

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2011, AT
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	Ted van der Gulik, Vice Chair
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
B.C. Ministry of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Branch	Steve Matthews
B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Ops.	Ken Cunningham
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Mark Watt
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Kelowna Fish and Game Club	Doug Flintoft
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Agri-Enviro. Branch	Doug Edwards
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ruta Fluxgold
Oceola Fish and Game Club	Lorne Davies
Okanagan College	Douglas MacLeod
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	Howard Neufeld
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Gwen Bridge
Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society	Mark McKenney
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Anna Page
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
South Okanagan Real Estate Board	Elden Ulrich
Urban Development Institute	Robert Evans
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Communications and Research Coordinator	Corinne Jackson
OBWB, Interim Office and Grants Administrator	Melissa Tesche
OBWB, Intern	Graham Campbell

GUESTS:

B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Ops.	Solvej Patschke
B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Ops.	Conrad Pryce
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Okanagan Nation Alliance, Fisheries Dept.	Elinor McGrath
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat
UBC Okanagan	John Wagner

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Hans Buchler

Seconded by Brian Guy

“That the agenda for the June 9, 2011 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held May 12, 2011, at the Best Western Hotel, Kelowna.

A small amendment was noted.

Moved by Don Dobson

Seconded by Brian Guy

“That the minutes from the May 12, 2011 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported on the board meeting and noted a presentation by Vic Jensen and Mike Reiner from B.C. Ministry of Environment, regarding municipal requirements for sewage treatment plants. The board wanted to hear from regulators about the process and the environmental assessments required, she added, noting the presentation was well-received.

The board approved an updated Terms of Reference for the Sewage Facility Grants which will help facilitate the process for communities to apply for funding.

Board of Directors also adopted the audited financial statements which will form the core of the OBWB's upcoming annual report.

There was some discussion around a letter the OBWB will be sending to B.C. Premier Christy Clark and B.C. Ministry of Environment regarding the Water Act Modernization process and the need for it to remain a priority for government.

Chair Bauer added that the board also received a letter from the International Joint Commission acknowledging the OBWB's concerns about the potential for flow rates to be negotiated in the renewal of operating orders for Osoyoos Lake.

The board also received a report from May's Strategic Planning Session. The planning session and the resulting report reaffirms the direction of the Water Stewardship Council. A copy of the report can be circulated to interested council members. Those wishing to see a copy can contact Dr. Warwick Sears or Mr. Jatel.

5. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Campbell: The OBWB has hired Mr. Campbell as a summer intern to create a number of videos, including a few fun ones for Okanagan WaterWise (one promoting water conservation, another on source protection), as well as an informational video on the milfoil control program and an instructional video on the Water Supply and Demand Viewer. Mr. Campbell recently won a BC Hydro Invent the Future contest for his work on a xeriscape rap video.

- Dr. Guy: Work is being done to develop a workshop on flood management strategies. The Canadian Water Resources Association has its annual conference in St. John's, Nfld. With all the changes at B.C. Ministry of Environment and the introduction of a Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the B.C. branch of the CWRA is looking to encourage the province to maintain important communications on water and environmental issues.
- Mr. Birtles: As a member of the Water Stewardship Council's Source Water Committee we are looking at developing three position papers on general source water protection, urban water source protection and the eco-valuation of water. We are also looking at holding a workshop in November.
- Mr. Watt: The City of Kelowna has been busy working on its filtration deferral application and is now waiting for a response from Interior Health. The city has completed some water studies, thanks in part to support from the OBWB. One study looks at how various events can contaminate water and affect water intakes on Okanagan Lake. This study is available to share with those interested. An integrated water supply project for Kelowna is also being studied.
- Ms. McGrath: Okanagan Nation Alliance's Fisheries Department is developing a position paper regarding water. The department is also conducting a study on diversion and has been working on various projects to improve fish habitat.
- Dr. Janmaat: Recent travel allowed for the study of water storage options and the presenting of some recent research on residential spatial patterns in lawn-watering. A UBC Okanagan student is assisting on a project that looks at the expansion of water rights and the consequences of using the current First-in-Time, First-in-Right system on the run.
- Mr. Matthews: The Fish and Wildlife branch of B.C.'s Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) has been busy with the Okanagan River restoration and other restoration initiatives and is looking at additional property acquisition on Mission Creek. The ministry is also busy with maintenance of a number of dams that the province acquired.
- Mr. Cunningham: There have been a number of changes within provincial ministries with the creation of MFLNRO, including Mr. Cunningham becoming the regional water manager for the newly expanded Okanagan Shuswap District. The office is currently busy with the high water levels in the area and working to minimize flood risk.
- Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo: Foreshore Inventory Mapping of Okanagan Lake is now complete and on the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program's website. A two- to three-year biodiversity conservation project is currently being developed for the Okanagan and will be comparable to initiatives elsewhere in Canada. A reminder that the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum is Sept. 18 to 20.
- Ms. Riechert: The Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen is pleased to see that the Faulder aquifer, which was in decline for a number of years, looks like it is recharging this year. The RDOS is looking to change its Official Community Plan to include a "Crown watershed zone" to protect such areas. The proposal is currently going through a legal review.
- Van der Gulik: Workshops on the Okanagan Irrigation Management (OKIM) tool are being held with farmers throughout the Okanagan. The tool is intended to help farmers monitor their water use and get tips on how to improve irrigation efficiency. The irrigation industry is also looking to work with the landscape architects association to develop standards that can be adopted by municipalities.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: The OBWB is working with the Water Sustainability Partnership to develop a workshop in November for local government staff that would promote the various tools that have been created for their use (e.g. a scaled down version of the Water Balance Model, the Topsoil Bylaws Toolkit, and the Water Supply and Demand Project and its local government guide.)
- Mr. Jatel: The Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool (SWURT) project is now complete. Three workshops were held in the Okanagan, helping water utilities learn how to use the web tool. SWURT will allow utilities to provide the province with ongoing reporting, rather than once a year, and help plan water use effectively. The B.C. Government is now looking at using this tool in other parts of the province. The tool is also being looked at as a potential way to report snowpack information and hydrometric station data – providing a central location for water information in the province. The Groundwater Well Monitoring Project is ongoing. Six wells were drilled in the last year, and another five will be drilled this year. Preliminary results will be available soon on the Hydrologic Connectivity Study which builds on the OBWB's Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study.

- Ms. Jackson: Water Board staff are working on a number of communication fronts with the creation of videos, public and media outreach for the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, development of a valley-wide water conservation ad campaign, the build-out of the WaterWise print/radio series and a news conference regarding the groundwater well monitoring project.
- Mr. Buchler: BC Agriculture Council is developing an Ag-Water Reserve position paper. As a grapegrower, there has been no need to irrigate yet this year. The groundwater supply is high but below average.
- Ms. Bennest: While the water supply is plentiful, the growing season is about two weeks behind from last year. The Okanagan should perhaps be looking at how to improve the groundwater recharge system, especially based on this year's surplus.

6. PRESENTATION – AGRICULTURE WATER RESERVE

BC Ministry of Agriculture: Ted van der Gulik

Water Stewardship Council's Water Reserve Committee: Ted van der Gulik, Lorraine Bennest, Hans Buchler, John Wagner, Bernard Bauer

Mr. van der Gulik led off the presentation to council by reminding the WSC that the province made a commitment in the Living Water Smart document to increase water efficiency by 33% and to reserve water for agriculture. This is the framework for an Agricultural Water Reserve (AWR), he noted, adding that the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture has drafted an agriculture water strategy.

He noted that efficiency, uniformity, and scheduling are the three keys to improving efficiency. Tools like the Irrigation Scheduling Calculator and Okanagan Irrigation Management (OKIM) are helping farmers move toward these goals. Is it expected that water resources in the Okanagan could be totally allocated within 10 years, and 85% of the water used in the valley will go to irrigation. To properly manage water, we will need to properly manage irrigation, Mr. van der Gulik added. Because the current system operates on the principle of beneficial use and a lot of the land in the ALR is not currently being irrigated, there is concern that the water will be allocated somewhere else before the lands are used for agriculture in the future.

Mr. Van der Gulik noted many sources of data to begin formulating a water reserve, including: current water storage licences, irrigation licences, other licences (stock watering), water licences help by water purveyors (ground water is missing here, of course, because it isn't licensed). The planning process could complement agricultural plans that are already being created, like the Agricultural Area Plan, which was built using the land use inventory.

He noted that while this would not be possible under the current Water Act and that there are many questions around how an AWR would function, including: Who holds the reserve? How does water enter it? How is water applied for within the reserve? As the agricultural community becomes more efficient, the water should stay in the reserve to irrigate other arable lands, he added.

Mr. van der Gulik presented a list of principles for an AWR that the BC Agriculture Council is in the process of developing and refining. When they are finalized, he will circulate them to WSC members.

Mr. Jatel went on to present council with a progress report on the WSC's Agricultural Water Reserve Committee, reminding council that the Sustainable Water Strategy listed an AWR as a priority. Mr. Jatel referred to the planning of an AWR as a future visioning exercise that must dovetail with land use planning.

Mr. Jatel noted the challenges of developing an AWR are three-fold: demand side, supply side, and legislative. He emphasized the need for proper process and ensuring that all partners are engaged. He described the first stages of planning as a technical exercise that should occur at the sub-basin level, noting that AWRs will look different for different areas of the province. He also commented on

the need to ensure that the environmental needs are fully accounted for and the need to license and account for groundwater.

Chair Bauer opened the floor for discussion. It was noted that the AWR planning process sounds similar to the OCP process, which involves feedback and planning by the community, with regular review. Member were unsure if an OCP-style process would be appropriate, since an AWR is a very long term plan with 30 year horizons for climate change impacts etc, and the OCP is relatively short term.

There was a sentiment that the broader community and water users should be consulted for such a planning process and that the non-consumptive values of the lakes must be considered.

Clarification was requested on the mandate of the AWR committee, to which Mr. Jatel replied that the committee will develop a position paper that will go to the WSC for review and eventually to the board which allows the board to advocate for that position. Dr. Warwick Sears reminded the WSC that an application to Agriculture Canada to fund a feasibility report on an Okanagan AWR is pending.

There was some question as to whether development of AWR principles by the WSC is beyond the scope of the council, since the WSC represents a broader community than the BC Agriculture Council. Mr. van der Gulik pointed out that the Okanagan is perhaps in the best position to scope an AWR and that if the BC Ag Council and the WSC came to similar recommendations, they would carry a lot of weight with the provincial ministries involved.

There was nearly unanimous agreement that it will be of utmost importance to accurately include environmental needs and the concern over the lack of good data on this issue.

Mr. van der Gulik noted that the changes to the Water Act are coming, and it is important to make sure that the language that goes into the new act enables proper watershed planning. The province has committed to an AWR and this is a chance for the WSC to influence that process, he said.

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Position paper development – Source Protection

Mr. Jatel reported that the WSC's Source Protection Committee is close to bringing the first of its position papers to council for discussion. The content should be ready for review by the September WSC meeting. Chair Bauer noted that all members of the WSC are encouraged to review the language and make suggestions since the papers will be sent to the board on behalf of the WSC, not just the committees.

7.2 Hydrometric monitoring – Committee update

Mr. Dobson reported that in the hydrometric report provided to the OBWB years ago it was suggested that 15 hydrometric stations be added to the network. The goal is to get three of these stations installed and operational in the 2011-12 fiscal year. Mr. Jatel has begun making funding inquiries with potential partners, since the Water Survey of Canada would be able to work the new stations into their existing workload of staff.

He noted that an analysis of the 100 stations that are recommended to be operated by purveyors has been done and there is great opportunity for data sharing and pooling of money to move this ahead.

Ms. Bennest inquired as to the progress of the provincial government on the compensation of residents affected by last year's dam break and wondered if the WSC should be doing something to speed up the progress. It was noted that substantial progress is being made within the ministries.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held July 14, 2011 in Oliver and will include some water-related tours.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Moved by Ken Cunningham

"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of May 12, 2011 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director