

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON MARCH 13TH, 2001, AT THE BOARD ROOM, REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN, 9848 ABERDEEN ROAD, VERNON, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.

PRESENT:

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| Chair R. Hobson | C.O.R.D. |
| Director D. Hackman | N.O.R.D. |
| Director R. Hein | C.O.R.D. |
| Director L. Novakowski | C.O.R.D. |
| Alternate Director J. Slater (Vice Chair) | O.S.R.D. |
| Director J. Cardoso | O.S.R.D. |
| Director J. Coady | O.S.R.D. |

STAFF: G. Armour Field Supervisor

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hackman:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on February 14th, 2001 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Minister of Environment – Control of Eurasian watermilfoil

Minister Ian Waddell informed the Board that there would be no consideration of providing any funding for aquatic weed control. This was in response to notification from the Okanagan Basin Water Board that lakeshore Provincial Parks and day-sites might not be able to be treated for weed growth in the summer of 2001 due to reductions in local funds for milfoil harvesting.

Moved by Director Cardoso and seconded by Director Coady :

"That the regional boards be made aware of the weed control situation facing the Okanagan Basin Water Board in front of Provincial sites and the possible consequences of curtailment of weed control, and that the Boards be encouraged to express any concerns to the Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks."

CARRIED.

Director Hein asked that the letter be copied to the Okanagan Valley MLA's and the Board agreed.

Chairman Hobson suggested that the letter to the regional boards contain information concerning the previous commitment of the Province to a five year cost-sharing agreement and the withdrawal of funding due to a provincial financial crisis.

Mr. Armour questioned the distances that would be left surrounding Provincial Parks as most of the lake bottom is crown land.

The Board discussed the benefits of controlling weed growth from an economic standpoint and noted that the benefits to water quality were questionable. The plants tend to remove nutrient from the lakes and improve water clarity, but are a physical and visual problem to water users. It was agreed that weed control was within the mandate of the Board.

Director Hein wondered if the replacement of equipment should be funded by specified area since the benefits of weed control were primarily economic.

Chairman Hobson noted that the Province's own study commissioned by Treasury Board showed a strong rationale for continued involvement in weed control as there is a tremendous benefit economically to the Province as well as the local areas. He noted that the Water Board has collected reserves to pay for equipment replacement and that the existing equipment purchased by the Province had been turned over to the Water Board at no cost.

Director Hackman asked if weed control work in Mara Lake was performed by the Water Board

Mr. Armour replied that this was done by Columbia Shuswap Regional District on an annual contract negotiated with RDNO.

Okanagan Lake Action Plan – Conference Report and Summary of Phase 1

Mr. Armour presented a summary of information presented at the two day conference held on the Okanagan Lake Action Plan for the recovery of kokanee fish stocks.

The two day conference held March 3rd and 4th updated people on what has happened since the initial conference in 1995 and charted strategy for the next five years.

BC Environment put on the conference but the Action Plan involves other government and non-government agencies and groups as well.

Facts from presenters:

Three factors are affecting the health of the kokanee population:

- Habitat degradation
- Competition from Mysis shrimp
- Poor quality food in lake

Drs. John Stockner and Ken Hall (U.B.C.) – both of whom worked on the original Okanagan Basin Study presented an overview of the limnology of Okanagan Lake. They quoted the per capita input of phosphorus into Okanagan Lake as 17 g from point sources and 24 grams from non point sources.

Analysis of plankton in Okanagan Lake shows marked differences now to what was present in 1970.

The high input of nitrogen and phosphorus in the early 1970's caused a bloom of blue green algae in July and August. There was an annual fall bloom of diatoms and flagellates. (zooplankton)

In 2000, the lake is dominated by blue green algae in late summer and early fall, and in parts of the lake nitrogen is usually non-detectable by June. There is no fall diatom and flagellate bloom. Blue green algae (cyanophyta) can 'fix' nitrogen from the atmosphere where the others cannot, and so can flourish in low nitrogen conditions. The lake is extremely nitrogen poor by fall and this imbalance is responsible for the change in the algal growth pattern.

Cyanophyta are poor quality food for kokanee – they lack sufficient fatty acids and other nutrient components. Flagellate zooplankton are the primary food for juvenile kokanee emerging from rearing

habitat in the creeks during the early fall. If the kokanee fry get poor quality food prior to winter, many do not survive.

Researchers thought the competition of mysis shrimp for this food was putting pressure on the kokanee population. This may be part of the story along with the poor quality source of food.

Kalamalka Lake provides an interesting comparison. The species composition of algae is as it was thirty years ago. There is a fall predominance of diatoms and flagellates. Despite the presence of large numbers of mysis shrimp, the kokanee do well in Kalamalka Lake. Nitrogen is not growth limiting in Kalamalka Lake.

The Okanagan Basin Study set objectives for lake phosphorus levels in the valley. These were based on estimates of desirable levels and represented major reductions from the high levels associated with secondarily treated wastewater entering the lakes. Some of these objectives have been achieved while other lakes still show levels higher than the objective.

The ratio of nitrogen and phosphorus appears to be unbalanced in Okanagan Lake. We have in reduced phosphorus to a more natural level through improvements to liquid waste management, but we may have reduced nitrogen too much.

A program of adaptive management will be followed in Okanagan Lake and any work will follow these principles:

- Take small incremental steps
- The steps should be reversible
- The purpose and results of the steps should be communicated prior to initiating next step

Director Novakowski commented that the complexity of factors affecting kokanee points to the need to take a watershed approach to these problems.

Director Cardoso noted that sometimes people do not appreciate the importance of a single species such as kokanee.

Director Hein added that in Lake Country, the Ocoala Fish and Game Club must be given some credit for stocking of kokanee and keeping the Wood and Kalamalka Lake populations in good shape.

Water Management Conference (October 2001) – Draft Outline and Sponsorship Information

This Conference was discussed under New and Unfinished Business along with the Water Management Partnership Proposal.

Kelowna Community Stewardship Centre – Concept Paper

Mr. Armour noted that the Stewardship Centre Concept Paper had been included in the agenda to demonstrate the efforts of non government organizations to better coordinate their activities. Information and expertise would be available at one location and overlap of projects could be minimized. He added that this is comparable to what the Water Board is promoting on the government side with a Water Management Partnership.

Chairman Hobson advised that the City of Kelowna will be discussing the location of the Centre with the Group and dealing with zoning questions and so on.

Director Coady noted that the organization of NGO's would make it easier for us in dealing with funding requests.

Director Cardoso asked about the plan to sustain the Centre financially. He noted that a long term source

of funds would be required.

Director Novakowski commented that we should assist if possible as the NGO's are future potential partners in water management.

Chairman Hobson agreed that alliance with stewardship groups makes sense but felt that funding sources should be outside the Water Board.

The Board agreed to invite Michelle Boshard to a meeting to further discuss the Stewardship Centre and related issues.

J. Mattison, Director, Water Management Branch

The Board received a summary of input gathered from Mr. Mattison's presentation on preserving drinking water sources.

Director Hein noted that the topic of local control of resource use in watersheds had been a recent issue of concern in Lake Country.

Chairman Hobson said that in areas of the U.S. where there is very controlled access to watershed, a fee is levied and the proceeds are used to undertake management actions in that watershed.

John Rowse, Ministry of Health

Mr. Armour informed the Board that Mr. Rowse had responded by telephone to the Board's letter to the Minister of Health asking for a presentation of information on enhanced septic systems, package treatment systems, and new septic tank regulations.

Mr. Rowse said that in approximately a month, re-drafting of the new regulations will be completed and he would be in a position to make such a presentation.

The Board agreed that local government staff from engineering and planning departments should be invited to the presentation and suggested that perhaps the May meeting would be a suitable time.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Water Management Partnership Proposal

Chairman Hobson reviewed the report of the Board sub-committee (attached) and the recommendations for proceeding with some areas of the water management partnership. He said that the group recommended that no revision of the goals and vision section was necessary as this information was still valid. The question addressed was what could be done with existing resources and staff. He outlined the ideas of a State of the Basin Conference and report, collaboration on community education programs, facilitating the coordination of referrals affecting water, and establishing a data clearinghouse. He noted that the resources at the disposal of the Board included the funds requisitioned for water management actions last year and the Field Supervisor's time.

Director Hein wondered if any funding might be available through the Province's Drinking Water Protection Initiative. He also asked how a data clearinghouse would differ from the information centre proposed by the stewardship groups.

Mr. Armour noted that information of a technical nature such as monitoring results might be collected through an institute such as OUC while the stewardship groups would have material on how to take on

various projects and funding sources. He added that there would be an ongoing requirement to keep a technical database current and perhaps make the information accessible through a website.

The Board discussed the C₅H₂O Conference to be held in October and how this might integrate with the proposed State of the Basin Conference.

Director Coady felt the Water Board should consider sponsorship of the C₅H₂O Conference.

Chairman Hobson reported that a significant portion of the \$75,000 needed had already been raised.

Director Novakowski stated that he felt all Board members should attend and also supported the idea of sponsorship.

Chairman Hobson said that we would need Regional District approval for any sponsorship and also to spend any funds on the other water management actions discussed previously.

Director Hein suggested that these events are the beginning of the water management process that the Board has been talking about, and that we should inform the regional boards of our wish to proceed.

Chairman Hobson summarized that the Water Board proposes to participate in some fashion in the C₅H₂O Conference; to host a spring 2002 State of the Basin Conference, and to use existing reserves and the time of the Field Supervisor to pull these actions together.

Director Cardoso cautioned that the Board should clarify the purpose of the conference and who is promoting it before we endorse or sponsor it.

Director Hackman asked if the reserve for water management was additional to the equipment reserve. He added that the Board should make sure that all other priorities were covered before allocating funding to either conference.

Mr. Armour said the Board had just over \$53,000 in addition to the equipment reserve.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Coady :

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board adopt the committee recommendation to request Regional Board authorization for the use of funds previously requisitioned by the Water Board for water management actions and the time of existing staff to convene a State of the Okanagan Basin Conference; to assist in establishing a central water related data clearinghouse at Okanagan University College; and to promote coordinated and cost effective water management actions among Okanagan communities. In addition that the Water Board distribute the Westland Proposal to the attendees of the October 31st Workshop, along with an update of the current status of the proposal."

CARRIED.

The Board discussed the recommendations received from the RDOS Board concerning water management actions which that regional board felt should be undertaken by the Water Board.

Director Cardoso asked if these issues are being addressed in the motion.

The Board agreed to review these recommendations and refer to them in the letter to the RDOS Board.

SEWERAGE FACILITIES GRANT APPLICATIONS:

City of Vernon - Blue Jay Subdivision

Moved by Alternate Director Slater and seconded by Director Hackman:

"That the application for a Sewage Facilities Grant from the City of Vernon for debt incurred in providing community sewer to Blue Jay Subdivision, be approved for payment."

CARRIED.

The Board noted that the grant application was for works dating back to 1999 and that if large retroactive grant applications were received, it might be necessary to phase payment of the retroactive amount over a number of years if the funds to avoid budget problems.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY