



Zosel Dam — Photo by Dan Miller



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: June 10, 2011

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Association of BC

**The next regular meeting of
the OBWB is 10 a.m.,
July 5, 2011 at the Regional
District of North Okanagan,
Coldstream.**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

OBWB studies provincial waste water regulations: Vic Jensen and Mike Reiner, from BC Ministry of Environment reported to the board regarding the province's process to regulate the quality of treated effluent being discharged into Okanagan lakes and rivers, through the Municipal Sewage Regulation and Liquid Waste Management Plans. The OBWB was noted for its leadership in assisting communities to upgrade their sewage systems and its role in research and monitoring to ensure clean water for the residents of the valley.

Registration opens on Osoyoos Lake Water Forum: Board Chair and Osoyoos Mayor Stu Wells noted the opening of early registration for the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum. The forum, Sept. 18 to 20 in Osoyoos, is a follow-up to a similar event in 2007 regarding water issues in the region. However, this forum has special significance since it is also intended to gather public input for the renewal of Operating Orders on Osoyoos Lake. For the last 25 years, an agreement between Canada and the U.S. has controlled water levels on the lake for the operation of Zosel Dam in the U.S., and is overseen by the International Joint Commission. The Orders expire February 2013 and there are concerns that discussions could include guaranteed water flows from Canada into the U.S. and about the potential implications. Early bird fees for the forum are available until Aug. 15. Special rates are also available to residents of Oliver, Osoyoos and Oroville, Wash. For details visit: www.obwb.ca/olwsf/about-us.

OBWB Strategic Planning Session Report: OBWB held a strategic planning session in May 2011. The board's top priorities for the coming year include increased emphasis on stormwater management, protection of water sources, adapting to changes in water availability with the changing climate, and study of water resource allocations. The board directed staff to study whether the current sewage facilities grants program should be extended to include stormwater infrastructure improvements.

Sewage Facility Grants audit leads to changes and improvements: An internal audit of the Sewage Facility Grants Program and discussions with municipal financial staff in the Okanagan determined changes were needed to update the program, first implemented in 1975. In the past, the OBWB paid 18% of eligible project costs, but communities were required to pay the first 2.5 mills (2.5 cents per \$1,000) based on a value set at 105% of the 1988 converted assessment amount of properties being serviced. With changes at BC Assessment and other issues, it was decided this requirement was too onerous and inaccurate. The OBWB will lower its grant for new applicants to 16% of eligible costs and remove the requirement of communities to pay the first 2.5 mills. There will be no change, on average, to the actual amount of grants received by communities.

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