

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2013, AT
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Ted van der Gulik
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource)	Ken Cunningham
Canadian Water Resources Association	Rod MacLean (alt.)
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Kendall Woo
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Agri-Enviro. Branch	Doug Edwards
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, vice-chair
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Fish/Wildlife)	Mike Burwash
City of Kelowna	Greg Sauer
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Communications Director	Corinne Jackson

GUESTS:

B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.	Grant Furness
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.	Ray Crampton
BC Dairy Association	Lorne Hunter
BC Fruit Growers Association	Denise MacDonald
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ian Rogalski
Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens	Eva Antonijevic
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Technical Writer	Craig Baptie
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat
UBC Okanagan	Craig Nichol
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
Western Water Associates	Laurie Welch

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bernie Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Doug Flintoft

Seconded by Lee Hesketh

“That the agenda for the March 14, 2013 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held Feb. 14, 2013, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

Two small amendments were noted.

Moved by Hans Buchler

Seconded by Ted van der Gulik

“That the minutes from the Dec. 13, 2012 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported on the March 5 board meeting, noting much discussion on OBWB zebra mussel outreach efforts. Aquatic biologist Heather Larratt, who conducted research on the invasive mussels for OBWB and Glenmore Ellison Irrigation District is now sharing the results and speaking with Okanagan local governments. The Water Board is also organizing an April 4 public workshop in Osoyoos, as well as a webinar. Staff are working with the Invasive Species Council of BC and the local invasive species council which are promoting the Clean, Drain, Dry message to boaters. The OBWB is looking to bolster these efforts and raise awareness within the general public.

The board was provided a brief update on the development of a hydrometric database, the Canadian Water Resources Association – BC branch conference which had a day devoted to Okanagan water research, and the upcoming BC Water and Waste Association conference in April. Dr. Warwick Sears noted that staff are organizing a flood risk assessment workshop and other water workshops for the BCWWA event being held in Kelowna.

Lighthawk has offered to provide free flights to researchers and politicians whose work would benefit from a flyover of the Okanagan watershed. Those who are interested can contact Dr. Warwick Sears.

The board was told that applications to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program totalled about \$592,000 with \$300,000 available. Funding recommendations will be provided to the board at its next meeting.

Directors reviewed its strategic plan and the potential to pair some of its interests with the workplan of UBC Okanagan’s Water Research Chair John Janmaat. Dr. Janmaat will attend the next board meeting to discuss how we can work together on mutually beneficial water research.

Eva Antonijevic provided a presentation on the work being done at Summerland Ornamental Gardens to promote water conservation and protection.

5. GUEST PANEL: AGRICULTURAL WATER RESERVE (AWR)

Ted van der Gulik, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture – Senior Engineer

Denise Neilsen, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre – Research Scientist

Hans Buchler, BC Agriculture Council – Executive at Large and BCAC Water Working Group

The panel was introduced noting they would each be speaking to the concept of an Agricultural Water Reserve and how it relates to a potential Water Management Plan for the valley.

Mr. van der Gulik began the discussion and referred to B.C.'s Living Water Smart Plan 2008 which includes recommendations that agriculture be 33% more water efficient by 2020, and that there be a system to reserve water for agriculture. There is recognition of the need to prepare for climate change and be aware of supply and demand, he added.

BC Agriculture Council has defined an AWR and developed principles and guidelines.

A new Provincial Water Sustainability Act is being developed which will allow for the establishment of AWRs. The new Water Act is expected in 2014 with regulations introduced after that. It's expected that Water Reserve details will be included in the regulations.

The AWR process must consider environmental needs, said Mr. van der Gulik, adding that a model is currently running in the Okanagan and Metro Vancouver. Over the next five years it's expected that everything south of Prince George will be modeled, improving data collection.

Dr. Neilsen noted that the AWR pilot project on Mission Creek is one type of reserve, and there may be others. Farmers in the area are interested in securing water for ag and are concerned with the way licencing is currently done, she added, noting they are looking for a way to strengthen the security of farming and food supply.

A disconnect exists under the current system between licenced water and what is actually used in which twice as much water appears licenced. At the same time, surface and groundwater demand is expected to increase as much as 70% due to climate by 2100. The question is, do we have the water available? Looking at population growth and climate change with a cool scenario we're OK, but with a warm scenario, it suggests that BMID and SEKID will have difficulty providing supply, noted Dr. Neilsen.

Mr. Buchler said that BCAC recommendations are being provided, but there's no guarantee they will appear in the new Water Sustainability Act.

It was noted that individual AWR plans need to consider the connectivity of the valley's water supply and ensure water gets to the south Okanagan, especially since there are priority licences in the south.

Chair Bauer noted that in some parts of the U.S. they allow ag users to bank water for future use and this is done through legislation which may be useful in the Okanagan. Dr. Janmaat added that the current First in Time, First in Right policy can be overridden by senior government.

There was some discussion about the FITFIR system after which Mr. Cunningham added that current legislation doesn't allow for changes without consensus but that it can happen if there's an appetite for it.

In referring to the pilot study in Mission Creek, Mr. Hrasko suggested that the issue in the area is not lack of water but the need for more storage.

Ms. Antonijevic exited the meeting at 3 p.m.

6. OKANAGAN WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN - DISCUSSION

Mr. Jatel provided an overview of the council's guiding principles, noting they translate well for an Okanagan Water Management Plan.

In developing a draft plan it was noted there are many multi-jurisdictional factors and overlapping issues that may need to be discussed. The draft, Mr. Jatel added, provides context and background regarding the need for a plan and then attempts to build agreement on water management in the Okanagan basin – with “should” and “must” statements, and finally, requests a Ministerial Order.

Mr. MacLean exited the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Following a group exercise, reviewing the draft, council members provided feedback.

Comments included:

- the need for a project charter for scope and purpose
- first time the group has done this type of exercise in a while and enjoyed it
- recognize that this can't be done in isolation of each other and without OBWB/WSC don't know how this would be done
- stream protection on Crown and private land would be valuable
- this type of dialogue is just as important as the development of a potential WMP document.

7. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Mr. Bauer congratulated Mr. Cunningham on his upcoming retirement and thanked him for his contributions on the council.

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Furness: FLNRO is working with UBCO to determine priorities to research Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel and milfoil control efforts to minimize impacts on the species. Staff are also working with Ocoela Fish and Game Club on flow issues in Middle Vernon Creek and mutual concerns for rare plants and kokanee in the area.
- Mr. Cunningham: Ray Crampton will be the replacement on council. The March 1 snow bulletin shows the Okanagan-Kettle Basin at 115% of normal. The province's observation well network now has real time reporting of water supplies. A pre-freshet meeting will be held in April and local flood people should be made aware.
- Mr. Flintoft: The BCWF has invited Okanagan clubs to a meeting to discuss their potential commitment to some wetland protection projects in the Okanagan.
- Mr. Woo: Ian Rogalski is a senior analyst with Environment Canada, formerly with Ag Canada, and will be EC's rep on the council.
- Mr. Hrasko: WSABC holds its annual conference April 5 at Quail's Gate Country Club.
- Mr. Dickenson: City of Vernon is continuing to work on its Water Master Plan and Liquid Waste Plan. There has been great support from stakeholders.
- Mr. Janmaat: As Water Research Chair at UBCO, a Water Research Plan has been developed. The OBWB board has reviewed it and we are looking at where it might fit within its own priorities.
- Ms. Bakelaar: RDCO is putting together environmental data (e.g. AHI, FIM and other items) – will be public, contact if interested.
- Mr. Nichol: Research is being done at UBCO, looking at Mission Creek ground/surface water.
- Ms. Jackson: Posters are available for the 3rd annual Okanagan WaterWise Challenge for youth being launched as part of Canada Water Week/UN World Water Day celebrations. A “Love your water body” panel discussion is being organized for March 22 at Summerhill Winery. Staff have met with the Make Water Work committee and are gearing up to relaunch the outdoor water conservation campaign for the valley. A separate committee has been formed to develop a zebra mussel campaign and initial meetings have been held.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: RBC has put out its Water Attitudes Survey which shows a drop in interest and awareness around water issues. It's available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ccruja9>. Water Canada's annual *Water's Next* publication features 12 leading water initiatives in the country (two in the Okanagan). The WSD project is profiled for excellence in the collaboration category. <http://watercanada.net/waters-next/>

- Chair Bauer: The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy ceases operation as of March 31 due to lack of funding. It has done valuable work in the area of water and the environment.
- Mr. Jatel: Staff are working with the BCAC to get large ag water users reporting their water use on the BC Water Use Reporting Centre system. The annual water supply webinar will be held the week of April 22. Details to come.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held April 11 at the Best Western Inn.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Moved by Rob Birtles

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of March 14, 2013 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director