

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2012, AT BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, vice-chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Ted van der Gulik
City of Kelowna	Mark Watt
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Kendall Woo
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O’Keefe
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

Regrets

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Agri-Enviro. Branch	Doug Edwards
BC Cattlemen’s Association	Lee Hesketh
B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Ops.	Mike Burwash
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Aaron Deans (alternate)
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society	Mark McKenney
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
South Okanagan Real Estate Board	Scott Rowlands
Urban Development Institute	Robert Evans

STAFF:

OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Communications Director	Corinne Jackson
OBWB, Office and Projects Manager	James Littley
OBWB, First Nations Liaison Intern	Kyla Lavalee

GUESTS:

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Ehren Lee
BC Fruit Growers Association	Denise MacDonald
Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens	Eva Antonijevic
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Kerr Wood Leidal	Dwayne Meredith
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Susan Lightfoot
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat
Urban Systems	Michelle Cook

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Nelson Jatel called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Don Dobson

Seconded by Remi Allard

“That the agenda for the May 10, 2012 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

Mr. Jatel noted that Dr. Bauer has allowed his name to stand as chair.

Ms. Bennest nominated Mr. Dobson who respectfully declined but said he would accept nomination as vice-chair.

No further nominations were presented at second and third call for nominations; nominations for chair were closed.

There being no further nominations for chair, Dr. Bauer was declared chair by acclamation.

Mr. Dobson was nominated as vice-chair. No further nominations were presented at second and third call for nominations; nominations for vice-chair were closed.

There being no further nominations for vice-chair, Mr. Dobson was declared vice-chair by acclamation.

Mr. Jatel acknowledged Mr. van der Gulik’s leadership as vice-chair since the council’s beginning - for the three previous 18-month terms. He then turned the meeting over to Vice-Chair Dobson.

Vice-Chair Dobson also thanked Mr. van der Gulik. He then provided some thoughts on council procedures, suggesting that when the chair steps down that they become “past chair” to assist the new chair as needed and ensure greater continuity.

He also suggested that the new council be aware of its mission when looking at priorities and when providing advice and recommendations to the board, and how these align with the mission of the board. Vice-Chair Dobson commented on the value of the in-kind contribution made by council members and the need to ensure their time is used most effectively.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held April 12, 2012, at the Best Western Inn, Kelowna.

Moved by Lorraine Bennest

Seconded by Denise Neilsen

“That the minutes from the April 12, 2012 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

Ms. Clark entered the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

5. BOARD REPORT

Mr. Jatel reported on the latest board meeting, noting the June meeting will include a strategic planning session to look at priorities for the next 2 ½ years and the July board meeting will be a joint meeting with council.

Dir. Tom Siddon made a presentation to the board regarding the federal government’s Omnibus bill C-38 and concerns about removing habitat protection language from the Fisheries Act. Board

members also voiced concern around potential downloading. In response, the board will be writing a letter to the federal government. The board also discussed its concern regarding the federal government's recent announcement that it will be auditing non-profits, specifically environmental agencies, on its lobbying activities, Mr. Jatel added.

6. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. van der Gulik: The Water Demand Modelling program is being implemented in the Thompson and Fraser Valley regions and on Vancouver Island. The federal government was planning to partner with the U.S. Environmental Protection Authority on its WaterSense program and is now pulling out. The Irrigation Scheduling Calculator is being adopted in Quebec so that it is now available across Canada and there is a French language version.
- Dr. Nielsen: Ag Food Canada in Summerland and Agassiz have lost a program with federal government cuts. The department is going through a reorganization. The agency is continuing to develop additional real-time data to fill in gaps in climate information as part of the continuing Okanagan Water Supply and Demand research.
- Mr. Woo: Environment Canada is going through a reorganization in response to the federal budget and remains mindful of the environmental issues facing the Okanagan.
- Mr. Hrasko: Work on a pump station in Glenmore-Ellison is going out to tender soon. In response to the Testalinden Dam failure Black Mountain Irrigation District is updating its dam information. BMID is working with new standards to treat surface water which the province may adopt across B.C.
- Mark Watt: Kelowna is developing an integrated water supply plan and is hoping that it leads to some grant opportunities. Staff will be bringing two infrastructure projects to council for Lakeshore bridge and Hall Road sewerage.
- Mr. Allard: BC Ground Water Association has formalized an agreement with GeoExchange BC to sit on each other's boards. The Canadian Ground Water Assoc. has its national conference in Hamilton this year and next year in B.C.
- Mr. Birtles: The province is looking at new Drinking Water objectives. A new risk assessment tool has been drafted for water utilities and Interior Health is hoping to receive funds to help implement it next year.
- Ms. Bakelaar: Central Okanagan Regional District will be holding a workshop on livestock and watershed stewardship, and is planning to reprint its livestock, drinking water and fish document. RDCO, with OBWB funding, has been investigating water leaks and fixing them in Westshore Estates and soon Killiney Beach. Two OCPs are being updated and look at several issues, including water.
- Mr. Flintoft: In discussing it with OBWB staff, Mr. Flintoft noted that he would be representing BC Wildlife Federation – Okanagan region, which includes 10 fish and game clubs in the Okanagan and area, rather than just his home group, Kelowna F&GC.
- Dr. Janmaat: Work is being conducted with Summerland Ornamental Gardens to conduct a water conservation survey.
- Ms. MacDonald: BC Fruit Growers Association did a survey with Ipsos Reid of 150 tree fruit growers to determine long term trends and intentions of growers to change their crops and crop sizes. Results show the average age of growers is 55. There is lots of optimism with many planning to invest in their farms. There are opportunities for the OBWB to work with growers to increase water efficiencies when they replant.
- Mr. Buchler: It was noted that funds to assist with irrigation systems through the Environmental Farm Plan run out this year. The BC Agriculture Council is pleased that amendments to the federal Fisheries Act include changes so that drainage ditches and canals are not considered fish-bearing streams.
- Ms. Lavalee: As OBWB's First Nations Liaison, a number of meetings are being held with various community members. One of the items being discussed is a possible infrastructure workshop between local governments and First Nations.

- Mr. Littley: Staff have updated the OBWB's sewage facilities assistance grant. Sewage grant applications will be subject to Provincial Review to ensure best practice standards are met. This will be part of the application prior to starting the project so that any changes suggested by the province can be made.
- Ms. Clark: The Regional District of North Okanagan's Regional Growth Strategy has included agricultural water and economy as priorities and staff are now looking at actions to improve these areas for the coming year. Greater Vernon Water was able to avoid a boil water notice for thousands of customers by diverting them to the Duteau Creek water source during the heavy rains of April 26.
- Ms. Jackson: OBWB staff have been working on several public outreach and education initiatives including the Make Water Work campaign for the Okanagan valley, as well as a water conservation initiative in the South Okanagan (Tap by Tap) with City Green Solutions, FortisBC and Environment Canada.
- Mr. Jatel: Local government leaders and senior staff have been invited to a June 22 Climate Change workshop being co-chaired by Lake Country CAO Alberto De Feo and Peachland CAO Elsie Lemke. The workshop will report out on Phase 3 of the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Research and help communities manage water risks related to climate change. The OBWB Board has a strategic planning session in June. If council members have issues they feel should be addressed they can pass those along (e.g. expanding the Sewage Facility Grant Program to include storm water infrastructure projects, or the future water demands of agriculture). Mr. Watt noted that he would like the OBWB to assist with storm water infrastructure and do more on water source protection and education in this area.
- Mr. Rouck: There has been some discussion about the ecological valuation of water and the BC Forest Service is looking at how to value the resource on the land base before work begins. A fieldtrip is planned for June 9 in the Naramata watershed and is open to the public.
- Vice-chair Dobson: The April 26 rain event was like a similar event in 1980s. There is still significant snow on east side of the lake and with warm weather we could have record flows yet in our streams. There was some discussion about what various areas are seeing with water levels in the valley.

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Jatel introduced the discussion for the afternoon and noted the importance of members checking in with their respective organizations to ensure they are bringing all relative information back to the council table.

7.1 Orientation: Mandate, History, Sustainable Water Strategy

Mr. Jatel provided an overview of the mandate and history of the Water Stewardship Council. When the OBWB began it operated a Sewage Facilities Grant Program and the Milfoil Control Program. In 2009 it expanded to include the Water Management Program (WMP). The WMP involves several initiatives including the Water Stewardship Council, but also the Water Supply and Demand Study, Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program and various communication projects.

Mr. Jatel detailed some of the projects of the council and the WMP, including drought planning, water use reporting by purveyors, stream flow and groundwater monitoring. These projects continue to be a priority along with others that prepare the Okanagan for population growth and climate change. These include stormwater and source protection initiatives, and water data delivery, collection and management. Other issues for the council include the renewal of Osoyoos Lake operating orders in 2013, and B.C.'s Water Act Modernization process.

Sustainable Water Strategy

Mr. Jatel explained the history behind the strategy, noting the drought of 2003 and the issues that resulted, including the fires, and trying to manage water for fish and agricultural irrigation. The SWS provides the context for the board and council's work and the strategy to move forward on important

projects, he said.

As a result of the SWS, the Water Board and Penticton Indian Band are looking at a workshop in June 2013 on inland fish. Habitat restoration, and control of invasive species are also priorities (e.g. the prevention of zebra mussels in Okanagan lakes). Work is also continuing on the development of Ag Water Reserve and Efficient Irrigation discussion papers. Although water pricing is something council may not want to discuss at this time, it is important to be aware of it as an issue, he added.

In response to a question, Mr. Jatel said that it might be worth looking at an update to the strategy.

There was some discussion around the federal government's proposed changes to the Fisheries Act. While many agreed the act needs to be modernized there was concern that the proposed changes would erode the ability to protect habitat and fish. One federal official at the table suggested that assumptions are being made and invited council members to ask questions to determine if their concerns are valid or not.

7.2 Discussion: Strategic Planning, Policy Prioritization 2012-13

Mr. Jatel went over the policy priorities identified by the previous council and which are contained in the SWS, including a source protection strategy for the basin, and Okanagan Water Use Plan for fish-bearing streams. New items include: a foreshore plan for Okanagan mainstem lakes, work to maintain and expand the network of hydrometric and climate stations, development of a groundwater regulation pilot program, partnering with First Nations in the development of water strategies, the management of water data, an Agricultural Water Reserve and a discussion paper on Efficient Water Irrigation.

There was discussion about providing a report card to the board at the joint board/council meeting in July, providing an update on where various projects are at.

It was suggested there seems to be some disagreement as to who is responsible for taking these projects on. Vice-chair Dobson responded saying that perhaps a list should be created that shows what's been done, what needs to be done and who needs to do it (e.g. local governments, First Nations, water utilities, fish and game clubs, stewardship groups). Council members can then take the list back to their agencies and ask "What can we do to address these items?" Having council members and elected officials together in one room in July to have a common discussion on these issues could be extremely valuable, he added.

Mr. Hrasko suggested the list be shortened and categorized as issues under water quantity, quality and communication. Quality could simply be corridor protection because it speaks to so many other issues, he added. Ms. Bakelaar noted the OBWB's water data management and getting it out to local governments is important. Ms. Clark added that it is important for council members to bring sub-basin perspective to the council for a basin-wide response (e.g. barriers to getting source protection work done).

Mr. van der Gulik noted the importance of communication efforts and making sure the board is aware of this. Communication initiatives (e.g. forums, workshops, policy statements, news releases) can be critical in reaching the audience that is going to help ensure these projects get done, he added.

Mr. Woo exited the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

Mr. Buchler added that filling knowledge gaps is also important (e.g. on zebra mussels and groundwater).

Staff will draft a report to the board, with council input, to be delivered at the July 3 joint meeting.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be a joint meeting with the OBWB Board of Directors and will be held July 3, 2012 in the North Okanagan. Location is still to be confirmed.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Moved by Lorraine Bennest

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of May 10, 2012 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director