis and City Green Solutions to help with the Tap by Tap campaign in Naramata, and now Kelowna. Water-saving kits are being distributed at various events in Kelowna and to multi-unit residential building managers; The OBWB and OkWaterWise are sponsoring the showing of Robert Redford's "Watershed" at Kelowna Yacht Club Nov. 16 as part of the Reel Change Film Fest; Staff helped Okanagan Science Centre with this year's haunted house event "Drains of Darkness." About 7,000 people attended, learning about Okanagan water issues in a fun setting; Staff have also been helping with promotion of the Nov. 16 Drought Tournament and the Dec. 5 Vegas workshop.
- Ms. Clark: Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO)'s Master Water Plan was given an extension by Interior Health; Staff met with Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) to look at environmental flows on the Duteau Creek water source; Agricultural metering has been introduced with users billed the domestic rate for anything used over their allocation. The result was a drop in water use. Domestic block rates were also increased which led to a decrease in use.
- Mr. Cunningham: FLNRO is looking to reduce the backlog in water licencing, bringing additional staff in and cleaning up policies; Dam safety reviews are being done; The ministry is looking for a groundwater protection officer; Solvej Patschke is returning from eight months away while attending a water management course.
- Ms. Masters: ONA has been working with residents in Ok Falls who draw their water from Shuttleworth Creek, encouraging them to move from surface water to groundwater to help with fish habitat. Residents have agreed and a well has been drilled. Work should be complete by 2013.
- Ms. Besso: Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping in the Coldstream area is now complete; The district is looking forward to seeing the Water Master Plan from RDNO.
- Ms. Lapp: Forrex has been working with the Lower Similkameen Indian Band to help address water issues; The agency is also helping with the Nov. 16 drought tournament and looking at holding a similar event at UBCO in the new year. It is also talking with AAFC about potentially developing the material into a Grade 8 curriculum.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held Dec. 13, 2012 at the Best Western Inn.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Moved by Ted van der Gulik

"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of November 8, 2012 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director