

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, JULY 14, 2011, AT OLIVER RECREATION CENTRE, 36003 79TH ST., OLIVER, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	Ted van der Gulik, Vice Chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Agri-Enviro. Branch	Doug Edwards
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Ehren Lee (alternate)
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
B.C. Ministry of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Branch	Steve Matthews
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Kelowna Fish and Game Club	Doug Flintoft
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Regional District North Okanagan	Jennifer Miles (alternate)
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
South Okanagan Real Estate Board	Elden Ulrich

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
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
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
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
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, Science Policy Intern	Michelle Cook

GUESTS:

B.C. Ministry of Environment	Vic Jensen
B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Ops.	Solvej Patschke
Okanagan Nation Alliance, Fisheries Dept.	Elinor McGrath
Okanagan Basin Water Board Chair	Stu Wells
Town of Oliver, Mayor	Pat Hampson
Town of Oliver, Councillor	Jack Bennest
Town of Oliver, Water Councillor	Rick Machial
Town of Oliver, Public Works	Shawn Goodsell

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Elden Ulrich

Seconded by Doug Edwards

“That the agenda for the July 14, 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 June 9, 2011, at the Best Western Hotel, Kelowna.

Two small amendments were noted.

Moved by Steve Matthews

Seconded by Lorraine Bennest

“That the minutes from the June 9, 2011 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. WATER PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

4.1 Tom Szalay, Town of Oliver

Mr. Szalay provided a history of water delivery in Oliver, noting the town’s irrigation canal was built in the 1920s.

Some \$5 million in upgrades were done in the 1990s, and there have been smaller upgrades since. A fish screening facility was completed in 2010 for \$1.2 million, allowing fish to get through the dam, and was a partnership with the province and Okanagan Nation Alliance. It’s the only facility of its kind in B.C., added Mr. Szalay.

Currently, the water is treated with chlorine only. There have been water quality concerns and complaints, regarding human activities (e.g. swimming in the canal, adjacent farming activities causing chemical drift and irrigation runoff, material storage), fecal contamination from wild and domestic animals, and fish smell and taste. In an attempt to deal with these issues, a water-twinning project is underway and will be built in 3 phases. Phase 1 was completed in 2008, Phase 2 was finished in 2010 and under-budget. The cost-savings has allowed the town to get started on Phase 3.

A water conservation plan was adopted in 2007 by council. As a result, there is universal metering of non-farm services, conservation education, and other projects that have been undertaken. Meter rates are increasing this year and the town is looking at xeriscaping and toilet rebate initiatives. Mr. Szalay noted the Catch 22 with water conservation is that people using less water means less money to keep up with the operating costs to deliver clean water.

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo entered the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

There were a number of questions from council members. In response to one question, Coun. Machiel said that farms are largely unmetered in Oliver and there is no move to meter them at this time, adding it would not be cost-effective. As for new properties, they are allocated eight gallons per minute because of the efficiencies in place today (versus long-time farm properties that are allocated 10). Other requests for water have been told turned down if there is no capacity to provide it.

Mr. Van der Gulik entered meeting at 11:49 a.m.

Mr. Birtles entered the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Mr. Szalay told council that Oliver is waiting for approval to connect purple pipe with grey water to fire hydrants and in new developments for lawn irrigation. He said that the area's groundwater is hard and so new homes usually have a water softener installed. The town is trying to encourage people to use potassium chloride water softeners instead of the more environmentally harmful sodium chloride.

5. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Wells: The Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum is Sept. 18 to 20 and everyone is invited. The Water Board has sent a letter to the U.S. opposing a proposal to use chemical treatment on the American side of the border to treat milfoil in Osoyoos Lake.
- Mr. Edwards: The groundwater well monitoring project lost team member Oleg Ivanov from B.C. Ministry of Environment. The province is looking to try and fill the position.
- Ms. McGrath: ONA restoration projects are underway, but high flows have prevented some work from getting done this year. Diversion research projects are continuing, looking for diversions on creeks and rivers and working with landowners to make changes.
- Ms. Miles: RDNO has been focussing on agricultural water demand management since it is the largest water use sector. The regional district held a successful workshop for the ag community on the Okanagan Irrigation Management scheduling calculator. A xeriscaping and rainwater harvesting workshop was also held, aimed at domestic water users, trying to encourage conservation. The district is also continuing its work on a drought response plan and will be taking its recommendations to its board in the fall.
- Ms. Riechert: RDOS has been working on a Liquid Waste Management Plan for Vaseux and Gallagher Lake.
- Mr. Lee: APEGBC is holding a conference in Kelowna on Oct. 13 which will include discussion on climate change in the Okanagan.
- Mr. Jensen: MoE's Environmental Protection Division is continuing to work with communities on their Liquid Waste Management Plans. It is important that communities work together and collaborate and look at the basin as whole. The ministry isn't able to do that, but the OBWB and its Water Stewardship Council (WSC) is in a unique position to promote this, as well as discussions on wastewater reuse. It is easier to dump treated wastewater. Finding land to divert this water to, and filter, is preferred but difficult. However, solutions can be found by working together.

Anna Warwick Sears and Michelle Cook entered the meeting 12:20 p.m.

- Mr. Ulrich: SOREB and the Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board met with Water Board staff about sending a letter to the province regarding the Water Act Modernization (WAM) process. A letter will now be forwarded to the B.C. government and cc'd to the WSC. I will also be discussing this with another real estate association, making sure this issue remains in the spotlight.
- Ms. Cook: Having recently finished a masters in Environmental Management, work as the science policy intern at the OBWB begins in September.
- Mr. Birtles: The WSC's Source Protection Committee has been busy on a number of projects which will be discussed later. Interior Health has been working with RDCO which has contracted a biologist to look at water intakes. Penticton is looking at conducting a source assessment and then protection plan on Penticton Creek.
- Ms. Bennest: Summerland is almost ready for domestic water metering to start in 2012. While there is an adequate water supply right now, there is concern if there was an extended drought (e.g. four years). There is a need to educate Summerland farmers about efficient water use. Ms. Miles noted that RDNO is looking to add a cost to its ag water pricing for education purposes for this sector.

- Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo: The Foreshore Inventory Mapping report is now available on the OCCP website.
- Mr. Buchler: AgCanada has created a roundtable to develop a water strategy for agriculture. Very pleased to have been asked to be a member of that roundtable. Local winegrowers association is looking to launch a sustainable wine-growing program and will be looking for industry take-up.
- Mr. Matthews: B.C.'s fisheries and wildlife department is involved in the Okanagan River restoration project with ONA. Currently, staff are working on a project to improve water management in the Kettle River Basin, and working around Trophy Lake above Oliver for pipeline diversion of freshet into the lake since water has been a problem up there.
- Ms. Jackson: The OBWB has been working on developing a valley-wide water conservation ad campaign and is looking at piloting it in Vernon in August and September. There is great interest in each part of the valley in building out the campaign further and adopting it throughout the valley.
- Mr. Jatel: Work on the OBWB's Hydrologic Connectivity Study is underway. The study shows how licence priorities work and how utilities are connected to the water in the basin. Results will be provided in the fall. The Groundwater Wells Monitoring Project is looking to expand and drill five more wells in the Okanagan. The Source Protection committee is looking to hold a workshop Nov. 9. The Hydrometric Committee is reviewing strategic locations for hydrometric monitoring and using the funding strategy used for the Groundwater Well project as a template for funding this project.
- Chair Bauer: The Canadian Water Network is looking to hold a workshop in the Okanagan with university students from across Canada in October and will be looking for volunteers for fieldtrips and workshops.
- Mr. Van der Gulik: A meeting was held with MoE and the B.C. Agriculture Council regarding WAM and the need for further consultation. The province is looking at providing a draft of the act for feedback which is uncommon. Discussions around an Ag Water Reserve also came up and the province will be looking at how to include this in the new act.

6. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported that the Water Management Program is up for review by the three Okanagan regional districts. She presented a report to the board at its last meeting and was asked to take it to the Okanagan regional districts, requesting a three-year renewal. She noted that she made a presentation to Regional District of Central Okanagan this morning and directors voted to extend the program another three years. Chair Bauer asked Dr. Warwick Sears to circulate the WMP review for comment.

Chair Bauer noted a report to the board on the Foreshore Inventory Mapping Project. Modifications to the shoreline are occurring at an alarming rate, he added. There was lengthy discussion by the board on the FIM project. Ultimately, the board asked that the Water Stewardship Council look at the results and make a recommendation, whether or not the OBWB should be addressing the matter and, if so, in what capacity.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held Sept. 8, 2011 at the Best Western in Kelowna.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Moved by Rob Birtles

"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of July 14, 2011 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director