



Photo by Dan Miller



BOARD REPORT: July 8, 2011

1450 KLO Road, Kelowna, BC V1W 3Z4

P 250.469.6271 F 250.762.7011

www.obwb.ca

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Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

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Okanagan

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District of Central Okanagan

Graeme James, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Toby Pike, Water Supply
Association of BC

The next regular meeting of the OBWB will follow its AGM, Sept. 9 at the Laurel Packinghouse, 1304 Ellis St., Kelowna. Time to be determined.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Lakeshore mapping shows need for foreshore protection: Jason Schleppe presented Board of Directors with findings from a Foreshore Inventory Mapping (FIM) project on Okanagan Lake. The data shows 47% of the Okanagan Lake shoreline has been substantially modified, with only 43% remaining in its natural state. The rate of change is estimated at 0.5 - 2% of natural shoreline loss per year. At this rate, the entire shoreline could be developed in 15 to 20 years, he added. These trends can be halted or slowed, but will require a collaborative effort between the feds, province, and local government – potentially with a role for the OBWB. Solutions include: developing Shoreline Management Guidelines to incorporate into Official Community Plans; restoration work; monitoring the changing shoreline; and, enforcing compliance.

Review of Water Management Program provided to board: The board was presented with a report on the OBWB's Water Management Program (WMP). The program, initiated in 2006 to address the need for water leadership and coordination in the Okanagan, is reviewed and re-authorized by the Okanagan regional districts every three years. The WMP operates the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program (granting \$300,000 each year for projects that improve water on a basin-wide scale), Water Science and Research (e.g. the Water Supply and Demand Study), the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (a multi-stakeholder group that acts as a technical advisory council to the Board of Directors), and Communications and Outreach (e.g. the Okanagan WaterWise public outreach program). The board requested staff to forward the report to Okanagan regional districts for reauthorization of the program.

Milfoil control on U.S. side of Osoyoos Lake: The Okanagan County Noxious Weed Control Board is considering use of an aquatic herbicide to control milfoil on the U.S. side of Osoyoos Lake. They are also looking at other methods, including use of an insect that eats the weed. Concern about the potential impacts of chemical milfoil control to waters on the Canadian side of the border prompted the Water Board to direct staff to send a letter to the U.S. Weed Control Board requesting the herbicide not be used and offering assistance in exploring other control methods.

OBWB to send feds letter supporting water work of Environment Canada: Board directors asked staff to draft a letter to federal Environment Minister Peter Kent, noting the important role the agency plays with its water science, monitoring and testing programs, and encouraging the federal government to use the Okanagan as a centre for water science in western Canada. The letter comes out of concerns some have raised about cuts to the agency and the need to protect Canada's freshwater supply.

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