

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2013, AT MANTEO RESORT, 3762 LAKESHORE DR., KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, vice-chair
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
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)	Ray Crampton
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Fish/Wildlife)	Grant Furness
Canadian Water Resources Association	Dwayne Meredith (alt.)
City of Kelowna	Jason Ough (alt.)
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ian Rogalski
Interior Health Authority	Judi Ekkert
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Agri-Enviro. Branch	Doug Edwards
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
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 Project Manager	James Littlely

GUESTS:

BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alt.)
CH2MHILL Consultants	Mark Watt
District of Peachland	Paul Dupree
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Okanagan Nation Alliance	James Pepper
Regional District North Okanagan	Laura Frank (alt.)
Sylvis	John Lavery
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
Urban Systems	Michelle Cook
Westcoast CED	Victor Cumming
Western Water Associates	Laurie Welch

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Remi Allard

Seconded by Zoe Masters

“That the agenda for the May 9, 2013 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held March 14, 2013, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

Moved by Don Dobson

Seconded by Margaret Bakelaar

“That the minutes from the March 14, 2012 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

4. DICSUSSION: SYILX WATER STRATEGY

James Pepper, Okanagan Nation Alliance – Natural Resources Manager

Mr. Pepper provided an overview of the syilx water strategy currently being developed, noting that the purpose is to integrate local, traditional First Nations knowledge into a strategy to protect water. Part of the project includes developing mechanisms to work together with the wider community.

The syilx community is looking to develop the strategy in response to numerous decisions made by provincial and federal governments in the past that have impacted water and First Nations communities (e.g. dams, water diversion licences, and more recently changes to federal legislation under the Omnibus bill, Independent Power Producer projects, and run-of-the-river projects), explained Mr. Pepper. All of this has happened without First Nations rights and titles being properly addressed. And, as the region’s population continues to grow and the need for water increases, this indigenous perspective grows in importance.

The strategy is a four-year process and will include community meetings, discussions with elders, face-to-face interviews, focus groups, workshops, and chief and council meetings. Work is being done to engage youth, NGOs, stewardship groups and the larger community, the province, federal and local governments.

The ONA has been involved in fishery work for decades, added Mr. Pepper, but the First Nations community also feels that ceremony and connection to the resource is imperative. While science is important, traditional knowledge also holds an important place at the table.

Numerous council members voiced their appreciation and support for the strategy and interest in being part of the process.

In response to a question, Mr. Pepper noted that the syilx community is concerned that the Okanagan’s waters are almost fully licenced and allocated, and yet there is nothing reserved for First Nation’s needs.

PRESENTATION: RDCO BIO-SOLIDS APPLICATION PROGRAM

John Lavery, Sylvis

Mr. Lavery presented on Sylvis’ proposal to RDCO to transport and use treated biosolids from the Gellatly Road wastewater treatment plant on Westbank First Nations lands in the Rose Valley reservoir area for forest fertilization. Using treated biosolids, he explained, is intended to reduce pathogens (e.g. fecal coliform), and vector attraction.

The proposal includes a 30 metre buffer from surface water and staff flag the area for easy identification by those in the area. Signs are also put up, suggesting people not pick fruit or tubers underground, to help ensure potential pathogens cause no harm and allow the environment time to break down the matter.

This type of process has been around in B.C. for about 20 years and never an issue, Mr. Lavery said, adding Regional District of Nanaimo has been doing it for 10 years and Prince George for eight. King County has also been using the practice for 30 years and the buffer is only 10 metres.

There were many questions. Mr. Pepper suggested that if the work is approved, the company make sure to inform ONA and ask that berry and root pickers be made aware of any such work in the area as an extra precaution.

As for Endocrine Disruptor Compounds, Mr. Lavery said that a 2011 study done by Ryerson University on Kitchener biosolids found “no deleterious impact on selected biota under controlled laboratory conditions.” The study looked at aquatic and terrestrial organisms, but did not test mammals, he added. A Sylvis survey of Prince George biosolids in 2011 did not find EDCs transferred into nearby waterways.

Following the presentation, Michelle Cook, James Pepper, Mark Watt, Remi Allard, Laurie Welch exited the meeting.

5. OKANAGAN WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN (WMP) - CONCEPTS

Mr. Jatel provided an overview of the work done so far on the WMP.

Mr. Lavery exited the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

There was lengthy discussion about the goals (e.g. including collaboration), the vision, and how the WMP links to the Sustainable Water Strategy.

Mr. Hrasko suggested that the B.C. government needs to be better engaged as water managers, armed with a new Water Act because, as it is, there will be little water to reserve and there will be conflicts until the province enforces the licences, claws back unused allocations or water rates go up. Mr. Crampton responded that it is unlikely that people will want to let go of their licences and it is not clear if the province can claw them back.

Dr. Fan suggested that a mechanism to resolve covenants be established. Mr. Meredith added that enabling language - who is responsible for various actions - might be useful.

There was talk about the need to address climate change in the document.

Proposed objectives

Council members noted the need to highlight fish flows and elevate it in the document, and to refer to water – not as a resource, but as part of the environment – considering some of Mr. Pepper’s earlier comments in his presentation.

We also need to recognize the value in water as drainage, in natural and urban settings, it was noted.

Actions on objectives

Mr. Jatel went over the actions and asked people to provide feedback after looking through.

Just as the WMP committee gathered planners together to provide input, the committee would like to gather water managers and engineers for feedback, he added.

It was suggested that the document should include milestones (e.g. that a certain percentage of population is metered by a certain date, that all communities have a soil bylaw by a certain date). However, another member noted that council members can't be too prescriptive in going back to their communities and that being more general may be helpful, and instead take on the specific details at an administrative level.

6. COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION – EXCELLENCE IN WATER STEWARDSHIP AWARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Jatel provided an update on the \$1,000 awarded to the Water Stewardship Council by the Council of the Federation, noting that staff are waiting to hear from Okanagan College which is interested in a scholarship with the WSC name on it. Staff are also looking at how to administer the prize to a student for a water-themed science fair project to ensure it is valley-wide.

7. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported on the May 7 board meeting, explaining that directors reviewed the strategic vision from 2008. While the board felt that it needs to be updated, it will be the baseline for discussions in June.

Chair Bauer added that there was also much discussion around invasive species, especially zebra and quagga mussels, and the need to act and coordinate efforts with senior levels of government.

8. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Ms. Jackson: The OBWB is in the process of hiring a communication's intern for the summer. Planning for the Make Water Work, valley-wide outdoor water conservation campaign is underway. Residents will be invited to take the www.MakeWaterWork.ca pledge for a chance to win a \$5,000 prize from an Okanagan-based, IIABC-certified landscape and irrigation company to WaterWise a yard. Astral Radio will again help promote the contest. Staff are also working with the Invasive Species Council of BC and Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society to develop a coordinated approach on zebra and quagga mussels this summer. ISCBC and OASISS is focusing on boaters and the Clean, Drain, Dry message and OBWB/OkWaterWise will be supporting that message but is also developing a larger public awareness www.DontMoveAMussel.ca campaign. There was great response to the OkWaterWise Challenge and a winner will be announced as part of Drinking Water Week on May 21. We have DWW buttons and postcards available.
- Ms. Masters: Sockeye smolt outmigration is the third largest since 1998. A pilot biotelemetry program has tagged 4000 smolts. DNA fingerprinting in Skaha and Osoyoos will help determine species. Vernon Creek fry migrated a month earlier than last year, making it hard to monitor. ORRI phase 2 is going ahead this year. A fry release and event is planned for May 16. Ms. Masters announced she will be leaving ONA at the end of May. Chair Bauer thanked her for her time with the council.
- Mr. Meredith: The CWRA has a flood proofing workshop on May 23rd.
- Ms. Ekkert: South Okanagan Drinking Water Team has been replaced with Thompson Okanagan interagency management committee.
- Mr. Furness: FLNRO has been working on fact sheets for QEPs to help identify rare plants in the Okanagan lakes. Staff will be contacting local governments to determine what is in place for local soil bylaws with a view to assess what exists.
- Mr. Hrasko: BCWWA annual conference was the largest so far. Found the Not Waiting for Noah Workshop interesting. Mission Creek is in freshet season and peaked today at 60 CM/S. Mr. Crampton added that there is a high stream advisory for the Okanagan system and the whole southern interior. Snow pack: 116% of normal. Trying to keep Okanagan Lake at full pool to avoid a late drought. Current flow of Okanagan River is about 80 CM/S. More flow from southern creeks.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: A report on "Not Waiting for Noah" will be available soon and will circulate to council.
- Mr. Littley: The WCQI program and its value may be discussed at the upcoming joint board/council strategic planning session. Please think about the program and any comments you may want to make.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be the joint council/board strategic planning session at Penticton Lakeside Resort on June 4, 2013.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

Moved by Remi Allard

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of May 9, 2013 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director