



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: June 3, 2010

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OBWB Directors

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District of Central Okanagan

Bernie Bauer, Okanagan
Water Stewardship Council

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Similkameen

Gordon Clark, Regional
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Doug Findlater, Regional
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Graeme James, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Gyula Kiss, Regional District
of North Okanagan

Toby Pike, Water Supply
Association of BC

George Saddleman,
Okanagan Nation Alliance

The next regular meeting of the OBWB is scheduled for 10am on July 6, 2010 at Regional District of North Okanagan.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Australia provides lessons for Okanagan: OBWB Executive Director Anna Warwick Sears presented findings from a recent water policy tour in Australia, and lessons learned from their 10 year drought experience. Of note was the universal value given to water. Dual flush toilets are standard. Recycled water for irrigation is common. And, maintaining environmental flows is given great importance. Flashing highways signs show dam levels, daily water use, and most communities have road signs with current drought conditions. Sydney Water's goal is to be so water efficient that restrictions will not be needed. There are many lessons that can be applied in the Okanagan, noted Warwick Sears.

Conservation program highlighted at board meeting: Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo, with the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program, reported on a website developed through an Environment Canada grant to OBWB. The site provides data on wildlife corridors in the valley, including maps of shorelines and a Habitat Atlas. The information helps local planners assess development applications - recognizing conservation issues such as fish habitat and how a development may affect wildlife migration. The site ensures collaboration between conservation groups in the Okanagan.

Sewerage facility grants awarded: Board directors approved grants for wastewater treatment upgrades in three Okanagan communities. Vernon was awarded funds for their wastewater treatment plant. Penticton's grant covers costs of wastewater treatment and collection in their industrial area, and Okanagan Falls received a grant in principle to construct a wastewater treatment facility that is still in the design phase.

Water Board receives funds for valley-wide drought plan: The Water Board has been granted \$10,000 from the province, matching a previous federal grant of \$70,000 to develop a valley-wide drought plan. The plan will draw on the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study to develop drought trigger levels, based on mainstem lake levels. Water providers can then use these trigger levels to respond to water shortages.

Reservoir storage needed: Directors discussed how the province's plan to lift the moratorium on the sale of recreational lots on drinking water reservoirs may affect the ability to expand needed drinking water storage, given the results of recently released Okanagan Water Supply & Demand Study. The water is needed for human use and summer fish flows. Directors agreed to send a letter from the OBWB to the province.

For more information, please visit: www.OBWB.ca