

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2009, AT THE PENTICTON TRADE AND CONVENTION CENTRE, 273 POWER STREET, PENTICTON, BC

PRESENT

Council Members:

Bernie Bauer, Chair	UBC Okanagan
Ted van der Gulik, Vice Chair	Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Anna Page	Regional District North Okanagan
Bal Poonian	Urban Development Institute
Bob Hraske	Water Supply Association of BC
Brian Guy	Canadian Water Resources Association
Bryn Lord (alternate)	Interior Health Authority
Bryn White	South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program
Chris Radford	Regional District Central Okanagan
Dan Millar	Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region
Denise Neilsen	Agriculture and Agri Food Canada
Doug Edwards	Agriculture & Agri Food Canada
Doug Geller	BC Ground Water Association
Hans Buchler	BC Agriculture Council
Howie Wright	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Jillian Tamblyn	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Ken Cunningham	Ministry of Environment, Water Stewardship
Kerry Rouek	Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association
Lee Hesketh	BC Cattlemen's Association
Lorne Davies	OCEOLA Fish and Game Club
Lorraine Bennest	BC Fruit Growers Association
Magnus Bein	Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program
Mark McKenney	Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society
Mark Watt	City of Kelowna
Rob Birtles	Interior Health Authority
Steve Matthews	Ministry of Environment, Environmental Stewardship
Toby Pike (alternate)	Water Supply Association of BC
Vic Harwood	Community Futures Development

Staff:

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director, OBWB
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director, OBWB
Genevieve Dunbar	Office and Grants Administrator, OBWB
Kellie Garcia	Research and Communications Coordinator, OBWB

Others:

Conrad Pryce	Ministry of Environment
Oleg Ivanov	Ministry of Environment
Tom Siddon	Past Chair
Samantha Bartling	North Central Washington RC&D

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bauer called the meeting to order at 10:19 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

Chair Bauer welcomed Council members and guests.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Lorraine Bennest

Seconded by Brian Guy

“That the agenda for the October 8, 2009 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held June 11, 2009, at the Okanagan Nation Alliance offices, West Kelowna

Approval of the June minutes was delayed until the next regular meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council.

5. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Warwick Sears provided an update on topics covered and resolutions made at the October 6 OBWB meeting.

Chris Johnson, with Kerr Wood Leidal Associates Ltd., gave a presentation to the board of directors on stormwater quality issues and integrated stormwater management practices. He suggested that a comprehensive look at the contribution of stormwater pollutants to the lake systems in the Basin relative to sources is needed in order to set objectives and targets and assign priorities.

The Water Supply & Demand project will receive another funding injection from the NRCan Resource Adaptation Collaborative program, \$358,000 over the next 3 years to support Phase 3.

Dr. Warwick Sears recently attended a meeting of the Southern Interior Regional Drinking Water Team (SIRDWT), an interagency committee dealing with water quality issues in the Interior Health region. OWSC members can forward their concerns to the SIRDWT through the OBWB.

The OBWB received a \$154,000 infrastructure grant to develop a web-based water use reporting tool for the Okanagan valley. The tool will enable water suppliers and other large water users to record how much water they use each month, evaluate changes from year to year, and look at how their water use compares to other areas. The project will rely Project partners will include Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Community Development, large irrigation districts, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, among others.

Following up on recommendations made in the July 2009 “Living Within Our Means” drought planning document, the OBWB approved funding for developing a technical framework for

establishing the basis for basin-wide drought agreements, hydrology and licence prioritization; establishing a drought response team; and preparing a water conservation bylaws toolkit.

The Board also approved funding for a water pricing assessment (proposed by the OWSC economics committee) and a study to look at feasibility of using sewage grants for stormwater infrastructure (proposed by the source protection committee)

The OBWB will request a seat on the new steering committee being struck for a pilot project to look at where aggregate should and should not be mined in the Central Okanagan. Chair Bauer was nominated for that seat.

The OBWB will provide a letter of support to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to be included in their application to AAFC's Agri-Flex program in support of a BC agricultural water management program.

The OBWB received a letter from Lloyd Manchester, President of the Okanagan Cottage Owners Association, and will be sending a response soon.

Dr. Bauer requested that Brian Guy provide an update on the Water Supply & Demand Project at the December OWSC meeting.

6. ROUND TABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members provided an update on their organization's activities. The person who provided the update is included in brackets.

- The Osoyoos Lake Board of Control will be having their annual meeting on October 20 at 7:30 in Osoyoos. (Dan Millar)
- UBC Okanagan will be submitting an application to the AAFC's *Agri-flex Program* and may be requesting letters and in-kind donations to support the application. (Chair Bauer)
- A south Okanagan biodiversity conservation strategy is being developed by the SOSCP. (Bryn White)
- SEKID had very low water supplies this year; the lowest in 30-40 years. (Toby Pike)
- The BC Wine Grape Council is working on a sustainable practices program for vineyards and wineries. Recent research conducted by Pat Bowen at PARC demonstrated that there are times in vine development when regardless of how much water is available the plants do not take any up. The research could have important implications for irrigation of vines and perhaps orchards as well. (Hans Buchler)
- The OCEOLA Fish and Game Club is working on increasing water levels in the Lake Country section of Vernon Creek to allow for spawning kokanee. The water levels are very low this year. (Lorne Davies)
- RDOS has been participating in meetings with planning, engineering, transportation, and health to discuss developments in the regional district. The Groundwater Bylaws Toolkit and aquifer mapping were brought up at one of the meetings and received strong interest from the attendees. Metering new subdivisions is being promoted by the RDOS water technician. (Jillian Tamblyn)
- The Okanagan-Kootenay Water Stewardship Division of the Ministry of Environment is working on several projects including modernization of the *Water Act*, a natural resource legislation coordination project, and the Okanagan river restoration initiative and the Macintyre dam overshot gate project. There are lots of fish in the Okanagan River system (sockeye) this year; all the way up to Vaseux Lake. An interagency drought management committee was formed over the summer. (Ken Cunningham)

- The Cattlemen’s Association is meeting with ministry folks about getting tax relief for ranchers who are protecting riparian areas. (Anna Warwick Sears on behalf of Lee Hesketh)
- The Water Supply & Demand Project is using technical info to build 2 models and 25-30 scenarios are about to be run on these models to test the power and the databases. Technical reports are being produced for each study and will be integrated into a summary report. A web interface is being designed to allow access to the reports. The modelling, scenarios and reports will be done by the end of this year. (Brian Guy)
- Outreach around OBWB governance and the governance manual is underway, which include meetings with the regional boards and CAOs. (Anna Warwick Sears)
- An application form for the sewage assistance grant program is being developed and site visits to water conservation and quality improvement grant program recipients are being conducted. (Genevieve Dunbar)
- The draft OBWB Education and Outreach Strategy was taken before the Board on September 1. The final will be submitted for adoption at the November meeting. (Kellie Garcia)
- Summerland had a good water supply this year because storage was added in recent years and the Water Use Plan is in place. Users are under significant pressure to reduce water consumption because of the new water treatment plant. The fruit growers industry is looking at proposed changes to the *Water Act* and is concerned that there is no mention of irrigation water and the importance of food security in the Act. (Lorraine Bennest)

7. PRESENTATION

Ms. Samantha Bartling, Coordinator, Central Washington RC & D *NASA Remote Sensing Project*

Ms. Bartling is the Program Coordinator of the North Central Washington Resource Conservation & Development (NCW RC&D). The RC&D is a program of the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). Ms. Bartling facilitates the RC&D Council, a membership-based non-profit entity comprised of key community leaders in land conservation, water management environmental enhancement, and community development.

The NCW RC&D group is partnering with the OBWB to conduct the NASA Solutions Network Project. The project scoping is underway and is identifying the most appropriate use of NASA consulting time available (40 hours) and the form and function of the partnership between the NCW RC&D and the OBWB. A scoping meeting will be held on October 14 to develop a project charter and form project teams and workgroups.

Ms. Bartling asked the OWSC for input on what should be included in the project scope.

Dr. Warwick Sears suggested that the already developed streamflow forecasting model could benefit from remote sensing data for calibration and ground-truthing.

Chair Bauer suggested using the remote sensing data for assessment of snow pack, estimation of evaporation and evapotranspiration, and mapping land cover and change.

Mr. Guy discussed the two types of models being developed for the Okanagan, both of which could benefit from remote sensing data. The “adaptation to changing conditions (planning)” model is used to evaluate impacts of changes in climate, population, etc. The reliability of the model is heavily dependent on how it is calibrated; current data is incomplete so if we could obtain historic data from NASA we could do a better job of improving calibration and get a better idea of what the future is going to look like. The second type is the “short-term forecasting” model, which has big

implications for improving conditions for fish in the states and in Canada and would benefit from real time data collection going forward.

Dr. Bauer stated that he would like to get the UBC Okanagan Sustainability Institute involved in this project. UBC Okanagan doesn't have remote sensing expertise on their campus but they are building their GIS and modeling capacity right now.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that the River Forecast Centre and the MAL agriculture demand model could both benefit from the NASA data collection.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications & Outreach

Kellie Garcia provided the report on behalf of co-chairs Anna Page and Bryn White. At their September meeting, the committee heard a presentation from Ms. Garcia on the draft education and outreach strategy being prepared with the assistance of Think Marketing. The final strategy will be presented to the Council at the December meeting. The OWSC communications committee will help implement the tactics included in the strategy.

Source Protection

Kellie Garcia provided the report on behalf of co-chairs Rob Birtles and Jillian Tamblyn. The committee discussed 3 projects: drinking water public awareness project, stormwater management grant feasibility project, and livestock and wildlife watering infrastructure project. After much discussion, the committee decided to recommend that the Board approve the completion of the stormwater management project, which would involve developing a matrix of the status of stormwater management in the Basin, similar to what was conducted last year for the wastewater management plan update.

Water Supply & Drought Management

Lorraine Bennest, co-chair of the water supply & drought management committee, provided the report. She stated that the committee had a broad discussion on drought response planning, specifically how to forecast earlier in the season in order to allow time for adaptation measures to be implemented. The committee decided on 3 projects to recommend to the Board: a technical framework for basin-wide drought planning, formation of an Okanagan drought team, and preparation of a water conservation toolkit.

Water Economics

Toby Pike, co-chair of the water economics committee, provided the report. The committee discussed several projects at their September meeting and decided to recommend that the OBWB approve the completion of an Okanagan water pricing analysis. The analysis will look at current water rates throughout the valley and will update a similar study done in 1994. The study will help in developing full-cost accounting for water and valuing it for what it costs; water is currently priced only for operation and maintenance costs and does not reflect renewal costs of infrastructure and investments in water quality treatment infrastructure.

Water Information Management

Nelson Jatel provided the report on behalf of co-chairs Brian Guy and Denise Neilsen. The committee discussed the streamlined water use reporting project, the NASA remote sensing project and the hydrometric monitoring governance project. The streamlined water use reporting project received funding and the first committee meeting is on October 9. The NASA project was endorsed by the Board at the October 6 meeting.

Groundwater

Mr. Geller, co-chair of the groundwater committee, provided the report. The committee discussed five topics: implementation of the groundwater bylaws toolkit, a pilot project focusing on groundwater licensing and monitoring, implementation of the well protection toolkit, development of a borehole database, and development of a system to track geothermal wells.

Mr. Ivanov, a regional hydrogeologist with the Ministry of Environment, provided information about a groundwater monitoring project he has asked the OBWB to be involved in. The project would establish long term monitoring wells in groundwater sensitive areas in the Basin. The municipality would fund the drilling of the well and the MoE would provide technical assistance for water quality and quantity monitoring. The OBWB's role would be to communicate with the municipalities to gauge their level of interest and to act as an administrator.

Moved by Hans Buchler

Seconded by Lorraine Bennest

“THAT the OWSC recommend that the OBWB communicate with Okanagan municipalities regarding the opportunity to partner with the OBWB and the Ministry of Environment to drill monitoring wells and collect and interpret water quality and quantity data.”

CARRIED

Mr. Geller suggested that two priority areas in the Okanagan are Meyer's Flat and the Twin Lakes region.

Mr. Davies suggested that the Middle Vernon Creek area should be a candidate because of the prominent surface water/groundwater interaction.

9. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.1 Input to BC Government – Modernizing the Water Act

Mr. Jatel asked the Council to provide input on what they would like to see changed in the *Water Act*.

Ms. Bennest stated that she would like to see a greater reference to irrigation and food security.

Chair Bauer stated that he would like to see legislation that is flexible and takes into account different needs of regions and accommodates innovative practices.

Mr. Pike suggested that the licensed agricultural irrigation season should be extended and that all diversions should be metered.

Mr. Jatel suggested that the Act should allow for a marketplace for water and the opportunity to create water trusts (purchase water from farmers/industry to enable in-stream flows).

Mr. Buchler stated that water marketing and trusts make him nervous, need a farmer to agree not to withdraw water during a certain time,

Mr. Pike suggested that the *Water Act* should have provisions for capital plans that will provide for future growth (i.e., actual and planned use).

Mr. Cunningham stated that he would like the ability to reallocated water in the short term if a licensee is not using it.

Mr. Geller would like to see the Act regulate all groundwater uses. All wells should be required to be registered and if a well is not registered then it is not protected under the Act. All large groundwater users should be licensed and metered. Groundwater and surface water should be managed as a connected and integrated resource. A definition should be developed of when shallow groundwater use is considered an extraction of surface water. Basin plans should be created for priority basins with user input and have specific policies that apply to basin only.

Mr. Buchler would like to see enabling legislation that can be applied regionally. Calling out for province wide licensing of groundwater might not be feasible but licensing of groundwater in priority watersheds is a must. Medium users should also be licensed – not just large users.

Mr. Davies asked if First Nations water rights would be addressed in the new Act.

Ms. Tamblin suggested that the OBWB talk to Howie about the First Nations perspective on this *Water Act* modernization.

Mr. Millar suggested that Mr. Jatel provide a synopsis of the *Water Act* as it exists when he presents the OWSC suggestions to the Board. The synopsis should include a better description of what it means to be an owner/renter of the water, what rights a licensee has, and what rights the crown has.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that the group get consensus on as many suggestions as possible; anything that is not unanimous could be submitted as recommendations or issues that were investigated.

Mr. Jatel requested further comments by October 27 and committed to putting out a draft by the end of October.

10. NEXT MEETINGS

The next committee meetings will be held on November 12 and 13, 2009 at the Regional District Central Okanagan offices. The timing of each meeting will be determined by the co-chairs and a schedule will be sent out closer to the dates.

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held December 10, 2009 (location TBD).

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Moved by Hans Buchler

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of October 8, 2009 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director