

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, JANUARY 12 , 2011, AT
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	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 Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
City of Vernon	Brooke Marshall (alternate)
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Chris Lee (alternate)
Interior Health Authority	Judi Ekkert (alternate)
Kelowna Fish and Game Club	Doug Flintoft
Oceola Fish and Game Club	Lorne Davies
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Regional District North Okanagan	Anna Page
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
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
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
South Okanagan Real Estate Board	Scott Rowlands
Urban Development Institute	Robert Evans

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Communications and Research Coordinator	Corinne Jackson
OBWB, Water Policy and Research Intern	Michelle Cook

GUESTS:

B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Ops.	Solvej Patschke
Black Press – Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
District of Coldstream	Maria Besso
Environment Canada	Deborah Glanville
Forrex	Suzan Lapp
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Aaron Deans
Kerr Wood Leidal	Dwayne Meredith
Kerr Wood Leidal	Peter Fearon
EBA Engineering Consultants	Denise Mills
Larratt Aquatic Consultants	Heather Larratt

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Evelyn Reichert

Seconded by Doug Edwards

“That the agenda for the Jan. 12, 2012 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 Dec. 8, 2011, at the Best Western Inn, Kelowna.

Moved by Chris Lee

Seconded by Bob Hrasko

“That the minutes from the Dec. 8, 2011 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported on the make-up of the new Board of Directors following last November’s local government elections. The RDNO has appointed Vernon’s Juliette Cunningham and re-appointed rural director Rick Fairbairn and Coldstream’s Doug Dirk. RDCO has appointed Peachland’s Keith Fielding, and Gerry Zimmermann of Kelowna and re-appointed West Kelowna’s Doug Findlater. RDOS has re-appointed Stu Wells, of Osoyoos, and rural director Michael Brydon and appointed rural director Tom Siddon (former chair of the Water Stewardship Council). Bernie Bauer will continue to represent the WSC as a director, James Pepper as a rep for Okanagan Nation Alliance and Toby Pike for the Water Supply Association of BC. With only three new board members, Dr. Warwick Sears said she expects a smooth transition.

The next board meeting is Feb. 7 in Kelowna at the RDCO.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted a meeting earlier in the day with the RDCO board and discussion about stormwater projects being considered under the Sewage Facility Grants Program. This is something that perhaps the OBWB should begin looking at, she added.

5. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Hesketh: The BC Cattleman’s Association will be sending another representative for the group and Mr. Hesketh will stay connected as coordinator for the group’s Farmland Riparian Interface Stewardship Program (FRISP).
- Mr. Edwards: Workshops were held in November for well-owners in the Okanagan. The workshops went well and were held in partnership with provincial agencies and BC Groundwater Association. Will do more well workshops in the future.
- Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo: Aaron Deans will be replacing Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo while she is on maternity leave.
- Ms. Patschke: There are a lot of changes in the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations office in Penticton. Ms. Patschke noted that she will be away until November 2012.
- Mr. Hrasko: Black Mountain Irrigation District provided feedback to the province regarding access to Natural Resource Roads. The Kelowna Joint Water Committee is awaiting comments from the

province on its Kelowna Integrated Water Supply Plan. Some of the upgrades could result in power being supplied back to the grid, and the city making money.

- Ms. Glanville: Environment Canada will be doing upgrades on the Okanagan Lake buoys in the next few weeks.
- Ms. Page: RDNO is holding a watershed meeting Jan 17 for Duteau Creek. Greater Vernon Water is developing a Drought Response Plan and changes to its water use restrictions.
- Ms. Marshall: City of Vernon's Liquid Waste Management Plan is moving ahead.
- Mr. Flintoft: Kelowna Fish and Game Club is watching closely as the province reviews its Natural Resource Road Act.
- Mr. Davies: Ocolea Fish and Game Club is continuing work at Winfield's wildlife reserve. Some source water in a local creek was diverted due to residential development materials entering the ditch causing urban drainage issues.
- Ms. Lapp: Forrex will be helping present an Okanagan Irrigation Management Tool workshop. The group is also interested in holding a drought planning exercise through OBWB or UBCO.
- Ms. Bennest: BC Fruit Growers Association is pleased with the prices on goods so far.
- Ms. Reichert: RDOS' biodiversity strategy is almost complete.
- Chair Bauer: Fresh water science issues are being taught to 4th year UBCO students with a focus on Okanagan issues and public engagement in policy making. The students will soon be submitting a report on the renewal of Operating Orders on Osoyoos Lake from a student perspective. The students will also be available to do water-related research if anyone is looking for work to be done.
- Ms. Jackson: Staff are working on Phase 2 of the Make Water Work campaign – a valley-wide water conservation initiative aimed at residential outdoor water use. Planning is underway to develop some World Water Day events in March and events and materials for Drinking Water Week in May. Members were reminded that they can provide information on upcoming events to the OBWB to be placed on the Okanagan WaterWise Facebook page (www.facebook.com/OkWaterWise). For example, staff promoted the Well Owner Workshops and Greater Vernon Water's open house on new watering restrictions. People were also invited to connect with OkWaterWise on FB or Twitter (<https://twitter.com/#!/OkWaterWise>) – like the posts and share the posts so the messages spread further.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: OBWB staff will be participating in a Water Governance Workshop, Jan. 26 and 27 in Vancouver. Bursaries are available for people to attend.
- Mr. Jatel: Staff are working to organize the drilling of an eighth Okanagan groundwater monitoring well in early February – this one is set for Joe Rich. Staff have been invited to speak to West Kelowna council about potentially drilling a well in that district as well. SWURT (Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool) is being considered for adoption by Nanaimo. The Ag Water Reserve Committee is waiting for finalization on the WEAP model so that it can be sure all the data is accurate before modeling the test basin. The province has released snowpack results for the Okanagan. As of January 1, 2012 the Okanagan-Kettle Snow Basin Index was 72% of normal. If the trend is like last year, there could be a late winter/early spring dump of snow that may fill the snow basin. A webinar is set for March 9 to look at snow, groundwater and climate forecasting for 2012. The webinar is open to anyone interested.

Heather Larratt entered the meeting at 1:50 p.m

6. GUEST PRESENTATIONS – SOURCE PROTECTION

6.1 Cattle and Range – Lee Hesketh

Mr. Hesketh noted that, traditionally, irrigation and water have not been big, ongoing issues for ranchers. However, there are issues around water that ranchers feel strongly about.

The BC Cattleman's Association (BCCA) has stated that the B.C. government's First in Time, First in Right (FITFIR) water allocation system must remain – that it is integral to ensuring a sustainable food supply.

As for cost of water, farmers and ranchers can't afford to pay more for water, added Mr. Hesketh. The concern is that if the price goes up, farmers won't be able to compete in the marketplace and will be forced to leave their farms.

On groundwater licencing, the BCCA does not want to lose access to groundwater and does not support licencing of all wells. Agriculture wells, in particular, should be exempt, he added.

Water security must also include livestock drinking water. There should be an offer of programs and incentives to all agricultural users to encourage conservation and assist with agricultural storage, noted Mr. Hesketh.

One of the issues, he added, is that the streams are overallocated. Ms. Patschke has been helping, looking at the possibility of transferring water allocations.

In framing the situation, Mr. van der Gulik noted that cattle farmers have historically allowed their stock to drink from streams where they have a water licence, but now there's an effort to keep cattle away from these water sources. Farmers need to be able to take their livestock elsewhere without losing their licence, or their historical right to water, he said.

More information is available at www.cattlemen.bc.ca.

6.2 BC Wine Grape Council – Hans Buchler

Mr. Buchler noted that the BC Wine Grape Council doesn't have a specific source protection policy, but it has developed the BC Sustainable Winegrowing Program for vineyards, wineries and the wine hospitality industry.

The program was developed because there was interest from the industry and many were already implementing sustainable practices, but there was no way to formally measure achievements. The Sustainable Winegrowing Program looks at environmental, economic and social responsibility in protecting resources. There is an oversupply of wine in the world, Mr. Buchler added, noting that wineries who look at this are trying to be more environmental and are often looking at it as a way to set themselves apart to improve sales.

Guidebooks are available to wine grape growers online (www.bcwgc.org) and it is currently a self-assessment program. The council is looking to eventually change the program from self-assessment to third-party certification.

At the vineyard level, the program covers ecosystem management, viticulture management, soil and nutrition, water, pest management. It also looks at social responsibility, considering employees, neighbours and community. For wineries and the wine hospitality industry, the program includes building design and site development, energy efficiency, water and wastewater management, hazardous materials management, solid waste management, and social sustainability.

The guidebook was developed with funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

7. **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

7.1 Discussion: Irrigation workshop deliverables

Ted van der Gulik, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. van der Gulik gave an overview of the irrigation workshop held earlier in the day. The workshop has been provided to farmers a number of times. Today's was geared to local government staff and was well-attended with very interested participants. There was discussion about possibly holding another workshop in the South Okanagan.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS & DISCUSSION

8.1 Efficient Irrigation Position Paper

Council members were provided with a discussion paper regarding an OBWB policy on Efficient Irrigation in the Okanagan.

Ms. Bennest noted that the second resolution that speaks to encouraging drought tolerant landscapes should include an exemption for agriculture (e.g. their use of cedars is used to protect against spray drift).

Mr. Davies added that government needs to be leading by example and not planting grass unless it is drought-tolerant and should be adopting efficient irrigation practices. Ms. Bennest added that the OBWB should be careful with its messaging regarding grass because it can be more water efficient with proper soil, planting and type of watering.

Mr. van der Gulik noted that there are a number of tools in place already that need to be encouraged (e.g. the use of certified irrigation planners, and the use of the Okanagan Irrigation Management Tool).

Ms. Besso added that it may be useful to divide the policy into agricultural, domestic, and institutional users. But, she warned, there could be pushback from people who like their green lawns,

Chair Bauer added that homeowners should be encouraged to xeriscape and use certified irrigation planners, and local governments should have soil amendment bylaws in place.

Mr. Jatel added that the purpose of this is to create a policy, not a how-to guide, which encourages better ways to irrigate and wise water use.

Mr. Buchler added that this should be tied to an incentive program and that it needs to have teeth to be effective.

It was decided that the policy would be reviewed by a few members of the council and come back for further review.

8.2 Agriculture Water Reserve Committee

Mr. van der Gulik reported that he did some additional work on the Ag Water Reserve paper and forwarded it to the BC Agriculture Council for feedback. It will be brought back to the Water Stewardship Council next month for discussion, he added.

8.3 Source Water Protection Committee

Ms. Larratt was invited to come and present on her research into buffer zones to protect source water. She noted that she was invited by the Water Supply Association of BC to make a recommendation and suggested an 85 metre buffer zone from major drinking water sources on crown lands in multi-use basins, adding that this may not be enough for some areas, based on their high water mark. The recommendation was made looking at economic consequences of such a policy and the impact on forestry, for example.

Ms. Larratt added that it may be worthwhile for water suppliers to develop a user pay policy to address source protection issues.

Mr. Hrasko noted that Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Steve Thompson

has asked the WSABC what the impact on resource industries will be to have a buffer zone. The association is looking into this and will be reporting back.

Ms. Larratt said that the current standards require the water supplier to demonstrate that they have a source protection problem connected to an activity by another party. It is recommended that this onus be reversed and that the activity must be proven to not cause harm.

Chair Bauer thanked Ms. Larratt for her presentation and asked that any further suggestions be forwarded to Ms. Cook for inclusion in the source protection discussion paper.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held February 9, 2012 at the Best Western Inn, Kelowna.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Moved by Hans Buchler

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of Jan. 12, 2011 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director