

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2012, AT  
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

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**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 Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource)	Ken Cunningham
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Fish/Wildlife)	Brian Robertson (alternate)
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
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
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Ted van der Gulik
City of Kelowna	
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Kendall Woo
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Aaron Deans (alternate)
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O’Keefe
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 Littley

**GUESTS:**

BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alternate)
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource)	Richard Toperczer
Canadian Water Resources Association	Dwayne Meredith (alternate)
Ecoscape Environmental Consultants	Jason Schleppe
Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens	Eva Antonijevic
Interior Health Authority	Gordon Moseley
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Regional District of North Okanagan	Anna Page (alternate)
Regional District of North Okanagan	Jen Miles
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Zoe Kirk
Technical Writer	Craig Baptie
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat
UBC Okanagan	James Price
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
Urban Systems	Michelle Cook
	Joanna Norton

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

## 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Don Dobson

Seconded by Leif Burge

*“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 Nov. 8, 2012, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

A small amendment was noted.

Moved by Ken Cunningham

Seconded by Rob Dickinson

*“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 Dec. 4 board meeting and a presentation by Grant Furness, with B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), regarding changes in fisheries regulations and its effect on milfoil control. The OBWB has been granted permits to rototill in all of its regular areas other than one area of Kin Beach where evidence of Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel was found. The Water Board will continue to harvest this spot in summer as usual and is talking with FLNRO about possibly moving the mussel from this area to allow rototilling.

Warwick Sears also noted a presentation by Lisa Scott with the South Okanagan-Similkameen Invasive Plant Society. The group is changing its name to include invasive aquatic species, she added. The group received some OBWB funding to conduct zebra mussel outreach in the summer and staff will be working with them on this again next spring/summer. OBWB is also working with Heather Larratt on zebra mussel research. Finally, the OBWB is developing its own broader public outreach campaign on zebra mussels.

Michelle Cook spoke on recent updates and improvements to the BC Water Use Reporting Centre to include groundwater and other water data.

Staff also presented the findings of focus groups conducted in Kelowna, Prince George, Vancouver Island and Abbotsford regarding public perception around water issues and how best to engage the public. The focus groups were organized by the Canadian Fresh Water Alliance. The OBWB partnered with the Alliance to do some specific message testing in Kelowna. The report is available by contacting OBWB Communications Director Corinne Jackson.

## 5. OKANAGAN WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr. Jatel provided council with a background report regarding a possible Okanagan Water Management Plan (WMP) and noted a committee of council is in the process of collecting information and data.

Vice-chair Dobson said that a WMP seems to be the next logical step in the work of the OBWB, following on the data collection and research of the last six years, but that the issues are complicated and will take time to work through. In the end, the committee wants to have a document that can be acted upon.

Chair Bauer added that there still needs to be a decision as to whether or not to proceed, and that it's an important discussion to have. The document does not need to be regulatory in nature, he

added, saying that ideally it would be so compelling that agencies and stakeholders jump on board.

Additional comments:

- The document should be applicable across the basin and be at a bar that people can work towards;
- While there were issues with Langley's first WMP, a revised plan has been approved by local government and resubmitted to the province where it is waiting for endorsement;
- The scope, objectives and roles of agencies need to be clarified, recognizing the financial and time commitment that is possible from agencies;
- The WMP should take into account existing legislation and include input from the agencies that carry out that legislation – encouraging them to look inwards and commit to the plan;
- To be successful we will need to have input from elected officials, agency staff and the public;

Mr. Jatel concluded the discussion, noting that the committee is talking with Okanagan Nation Alliance about using traditional First Nations methods for dialogue as well.

## **6. GUEST PANEL: SOURCE WATER PROTECTION**

Rob Birtles, Interior Health Authority (IHA)

Renee Clark, Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO)

Don Dobson, Urban Systems

Bob Hrasko, Water Supply Association of BC/ Black Mountain Irrigation District (BMID)

The panel was introduced noting that they would each be speaking to their involvement in source protection work and how it relates to a potential Water Management Plan.

Mr. Birtles began, noting that source protection includes strategies used to protect the quality and quantity of water, ensuring its sustainability. It includes a multi-barrier approach to ensure safe drinking water, which is important to Interior Health since clean water means less illness.

With a population of about 350,000 in the Okanagan and expectations of further growth, and with about 406 water systems in the valley, plus many more lots with water intakes on lakes, there are numerous potential problems for water quality. IHA has conducted 16 source assessments in the valley and there appear to be common concerns, including urban runoff and sedimentation. The agency is now looking at strategies to address these issues.

Ms. Clark added that RDNO has worked with IHA and conducted assessments on two of its drinking water sources, including Duteau Creek, and has come up with recommendations for improvements. Duteau Creek is its largest water licence (and is one of the largest in B.C.) serving 15,000 domestic users and is also a multi-use watershed.

After the Duteau assessment was completed and accepted by IHA and the RDNO board in December 2008, staff created a stakeholders committee in Feb. 2009 which meets regularly to discuss emerging water protection issues.

An assessment was also done on the North Kalamalka lake intake – RDNO's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest water supply. It was accepted in Nov. 2011 by IHA and RDNO and also contains recommendations. Staff will be developing a response plan for Coldstream Creek and Kalamalka Lake with a kick-off meeting in Jan. 2013, again working with stakeholders and the public. Because we are all reliant on our water and the need to keep it clean, collaboration is key, concluded Clark.

Mr. Dobson noted that source assessments and source protection are the most cost-effective and reliable ways to protect drinking water, adding it can cost 40 times more to treat contaminated groundwater than to protect it from getting contaminated in the first place.

Source protection requires identifying risks, then developing a response plan, taking action and monitoring.

Mr. Hrasko reported that BMID developed a corridor protection proposal for its water source areas in 2011 to deal with the impact from fires, cattle, backcountry use, and logging around its waters. Working with consultant Heather Larratt, a plan was developed that includes large natural buffers/setbacks around its sources. The plan was presented to FLNRO Minister Thompson.

Very heavy rainfall in June created turbidity issues for BMID, as well as concerns about slides, costing the utility \$150,000 more in chemicals and an additional \$50,000 in staff time to ensure proper water quality to customers. Mr. Hrasko showed a number of images, showing what the utility is faced with, adding that it has two options: 1) do nothing and let the creek do what it is going to do, or 2) try to stabilize an area that is very hard to access.

Asked what the greatest issue is in source protection, Mr. Hrasko answered that setbacks around water sources are critical.

Mr. Cunningham responded that there is some debate about setback standards, but this is where more research and discussion should be done. Mr. Hrasko agreed, adding that his utility found a middle ground to ensure water protection.

Mr. Birtles and Ms. Clark added that stakeholder engagement is also important. Mr. Dobson agreed, noting that staff resources are becoming more limited, making collaboration key.

In response to a question, Ms. Clark added that working with stakeholders as a method to ensure ongoing protection, has led to additional players coming to the table, some with funds for work. It has also raised the level of awareness so that members of the community are saying they want protection.

Mr. Dobson added that while there have been cuts to provincial staffing in this area, there needs to be continued pressure on government to recognize the importance of source protection so when the economy rebounds it sees the benefit of increasing staff in this area.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

Chair Bauer opened the discussion on source protection asking if exclusion would help, similar to what is done in Metro Vancouver around its drinking water sources.

Mr. Dobson noted threats to drinking water are 1/3 people, 1/3 cattle and 1/3 wildlife. Even if you keep the first two out of the water, you still have wildlife you can't completely control.

Okanagan Lake is our largest reservoir, added Mr. Birtles, noting the difficulty in excluding people from there. It's about understanding the risks and what risks are we willing to take, he said. Mr. Dobson agreed, adding that Riverside Forest Products is a good example that looked at appropriate setbacks for logging around waterways. It is possible to coexist and there are tradeoffs but we can manage the risks and control them through proper management, he added.

Collaboration with stakeholders and public education is part of the solution, noted some. Natural vegetation buffers are another since they help stabilize banks and provide other benefits.

Ms. Cook added that Portland has hired people to help monitor watersheds.

In response to a question Ms. Jackson said the Water Board is working to develop educational materials for schools that look at various Okanagan water issues, and is also talking with a number of organizations that are wanting to expand their public education efforts. Some of the existing efforts include annual Canada Water Week/U.N. World Water Day events in March, and Drinking Water Week events in May.

Ms. Miles added that stakeholder groups are also doing outreach, for example ranchers are trying to educate their counterparts about source protection.

## 8. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Dr. Warwick Sears: The focus of this year's RBC Blue Water grant program is on urban water issues, specifically stormwater, and non-profits and local governments can apply. First round of proposals are due Jan. 11. The BC Water and Waste Association is providing an award of excellence for a collaborative effort or to an individual. The nomination deadline is Dec. 21.
- Ms. Jackson: Articles and links to TV coverage of the AgCanada/OBWB Nov. 16 Drought Tournament and the Irrigation Industry Assoc. of BC/Okanagan WaterWise Dec. 5 Vegas workshop are on the OkWaterWise Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/OkWaterWise](http://www.facebook.com/OkWaterWise)). The materials will also be up on the OBWB and OkWaterWise websites and YouTube channel in coming weeks. McAllister Opinion Research provided an overview of focus groups held in summer looking at the Make Water Work (MWW) water conservation campaign and ways to effectively message to the public around water issues. The MWW materials showed very good results and recommendations for 2013 were provided. The reports are available if interested.
- Mr. Littley: Staff are now accepting applications to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant program. The deadline is Feb. 22, 4 p.m.
- Dr. Guy: CWRA BC branch annual conference is March 5-7 in Vancouver. Dr. Guy is working with the OBWB and submitting a number of papers that will present on the work being done in the Okanagan. The CWRA is also looking at holding a Drought Tournament as part of the conference; The CWRA is again teaming up with the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society and the Canadian Geophysical Union to hold a joint national conference in Saskatoon May 26-30<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Cunningham: The province is planning for upcoming Emergency Management BC pre-freshet readiness meetings and provincial flood plan implementation will be discussed. FLNRO has extended some staff positions to help address the backlog in water licencing and allocation applications.
- Dr. Janmaat: UBC Okanagan is starting an Okanagan water researchers blog and will be starting an announcements and mailing list. Let us know if you would like to be included/excluded from the list.
- Ms. Page: RDNO staff have been working closely with community stakeholders to develop a Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan. Speaking to the earlier discussion around source protection and community involvement, she noted that sometimes having the community involved means you may end up with a plan that doesn't fit within existing government jurisdiction and which suggests the need for changes.
- Ms. Norton: Invited as a guest and is a recent graduate of Royal Rhodes and Okanagan College's water management program.
- Ms. Miles: Great to see so many irrigation industry people at the Dec. 5 Vegas workshop. Attended the WaterSmart Innovations conference, heard some great ideas and look forward to trying some of them with RDNO and improving communications in 2013.
- Mr. Robertson: FLNRO is working with District of Lake Country, First Nations and Ocoela Fish and Game Club on Middle Vernon Creek which keeps going dry between Ellison and Wood Lake.
- Mr. Moseley: As environmental health officer at Interior Health, interested in education and advocacy for water protection.
- Mr. Flintoft: BC Wildlife Federation is working with OBWB staff to identify Okanagan wetland areas needing rehabilitation and develop a plan for the work. The federation has 15 fish and game clubs interested in getting involved.
- Mr. Davies: BCWF has a wetlands education coordinator who is prepared to offer a spring workshop in the Okanagan.
- Mr. Birtles: As IHA's Environmental Health Technical Specialist I am looking at recreational water quality guidelines. Also working with FLNRO on regional water committees, helping address source water protection.
- Mr. Dickenson: The technical aspects of Vernon's Liquid Waste Management Plan are done and the plan will be going to the public in the new year. The city has also completed work on a stream under a flood protection grant.

- Dr. Fan: UBCO is looking at the work of the Water Stewardship Council, unique in its ability to bring stakeholders together and address issues, and will be presenting its findings at various national and international conferences.
- Ms. Masters: Okanagan Nation Alliance is wrapping up its 12-year experiment with re-introduction of Sockeye into Skaha Lake. There were positive outcomes with range extension to Okanagan Dam by 2015. Agencies are now looking at Sockeye re-introduction into Okanagan Lake. The Natural Resources Department is developing a Sylix water strategy and are interested in presenting to the council in 2013. Despite concerns by some, DFO is said to have approved a private arctic char fish farm in the South Okanagan and construction has begun.

Ms. Steeves exited the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

- Ms. Riechert: Eight water systems within the Okanagan-Similkameen are using the OBWB and province's Water Use Reporting Centre and hopefully others will too. There was mention of the importance of keeping key issues before elected officials on a consistent basis so that reasons for earlier decisions are remembered when tested.
- Ms. Kirk: RDOS's Naramata area has meters installed and now reporting; West Bench's pump station is being completed which will help water users in the area come off a boil water advisory. The area will also be receiving meters in 2013.
- Mr. Allard: The BCGWA is providing feedback to the province's guidance document on Ground Water at Risk of Containing Pathogens (GARP) Including Ground Water Under Direct Influence of Surface Water (GWUDI).
- Mr. Dobson: We are going to have to start thinking about and planning for potential flooding again soon, and look after related issues (e.g. a septic tank on Mission Creek needs to be decommissioned).
- Mr. Baptie: Work is continuing on the Okanagan Groundwater Monitoring Project with 10 wells drilled so far in aquifers identified as sensitive and there are plans for four more in 2013.
- Mr. Hrasko: WSABC had its annual conference. The Kelowna Joint Water Committee has finished an integrated water supply plan and is developing a plan for its partner, South East Kelowna Irrigation District to address its water needs. Glenmore Ellison Irrigation District is completing work on a new pump station – the largest on Okanagan Lake. As part of the project the lake foreshore is being monitored and the kokanee came back which suggests protection efforts may have been successful.
- Mr. Jatel: Ag Canada is pleased with the way the drought tournament went. Groundwater signage has been developed and is available if interested. OBWB Chair Stu Wells' concerns around the arctic char fish farm were noted. Staff will be at meetings in Victoria to discuss the Water Use Reporting Centre and next steps.

In response to some earlier discussion, Mr. Cunningham noted that FLNRO now has access to enforcement staff to bring docks into compliance. Dock builder outreach is also being done. FLNRO staff Liz Williamson and Patrick Tobin appeared at the October OBWB board meeting and provided an update.

## 9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held Jan. 10, 2012 at the Best Western Inn.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

**Moved by Zoe Masters**

*"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship*

*Council of December 13, 2012 be adjourned.”*  
**CARRIED**

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

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**Chair**

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**Executive Director**