



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD MARCH 7, 2017, AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
101 MARTIN ST., PENTICTON, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Tracy Gray	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice-chair Juliette Cunningham	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Dirk	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Ron Hovanes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Peter Waterman	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Lisa Wilson	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Brian Guy	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

REGRETS

Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC
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OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
James Littley	Operations and Grants Manager
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Specialist
Alyssa Bougie	Communications & Outreach Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Gray called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

- 6.1 Chair Report
- 7.2 Water Stewardship Council Communications Protocol Update Memo
- 9.3 Letter from District of Summerland
- 9.4 Letter from Federal Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 7, 2017 be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. DELEGATIONS

Bryn White with South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Partnership (SOSCP), and Scott Bowell of Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP) re: “Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Okanagan – alignment with OBWB initiatives”

Ms. White introduced the groups as partnerships aimed at protecting biodiversity and ecosystems.

There was an overview of the benefits of healthy ecosystems, such as floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas, including tourism, climate change stability, and clean, abundant water. It was noted that 85% of low elevation wetlands have been lost.

"Keeping Nature in our Future – A Biodiversity Strategy for the Okanagan Region" is a science-based collaborative strategy, developed by SOSCP and OCCP that includes policy solutions and maps to help local planners, and others, with decisions that keep ecosystems intact.

It was noted that 60% of the Okanagan region consists of ecosystems that are high priority for conservation because they are valuable to wildlife that are considered rare and sensitive – especially in the valley-bottom where most people also live.

The strategy includes strategic directions such as updating land use policies and regulations, and methods to finance conservation.

Dir. Dirk entered the meeting at 10:19 a.m.

The strategy has been used in updates to Official Community Plans, creating and updating Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit Areas, park reviews, ecosystem connectivity research, and expanded methods to fund conservation.

More recently, RDOS adopted a bylaw to allow collection of conservation funds to protect natural areas. In addition to protecting natural areas, public feedback indicated that clean abundant water was important. This fund will help make this possible, noted Ms. White, adding there is great interest around the province in adopting similar conservation fund programs.

Foreshore Inventory Mapping (FIM) is showing high rates of non-compliance by lakeshore homeowners. In response, the conservation groups are planning to create outreach materials and the development of two demonstration sites along the lake to promote appropriate and sensitive development practices.

In addition to the strategy and outreach efforts, SOSCP and OCCP have been partners in the OBWB's Okanagan Wetland Strategy, assisting with data collection and on-the-ground efforts to bring wetlands back.

Going forward, Boswell and White said that both groups are interested in assisting with the update to the Water Stewardship Council's Sustainable Water Strategy.

In response to questions, it was noted that the FIM maps are available to local governments.

Ms. White noted that the strategy was completed in 2013 and was assisted by local government staff. Next year, SOSCP and OCCP will be going back to local governments to discuss strategic recommendations and how to strengthen them.

Asked about public outreach, the board was told that a number of events and projects have been undertaken including open houses, news releases, newsletters, as well as the creation of an educational trailer with Allan Brooks Nature Centre and an outdoor learning space at Okanagan Landing School in Vernon. Ms. Jackson added that the outreach trailer was supported by the OBWB and includes a water component developed by staff as part of its Okanagan WaterWise outreach program. The outdoor learning space is also being used as an example in the creation of a WaterWise school curriculum for the valley, currently under development in partnership with OCCP.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 7, 2017 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna.

Dir. Fortin clarified comments regarding drinking water quality standards.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of February 7, 2017 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

6. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Gray acknowledged the passing of Lake Country Coun. Owen Dickie.

It was noted that B.C. Premier Christy Clark was the guest speaker at a recent Kelowna chamber luncheon to discuss the province’s latest budget and was asked about the mussel issue. The premier responded, saying she understands that it’s an urgent issue and expect an announcement soon.

The chamber has also indicated it will be bringing the issue forward to the national chamber to be pursued on a federal level.

Chair Gray noted a meeting with Kelowna-Lake Country MP Stephen Fuhr on March 1 regarding mussels, and that she is looking to attend the July Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) meeting and the possibility of in-person conversation to move the issue forward.

She added that she is looking at also attending the June Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference in Ottawa and requested feedback about how to engage federal ministries about the invasive mussel issue. Dirs. Waterman, Cunningham and Fairbairn noted they would be also attending and would be pleased to provide support. Dir. Findlater suggested Chair Gray work with MP Fuhr to arrange meetings in Ottawa.

7. STAFF REPORTS

- 7.1 Executive Director Report

Mussel meeting with MP Fuhr

Dr. Sears reported on the meeting with MP Fuhr regarding invasive mussels and the request for stronger engagement from the Ministries of Public Safety and Fisheries and Oceans Canada at PNWER, but also on the issue in general (e.g. improved border inspections). Mr. Fuhr offered to take these concerns forward to these ministers and invited the OBWB to speak with the western caucus. There may also be an opportunity to speak with these ministers when they are in the Okanagan this summer, she added.

Groundwater update

Staff spoke with the province regarding new groundwater licencing regulations and learned that any significant licence application requires landowners to be given an opportunity to respond. Provincial staff agreed that it is not always clear who they should send feedback requests to in local government and recommended that local governments follow up and provide appropriate contact info.

There was general discussion about the groundwater regs, including the issue of one-at-a-time applications and their cumulative effects. It was suggested that feedback be provided to FrontCounter BC. There was a question regarding having the Water Stewardship Council follow up with recommendations on a referral process. Dr. Sears responded that this would need to be looked into further.

Dr. Sears then provided a brief overview of a couple items, including her participation in a CBC radio podcast on climate change that will air in June, and a weather update noting below-average snowpacks in the Okanagan.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated March 1, 2017, be received.”
CARRIED

7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Sears presented the report to the board. There was a motion to receive it. A couple of small changes in membership were noted.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s report, dated March 1, 2017, be received.”
CARRIED

7.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley reported on the Request for Proposal process for milfoil equipment. In speaking with milfoil staff it has been agreed to prepare a new RFP for the redesign and build of a new rototiller to help offset the work being done by one of the machines which was built in 1984. This additional machine will also allow the crew to treat Vaseux Lake.

The board was presented with a Sewage Facilities Assistance grant application for Summerland.

“THAT the SFA application for the District of Summerland Juniper, Miltimoer, Willow and Tait Roads project be approved as outlined.”
CARRIED

There was further discussion on the mussel issue, including acknowledgement of a March 6 letter from the Federal Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans in response to a letter from the OBWB, days after the Water Board’s meeting with Mr. Fuhr.

Staff will follow up and contact provincial staff about the extent to which they are working with DFO on this.

There was a return to the matter of OBWB Directors meeting with federal officials at FCM and a motion to move this forward.

“THAT the OBWB contact MP Fuhr and ask for assistance in helping set up meetings during the June Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference in Ottawa with appropriate ministries regarding the invasive mussel issue.”
CARRIED

Mr. Littley reported that 25 applications were received to the Water Conservation & Quality Improvement Grant program. The applications will be reviewed and recommendations will be brought back to the board at its April meeting.

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager’s Report, dated March 1, 2017, be received.”

CARRIED

7.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson reported on Canada Water Week activities including the screening of the award-winning documentary *RiverBlue* on March 22 (UN World Water Day), followed by a question and answer period with the film’s director David McIlvride. On March 21, there will be the annual public forum, MC’d by AM1150’s Phil Johnson and the theme “Why WASTE water?” providing a look at wasting water but also waste water and efforts by utilities and what the public can do to help keep water clean and abundant, from source to tap, back to source.

Dir. Wilson noted possible partnerships opportunities on the panel event.

Ms. Bougie, Okanagan WaterWise Communications and Outreach Coordinator, added that staff are also working to roll out its Okanagan WaterWise Challenge for youth, encouraging young people to conserve and protect water by completing up to three challenges using an H2O bingo board to guide their efforts.

For the second year, the OBWB’s WaterWise program partnered with RDCO’s Waste Reduction Office to offer rain barrels as part of the regional district’s composter sale event. Some 200 barrels will be available through pre-sale. The sale started March 1 and as of March 6, 80 were already sold.

Ms. Jackson provided a brief update on the Make Water Work and Don’t Move A Mussel campaigns and meetings with various partners to prepare for a 2017 roll-out.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated March 1, 2017, be received.”

CARRIED

7.5 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia gave an update on the Sustainable Water Strategy noting that an editorial board has been established and is already receiving feedback on possible updates.

A survey was conducted on various OBWB guides, and other bylaw and planning toolkits. There were 45 participants, mostly planners, some engineers and others. They were asked about 19 toolkits available to them and whether or not they are using them and if not, why not. Results show that the BC Climate Action Toolkit is being used most, but not to a great extent. Others like the OBWB’s Groundwater and Topsoil bylaw toolkits, as well as SOSCP’s “Keeping Nature in our Future” are not well known. Some of the issues identified are a lack of time and resources, but also a lack of support once they have the toolkits in hand.

Survey participants provided input on possible solutions to ensure greater uptake and Ms. Garcia is now following up on these.

“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist’s Report, dated February 28, 2017, be received.”

CARRIED

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**8.1 Review of OBWB Strategic Plan Memo**

Dr. Sears introduced the existing Strategic Plan (2014-2019) and offered the opportunity to discuss potential updates. A brief overview was provided and Dr. Sears explained that the plan came out of a joint board-council strategic planning session which was led by a consultant.

Chair Gray added that a review is useful as a reminder and to ensure the board is still on track. Also, since we are at the halfway mark in the plan, it is useful to start thinking about the next one which should start in 2018. Dir. Waterman added that the board may want to keep the big goals in place and review the subgoals and efforts to support the larger goals.

There was some discussion about the OBWB being looked to as an example of water governance by others. A brief overview of the formation of the Water Board was also provided.

“THAT the OBWB Strategic Plan Memo be received.”
CARRIED

8.2 Water Stewardship Council Communications Protocol Update Memo

Ms. Jackson provided the board with a proposed update to the WSC’s communications protocol. The original protocol was adopted in 2006, she explained. The changes reflect an update in staffing and brings the protocol in line with the OBWB’s external communications protocol from 2015. The update is timely given that the council has now established a Communications Committee, she added.

Dir., and Council Chair, Guy added that the Communications Committee is aimed at strengthening relationships between the members but is also considering ways to assist with external communications, making the update necessary.

There was discussion about the extent of external communications, with board members noting that it is important for the council to understand that it does not speak on behalf of the board, and is a technical advisory body to the board. For example, news releases should come from the board, through the Communications Director’s office, on board letterhead.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board adopt the revised Terms of Reference for the Water Stewardship Council – Communications Protocol (2017), as presented.”
CARRIED

9. CORRESPONDENCE

- 9.1 Letter from Hon. Ralph Goodale, Min. of Public Safety
- 9.2 Letter from Rob Dickeson, Summerland resident
- 9.3 Letter from District of Summerland
- 9.4 Letter from Federal Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans

“THAT the letters to the Okanagan Basin Water Board be received.”
CARRIED

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at the Regional District of North Okanagan in Coldstream at 10 a.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 7, 2017 be adjourned at 1:40 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director