

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2014, AT
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, Chair
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles, Vice-Chair
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Ground Water Association	Doug Geller (alt.)
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Andrew Petersen
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Resource Mgmt)	Bob Warner (alt.)
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Jason Angus (alt.)
City of Vernon	Rob Miles (alt.)
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ian Rogalski
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carol Luttmmer
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer
Water Supply Association of BC	Darwyn Kutney (alt.)

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Ecosystems)	Grant Furness
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Doug Edwards
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck

STAFF:

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

GUESTS:

B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.	Shaun Reimer
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.	Andy Oetter
BC Real Estate Association	Norma Miller
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alt.)
Black Mountain Irrigation District	Bob Hrasco
Canadian Water Resources Association	Dwayne Meredith (alt.)
CH2MHill	Mark Watt
Clarke Geoscience	Jennifer Clarke
Ebbwater Consulting	Tamsin Lyle
Kerr Wood Leidal Assoc.	Jason Miller
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Zoe Kirk
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Angelique Wood
SARAHS UBC Institute	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Town of Princeton	Kim Maynard
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat
UBC Okanagan	Natasha Neumann
Urban Systems	Graeme Hayward
Village of Keremeos	Manfred Bauer
Western Water Associates	Laurie Welch
Associated Engineering	Rod MacLean

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Dobson called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Moved by Bernie Bauer

Seconded by Hans Buchler

“That the agenda for the Feb. 13, 2014 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held Dec. 12, 2013, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

Moved by Bob Warner

Seconded by Margaret Bakelaar

“That the minutes from the Dec. 12, 2013 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on the most recent board meeting noting discussion that the Water Management Program is up for review in 2014 which includes the WSC. As a result, the council will likely be involved in the process, she added.

The board has a new chair – Doug Findlater, representing RDCO. Additional RDCO reps who are returning are Keith Fielding and Gerry Zimmerman. The new vice-chair is Juliette Cunningham of RDNO. Additional RDNO reps are Doug Dirk and Bob Fleming. RDOS is represented by former board chair Stu Wells, and new to the board are Allan Patton and Wes Hopkin. Toby Pike returns as a director representing Water Supply Association of BC, James Pepper is the Okanagan Nation Alliance rep. and Don Dobson for the WSC.

The Okanagan Falls wastewater treatment plant was discussed and RDOS' interest in having the water go through a wetland for additional filtration before being released into the Okanagan River. The plan has been opposed by the Canadian Wildlife Service. After some discussion the board decided to send a letter to the federal government asking that the issue be sorted out.

An updated water conservation guide for municipalities was recently released, created in partnership with the Province and Polis. The guide is available on the OBWB website.

The board received reports on the Make Water Work and Don't Move a Mussel campaigns.

There was a lengthy discussion about the continued concern re: the threat of zebra mussels. A news release went out, urging the federal government to pass pending legislation that will allow Canadian Border Services to stop and inspect boats at the Canada-U.S. border, and asking the province to ensure appropriate funding for conservation officers to carry out inspections. A recent report from Idaho's inspection program found 19% of fouled watercraft that were inspected were headed to B.C. (11%) and Alta (8%).

The board heard a presentation from City of Kelowna's Todd Cashin regarding restoration work on Mission Creek to address flooding, climate change and the work's many benefits to the ecosystem.

5. GUEST PANEL – OKANAGAN FLOOD RISK & MANAGEMENT

Bob Hrasko – Black Mountain Irrigation District, **Shaun Reimer** – Flood Safety Engineer with B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, **Tamsin Lyle** – Ebbwater Consulting, **Norma Miller** – BC Real Estate Association, and **David Campbell** – BC River Forecast Centre

Mr. Jatel introduced the discussion and the need for updated floodplain mapping and management plans.

Flooding is becoming more common. One sign of its impact is the significant growth in insurance claims for flooding over the last 20 years in Canada as well as the U.S. One of problems is the amount of hard-scaping in communities and a lack of opportunities for water to sink, noted Mr. Jatel.

Floodplain maps were designed to show where an area is expected to flood once every 200 yrs. Okanagan maps done for Mission Creek, and in the north and south Okanagan, date back to 1984 and are now out-of-date, he added.

Mr. Hrasko – BMID

Black Mountain Irrigation District includes and relies on Mission Creek. It is the largest creek in the Okanagan, supplying 1/3 of all water flowing into Okanagan Lake. It is also one of four drinking water sources for Kelowna – the other three being intakes in the lake.

There have been significant floods on the creek over the years, but they have become more frequent, noted Mr. Hrasko. One of the issues the utility is facing is the loss of tree cover due to pine beetle. In June 2013, there were three large, unprecedented, storms. Normally, turbidity in the creek is minimal by August, but in 2013 it didn't settle until it froze in winter, he added.

Shaun Reimer – FLNRO Flood Safety engineer

Mr. Reimer provided an overview of provincial regulations around flooding and dikes. We're seeing a strange distribution of snow this year, he said, explaining that the latest reading shows Okanagan Kettle Basin at 88% of normal. Because inflow is expected to be high, the province will be releasing some water to prepare for possible flooding, he added.

Recognizing the considerable number of flooding events on Mission Creek, the province is conducting a study on the creek to determine what to expect with climate change, and what works (e.g. bridges, in-stream changes, moving dikes) can be done to help address concerns. Staff hope to complete the study by March.

Tamsin Lyle – Ebbwater Consulting

Ms. Lyle spoke on the difference between hazard management vs. risk management. She noted a number of tools available for local government and utility staff to help understand the hazards they face and potential solutions. One such tool was developed by Hazus Canada, allowing communities to put in their own information and develop some strategies.

Norma Miller – BC Real Estate Association

Ms. Miller explained the association's growing interest in the need for updated flood maps and their efforts to encourage the province to get the work done.

The association is often asked why they care, she said, adding that "what is good for the province is good for all of us." The BCREA, she added, started hearing about various water issues in 2005 from various real estate boards so the association began making recommendations to the province in 2006 regarding flooding and other issues. In 2010 it commissioned a study and developed a report on the state of flood management in B.C. which indicated floodplain maps were out of date, putting communities, the economy, and other considerations at risk.

The type of devastating floods that hit Alberta last year can be avoided in B.C. if we plan now, added Ms. Miller.

Discussion

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the Okanagan, generally, has less flood risk, but it has happened she added, pointing to the Testalinden Dam in Oliver. It's something that should be addressed now, she added, saying the risks need to be assessed and long-term infrastructure plans made.

There was general agreement that the current 1 in 200-year scenarios are ineffective today.

It was noted that the province is looking at the implications of climate change to infrastructure, but it was unclear if any action was being taken yet.

It was also pointed out that the Insurance Bureau of Canada has developed a Municipal Risk Assessment Tool and is going to ask municipalities to use it to do analysis, allowing them to assess risk before giving out insurance.

Additional comments:

- Some communities are planning for 1 in 700 year events.
- We need to give rivers room to breathe. Infrastructure doesn't last forever and we can plan ahead to move infrastructure.
- City of Penticton has bylaws that state if a homeowner with waterfront property dies and the family intends to sell the property, the local government has the first right of refusal to purchase it with the intention of turning it into park land, removing the risk of someone else moving onto property that is at risk of flooding. It is a good solution that just requires political will.
- After the B.C. interior fires in 2003, people rebuilt their homes back in their high-risk neighbourhoods because of the requirements of their insurance policies. These types of policies need to be reviewed – compensating people to move away.

6. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Birtles: IHA has a new water system report available on its website.
- Ms. Kirk: Westbench water metering is almost ready to launch. I have found less uptake in water conservation messaging when it's delivered on its own, but when it is coupled with the need for climate adaptation there is greater interest.
- Dr. Janmaat: UBCO is holding its "Splashdown" event prior to the Water Board holding its public panel discussion for Canada Water Week. We are still looking for sponsors for prizing.
- Mr. Meredith: CWRA is holding a course in March on the principles of hydrology.
- Mr. Pike: The BCWSA holds its annual spring workshop April 3-4.
- Mr. Rogalski: Environment Canada will soon be releasing its evaporation lake study with recommendations.
- Dr. Neumann: A Middle Vernon Creek Action Plan has been developed, looking at hydrologic measurements and includes a tool to support decision-making, helping planners with water management decisions.
- Dr. Bauer: UBCO has developed a water management proposal to the Canadian Water Network and looks at traditional knowledge for water management.
- Littley: The deadline for WCQI grant applications is Feb. 21, 4 p.m.
- Ms. Jackson: Work is underway for Canada Water Week. The OBWB and Okanagan WaterWise are hosting its annual panel discussion March 20 at the Laurel Building starting at 5 p.m.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: The OBWB has submitted a proposal for federal funding that joins the wetland project with floodplains and the impacts on agriculture, flooding on ag lands and how we can

perhaps compensate farmers, as well as the impact of old school farming methods on water quality. We are interested in having more people help develop the proposal.

- Mr. Jatel: Part 1 of the Okanagan wetland strategy is almost complete, looking at the issues and where we want to focus attention for wetland rehabilitation. We will be looking to develop partnerships for this work.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be at the Best Western Inn on March 13, 2014.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

Moved by Rob Birtles

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of February 13, 2014 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director