



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD FEB. 5, 2013, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN
1450 KLO RD., KELOWNA, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Stu Wells	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Juliette Cunningham	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Dirk	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt. Director Patty Hanson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Michael Brydon	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Tom Siddon	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Bernie Bauer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

REGRETS

Director Keith Fielding	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director James Pepper	Okanagan Nation Alliance

OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littlely	Office and Projects Manager

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Dr. Warwick Sears called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

2. APPOINTMENTS TO THE OBWB

2.1 Board Appointments and Elections for 2013

Regional District of North Okanagan

Director Rick Fairbairn
Director Juliette Cunningham
Director Doug Dirk
Alternates – Rob Sawatzky, Bob Fleming, Mike Macnabb

Regional District of Central Okanagan

Director Keith Fielding
Director Doug Findlater
Director Gerry Zimmermann
Alternates – Patty Hanson, James Baker, Gail Given

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Director Stu Wells
Director Tom Siddon
Director Michael Brydon
Alternates – Ron Hovanes, Dan Ashton, Mark Pendergraft

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Director Bernie Bauer
Alternate – Don Dobson

Water Supply Association of BC

Director Toby Pike
Alternate – Bob Hrasko

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Director – James Pepper

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Dir. Siddon nominated Dir. Wells as Chair. Seconded by Dir. Findlater.
There being no other nominations, Dir. Wells was declared Chair by acclamation.

Dir. Dirk nominated Dir. Fairbairn for Vice-Chair. Seconded by Dir. Bauer.
There being no other nominations, Dir. Fairbairn was declared Vice-Chair by acclamation.

4. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no new items, but the agenda order was slightly altered.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 5, 2013 be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

6.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 4, 2012 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton, B.C.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 4, 2012 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton be adopted.”

CARRIED

Dr. Warwick Sears turned the meeting over to Chair Wells.

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Executive Director Report

Long-term Milfoil Permitting Letter

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on a meeting staff had with B.C. Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations (FLNRO) Minister Steve Thomson and his request for letters from the OBWB and local governments regarding the need to continue milfoil control efforts and the economic importance of the program.

OBWB's draft letter asks for balance, recognizing the need to protect endangered species while ensuring the Water Board's work to control invasive milfoil continues.

The OBWB has since met with FLNRO staff about long-term permitting and is moving towards a five-year approval process. If Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels end up being listed as endangered the province and Water Board will address it.

The board agreed to send the letter.

“That the OBWB send a letter to the B.C. Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations to request grandfathering, or at a minimum long-term permitting, for the OBWB’s milfoil control program and a stable regulatory environment that recognizes the need for winter rototilling, and respects the economic and social needs of Okanagan citizens as well as the needs of the environment; and further, that the OBWB contact each of the Okanagan local governments and urge them to send similar letters.”

CARRIED

IJC-Osoyoos

The International Joint Commission (IJC) has approved new operating orders for Osoyoos Lake with an agreement to review them in another 25 years. Dr. Warwick Sears explained that drought year declarations were kept and the rule curve for lake curves was improved and will make better sense to local residents.

Chair Wells added that residents, on both sides of the border, have been frustrated with the lack of communication regarding changing lake levels. The new agreement calls for improved communication and the potential for an International Watershed Initiative (IWI), which could help with this issue. In the meantime, Dr. Warwick Sears noted that there is an attempt to have the IJC hold a spring public meeting.

Stormwater Grant Feasibility Study

Work is underway to review the OBWB’s Stormwater Grant Program with local municipalities being interviewed about their infrastructure needs.

Water Research Chair

The board was provided with a work plan for the UBCO Water Research Chair John Janmaat.

There was lengthy discussion about Dr. Janmaat’s role and how his research aligns with OBWB’s priorities. Board members were reminded that the regional districts, through the OBWB, funded an endowment to ensure ongoing water research into water, and the board can encourage research in certain areas.

Some of the issues directors suggested for possibly more research include Endocrine Disruptor Compounds, and a cost benefit analysis of drinking water standards. The drought tournament highlighted the need to look at impacts on residential well-being and agriculture. Perhaps the Water Research Chair could help with such a project,. As the Water Stewardship Council continues to look at the possibility of developing an Okanagan Water Management Plan, gaps in information will likely start to surface as well which could possibly inform research areas, it was noted.

Dr. Warwick Sears added that the Water Research Chair Advisory Committee is open to research ideas. As co-chair of the committee, she said she would pass along the comments regarding priorities and encouraged directors to further any more to her.

It was noted that research will also be driven by funding available.

Dir. Pike, also a member of the advisory committee, added that while the board can suggest research ideas but not necessarily direct the work, Dr. Janmaat has suggested he can encourage colleagues to take on some of the topics that may arise.

Several directors suggested it would be useful to review its priorities noted in the past two Strategic Planning Sessions and then have Dr. Janmaat come speak with the board to provide some background and have some discussion.

Dir. Brydon noted that, ultimately, a practical agenda is needed. Let's find where knowledge gaps exists, get the funds, have research done, and develop something that helps make sound decisions around water management in the valley. Dir. Findlater agreed, noting that after five years of funding, taxpayers will want to see a return on investment.

The board asked that copies of the last two Strategic Planning Sessions reports be provided for review and Dr. Janmaat be invited to present at an upcoming board meeting.

COF Excellence in Water Stewardship Award

The OBWB submitted an application on behalf of the Water Stewardship Council for an award from the Council of the Federation. Dr. Warwick Sears added that it was heartening to see letters of support coming in from so many local governments, provincial and federal ministries, groups such as Summerland Ornamental Gardens, scientists, fisheries biologists, farmers and many others.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Jan. 30, 2013, be received."
CARRIED

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Contracting memo

Dr. Warwick Sears provided the board with a report regarding contracting procedures, noting it is also in line with RDCO procedures.

Dir. Siddon noted that he would like to see what the policy is from RDNO and RDOS on contracts over \$25,000. He was asked to bring this information back to the board. Dir. Bauer suggested that perhaps the OBWB should adopt a formal policy like RDCO. Chair Wells agreed.

The board voted to accept the report for information and revisit the matter at an upcoming meeting.

"THAT the Contracting Memo dated Jan. 30, 2013 be received for information."
CARRIED

Dr. Warwick Sears exited the meeting at 11:29 a.m.

8.2 Draft letter to B.C. Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations re: clarification on water licence approval

The board reviewed Dr. Warwick Sears' memo regarding a letter to FLNRO Minister Steve Thomson regarding the water licence application approval process.

There was discussion about the letter and the need to be clear about the board's concerns regarding the approval of licences on a fully-allocated water system. Mr. Jatel noted that, in the past, the province has managed water conservatively in the Okanagan and provided licences only to the amount of water available. The direction now appears to be more open to issuing a licence to those who request one with the understanding that in time of scarcity the province will rely on "First-in-Time. First-in-Right" to address disputes.

Dir. Siddon suggested that Min. Thomson be invited to come to the board to discuss the matter, and that if directors have any additional comments on the letter that they be provided to staff right away. Mr. Jatel added that the letter would then be vetted and sent.

The board voted to send the letter to Min. Thomson and appropriate opposition ministry critics.

“THAT the letter to B.C. Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Operations re: clarification on water licence approval be sent.”

CARRIED

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.2 Office and Project Manager Report

Mr. Littley provided a report on the 2013 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant program noting a number of requests to discuss potential projects. The deadline is Feb. 22 at 4 p.m. with a one week extension for council/board resolutions.

In response to a question, Mr. Littley added that rototilling for milfoil at Green Bay has been approved by FLNRO and will be going ahead in the next three weeks.

“THAT the Office and Project Manager’s Report, dated Jan. 24, 2013, be received.”

CARRIED

7.3 Communications and Research Coordinator Report

Ms. Jackson reported that talks have started regarding Phase 3 of the Make Water Work campaign – a valley-wide outdoor water conservation initiative with a number of new strategies being looked at.

Preliminary research has also begun on development of a zebra mussel public outreach campaign for the summer.

Plans are underway to hold the OBWB’s annual panel discussion as part of UN World Water Day/Canada Water Week events. Staff are also, once again, organizing a contest to engage Okanagan youth in water issues. The contest theme is “I Love My Water Body” and will begin at the start of Canada Water Week and run until Drinking Water Week in May.

OBWB staff are working with BC Water and Waste Association’s province-wide Drinking Water Week committee, providing an Okanagan voice to the discussions. The campaign runs May 20-26 and the OBWB will be contacting Okanagan communities, encouraging involvement and assisting where possible (e.g. with public outreach events such as tours of watersheds or water treatment plants). The committee is working to develop outreach materials to be distributed (e.g. children’s activity sheets) and a contest to encourage B.C.ers to conserve and protect their water.

The OBWB was among 17 B.C. organizations selected by the Fresh Water Alliance (FWA) of Canada to participate in a weekend Water Leaders training (Jan. 25-27), providing information and hands-on practice with practical tools to engage the public on water issues. Staff are now using some of the tools on various projects (e.g. upcoming Canada Water Week events), but are also looking to partner with FWA on other activities that will further our efforts in the Okanagan. Connections made at the workshop have also been useful in furthering OBWB projects.

“THAT the Communications and Research Coordinator’s Report, dated Jan. 29, 2013, be received.”

CARRIED

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.3 Presentation by Larratt Aquatic Consulting on Zebra/quagga mussels – The costs and impacts to local government

Ms. Heather Larratt provided an overview of major aquatic invasive species (AIS) threats to the Okanagan, including zebra and quagga mussels, New Zealand Mud-snails, Didymo (Rock-snot), and Spiny Water Flea. The biggest threat currently, she stressed, is zebra and quagga mussels. Fortunately it does not appear to be in B.C. right now, she added.

Ms. Larratt provided a number of points about the mussels including:

- Each female produces 1 million offspring at least once a year;
- The mussels were first discovered in the Great Lakes in 1982. Today they are in California and Colorado;
- At their youngest stage they can’t be seen with the naked eye;
- The best policy for those who have had a boat, or any water-related item (e.g. Seadoo, life jacket, hipwaders, etc.) in an infected area is to consider themselves infected;
- Every reservoir in the Okanagan (valley bottom lakes and upper lake reservoirs) is vulnerable except a few acidic lakes;
- The mussels cover submerged surfaces to 100+ meters depth;
- They clog water intakes and other infrastructure;
- They corrode metal and concrete surfaces;
- They coat wet surfaces and beaches with razor-sharp shells;
- Out-compete native mussels and alter the existing eco-system, including damage or elimination of sport fisheries;
- Encourage blooms of toxin producing algae and toxins that can kill birds, fish, and contaminate drinking water;
- Cost to the Great Lakes region alone has been \$5 billion (2000 – 2010) to *manage* the infestations;
- A 2009 U.S. report suggested invasive mussels could cost \$22 million annually to the Lake Tahoe region in damage to tourism, reduced property values, and increased maintenance costs;
- Looking at the potential financial impact to Okanagan water systems, municipal infrastructure, boating, fisheries, lake-front real estate values, and tourism, a mussel invasion could exceed \$43 million per year in lost revenues and added maintenance of aquatic infrastructure.

Ms. Larratt spoke to the board about various prevention options including inspection stations, wash stations at boat launches, and public outreach campaigns. Her recommendations included a public education blitz, similar but bigger than the one OBWB funded last summer with the Okanagan Invasive Species Society and the Invasive Species Council of B.C. (ISCBC), and the need for private sector involvement (e.g. fish and wildlife groups, media, etc.).

The board was reminded of a near miss in the Shuswap last summer when a boat, that was launched in infested U.S. water, made its way through the Canada-U.S. border and launched in Shuswap lake. Once officials became aware of this, the boat was checked and found to not have any live mussels, however the province is still keeping tabs on the water since mussel-infested water from the vessel may have been released into the lake.

Directors had a number of questions and comments for Ms. Larratt.

Dir. Findlater noted that he would like a similar presentation to his council.

There was a general feeling that it was good to see a Canadian Border Services representative at a recent ISCBC workshop in Kelowna, regarding the mussels. However, it was suggested that National Parks in Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. should also be engaged.

Ms. Larratt added it might take an hour to train border guards and others on what to look for, but there needs to be federal legislation to ensure this is done.

A U.S. program that requires boaters to have an AIS permit, as a prevention tool, was also mentioned.

There was a question about potential problems with boat owners trying to disinfect their equipment at home. Ms. Larratt agreed this is a concern, because if it is not done right, it could cause larger problems by washing the mussels into our sewer system that flushes right into our lakes.

Dir. Brydon noted that decontamination stations may be costly but most effective.

Items that the mussels can hitchhike on include: kayaks, paddle boards, canoes and wind surfers, life jackets, small boats with pontoons, float planes – any water equipment that goes into infested waters.

Additional solutions mentioned included: an information card developed by the OBWB that could be given out by Canadian Border Services to each person that comes across the line with a watercraft; an information booth at home shows, boat shows; information materials for yacht clubs, etc.

8.3.1 Zebra -quagga mussel update memo

The board reviewed a letter from the OBWB to the federal and B.C. governments requesting immediate action on an inspection and control program to stop the spread of zebra and quagga mussels in B.C. lakes. The board voted to send the letter and CC the letter to appropriate official opposition members.

“THAT the OBWB send a letter to the B.C. Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, and to the B.C. Minister of Environment, as well as to the federal Minister of Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and federal Minister of the Environment, to request immediate action on an inspection and control program to stop the spread of Zebra and Quagga mussels, and other noxious alien species to B.C. lakes;

And further, that the OBWB contact each of the Okanagan local governments and the Regional District of Columbia-Shuswap, and urge them to send similar letters.

CARRIED

There was some further discussion about best approaches for inspection stations. Mr. Littley suggested that Canada should be adopting an interjurisdictional approach with other Western Provinces and the U.S. Oregon, Idaho and Montana already have stations which help protect our southern border. Similarly, B.C. should be working with Alberta and Saskatchewan to prevent the spread from the East. (The mussel has already been found in the Red River system South of Manitoba.) This would then require only a handful of stations instead of stations around every lake, he added.

- 8.4 Consideration of letter from Federal Minister of Environment re: Bill C-38 and amendments to federal environmental legislation

There was a short discussion about sending a brief follow-up letter to the federal government expressing disappointment with its last response to the Water Board re: Bill C-38.

“THAT the OBWB send a letter to Federal Environment Minister Peter Kent regarding the ministry’s response to the board’s letter re: Bill C-38.”

CARRIED

- 7.1 Water Stewardship Director Report

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Mr. Jatel reported that discussions around a potential Okanagan Water Management Plan (WMP) are ongoing. A meeting is being held Friday on this file, and last month the Water Stewardship Council had a panel discussion regarding forestry and range issues and how these might help inform a WMP.

This month’s council meeting will include a panel discussion on emerging water issues. Ms. Larratt will be presenting on zebra and quagga mussels, Dr. Jeff Curtis will give an update on EDC research, and there will be a presentation on the eco-system valuation project for Okanagan River.

Dir. Bauer added that directors should feel encouraged to talk with their council’s about the potential for a WMP for future water sustainability. The fact that certain communities are developing Water Master Plans is positive and should be considered in how to develop a basin-wide plan, he added.

Groundwater Monitoring Project

Work is continuing to get the last three or four wells installed. Staff are working with RDCO for one in Ellison. There is also interest in having one in the Mission Creek area and one in the Shuttleworth Creek area.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated Jan. 29, 2013, be received.”

CARRIED

9. **NEXT MEETING**

- 9.1 The date for the next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board is March 5, 2013 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 5, 2013 be adjourned at 1:51 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director