

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2013, AT
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

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	Lorne Davies (alt.)
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Fish/Wildlife)	Grant Furness
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Jason Ough
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ian Rogalski
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O’Keefe
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

Regrets

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, vice-chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Agri-Enviro. Branch	Doug Edwards
BC Cattlemen’s Association	Lee Hesketh
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Ted van der Gulik
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource)	Ken Cunningham
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck

STAFF:

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

GUESTS:

Canadian Water Resources Association	Dwayne Meredith (alt.)
District of Coldstream	Gyula Kiss
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Okanagan Basin Water Board/RDOS	Tom Siddon
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Susan Latimer
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Kari Alex
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat
UBC Okanagan	Craig Nichol
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
Western Water Associates	Laurie Welch

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mr. Jatel called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Denise Neilsen

Seconded by Brian Guy

“That the agenda for the April 11, 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 March 14, 2013, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

Moved by Lorraine Bennest

Seconded by Margaret Bakelaar

“That the minutes from the March 14, 2012 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

4. GUEST PANEL: OKANAGAN NATION FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

Kari Alex, ONA biologist

Zoe Masters, ONA geomorphologist

Ms. Alex provided an overview of the fisheries projects being conducted by ONA, noting that Salmon travel 900 km up the Columbia River to Okanagan River to spawn. Fisheries work has resulted in a rebound in sockeye numbers in the last four years from 10,000 to 100,000. (ONA is keeping watch, but it's expected that the Testalinden dam break two years ago will impact numbers.)

Historically, she said, sockeye were found in significant numbers throughout the Okanagan system, but the building of dams for irrigation and flood control from 1915 to the 1950s impacted fish passage and then channelization for flood control also impacted fish habitat. The channeling halved the length of Okanagan River and reduced wetlands by 88%. These changes hurt the diversity of native fish species but have also proven beneficial to introduced species.

ONA has been working on a number of projects to assist Okanagan sockeye, including the building of fish passage at McIntyre Dam which began in 2009, providing an additional 8 km of potential spawning habitat up to Ok Falls and hopefully access to Skaha Lake. In the last two years, the fisheries department has been stocking Skaha in hopes of them coming back to the lake. It has also been working on the Okanagan River Restoration Initiative, restoring the river to its natural flow to make it easier for sockeye migration.

Dir. Tom Siddon entered the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

Another project that has brought success is development of a fish management tool that helps those who regulate water in the system ensure best water management practices for the fish.

Challenges for the program include funding for projects that are at the whim of funding groups, managing the impact of humans, as well as climate change which is altering volume and timing of water flow.

There was some discussion about the arctic char farm planned for the South Okanagan and the potential issues for native fish.

Ms. Latimer exited the meeting at 2 p.m.

PRESENTATION: COLLABORATION IN MISSION CREEK

Craig Nichol, UBC Okanagan

Dr. Nichol presented some of the research being done through UBCO on Mission Creek to augment earlier research on groundwater. Looking at some of the current research being conducted on Mission, Mill and Bellevue Creeks, he noted several overlapping issues including ground/surface water interactions, governance, climate change, and others.

Groups doing research include ONA, UBCO, Environment Canada, B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Okanagan College. Dr. Nichol suggested that there may be opportunities to collaborate and coordinate efforts, share information and resources. He invited council members to fill in a questionnaire and forward it to others who might have something to add. UBCO will then compile the results and come back to the council with findings and suggestions.

Additional questionnaires are available through Dr. Nichol or Mr. Jatel and are due April 19.

5. DISCUSSION

Mr. Jatel noted that instead of a regular council meeting in June, that a joint council/board meeting is proposed for June 4, from 10 am to 2 p.m. The meeting would be in the South Okanagan and the Water Board would cover mileage as it does with regular council meetings. The meeting would focus on strategic planning and be facilitated to make best use of time, he added.

The board is already talking about research priorities and project priorities, so the timing is perfect, added Dr. Warwick Sears.

Council members were asked for possible discussion topics. Mr. Buchler noted watershed planning with Water Act Modernization underway. Mr. Jatel added that the proposed Water Management Plan will also be discussed.

During the coffee break, at 3:15 p.m., several members exited the meeting including Ms. Bennest, Dr. Guy, Mr. O'Keefe, Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo, Ms. Masters, Ms. Steeves, Ms. Latimer, Ms. Alex, and Mr. Kiss.

6. COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION – EXCELLENCE IN WATER STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Mr. Jatel congratulated the council on its receiving the Excellence in Water Stewardship Award from the Council of the Federation, noting one was presented in each province and territory as part of U.N. World Water Day. In addition, the WSC was presented with \$1,000. Staff are now trying to determine how to make best use of the \$1,000. Council members were asked for their suggestions.

There was discussion about using it as a one-off contribution vs. using it towards something that is lifelong. Several ideas were presented. After some discussion the ideas that had the most support included: an award to a college/university student in a water-related program, donation to the BC Conservation Foundation's John Holdstock Scholarship, assistance for a science fair winner (with a water entry) to get to the nationals, a model UN/youth WSC, a drought tournament for youth, use it as start-up funds towards a bursary/scholarship and invite council and board members, and others, to contribute additional funds.

If the council were to use it towards a bursary/scholarship fund, the OBWB would potentially have to look for an Okanagan-wide agency to help administer it. Mr. Jatel said that staff will contact the Central Okanagan Foundation and the Central Okanagan Bursary and Scholarship Society for more information to start and will report back next month.

7. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears reported on the April 2 board meeting, noting that Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants were awarded to 19 projects in the Okanagan. Some of the groups funded include the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) for zebra/quagga mussel summer outreach, ONA for its Shuttleworth Creek project to move surface water users onto groundwater to leave water for fish spawning, and KLO Middle School for its Fasceaux Creek restoration project.

The board noted the CoF award to the Water Stewardship Council, discussed latest efforts to prevent invasive mussels in the Okanagan – by the OBWB as well as OASISS, the Invasive Species Council of BC and others. ISCBC is holding an invasive species workshop on April 30 in Kelowna, added Dr. Warwick Sears.

The board was also told about a “Not Waiting for Noah” flood risk assessment workshop being put on at the BC Water and Waste Association conference. Local government electeds and staff are eligible for a registration fee subsidy. If interested, contact OBWB staff.

Also, BCWWA is training people in water and offering two-week job shadows in early June. Those who are interested can contact Dr. Warwick Sears.

8. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Littley: OBWB staff are asking local government partners to consider OBWB's milfoil control efforts when doing infrastructure work.
- Dr. Nichols: UBCO groundwater research is wrapping up and getting started on Mission Creek.
- Mr. Davies: BCWF is canvassing local clubs re: work on Okanagan wetlands and holding a workshop.
- Mr. Meredith: CWRA held its annual BC conference in March and had strong showing of presentations from Okanagan. Action is being taking on a recent BC Real Estate Association flood mapping workshop. The CWRA is holding its AGM again with the Canadian Geophysical Union and now also with the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society in Saskatoon in late May
- Dr. Janmaat: UBCO has received a \$25,000 grant to look at water governance and economic valuation of market services.
- Ms. Bakelaar: RDCO received WCQI funding for wetlands project and is working with BCWF on developing a wetland inventory. The regional district is also working with OCCP on habitat connectivity, conservation rankings and more. We are also working on a connectivity document with UBCO. The RDCO's silvopasture project, funded by OBWB, is up for an award.
- Ms. Clark: RDNO received a WCQI grant for Coldstream Creek watershed planning work and a drought signage project. The regional district was involved in a water and watershed workshop in Salmon Arm through the Fraser Basin Council.
- Mr. Ough: City of Kelowna staff attended a benchmarking conference in Vancouver last week. It was interesting to hear what other utilities are doing to address storm drainage issues and to learn about innovative solutions Canada-wide. Financial planning was discussed and an interesting tour was offered of the Seymour Capilano Filtration Plant.
- Mr. Buchler: BCAC has developed a strategy for horticulture. Mr. Buchler noted that, interestingly, his South Okanagan farm property often has water challenges but that he has more than ever this year.
- Mr. Allard: BCGWA held its annual conference in Kamloops in March.
- Mr. Furness: FLNRO has been conducting monitoring for ecosystem, fish and wildlife in Okanagan. When the ministry began six years ago there was 10% compliance which is now at above 90%. A wetlands partnership meeting was held which looked at potential work in the Okanagan and Central Interior and included representation from BCWF. FLNRO is working with Okanagan real estate boards regarding responsibilities and expectations for due diligence on waterfront property sales.

The ministry is also reviewing what requirements are in place for Official Community Plans to include wetland management. The ministry is working to prepare for the upcoming flood season in light of changes with the ministry's reorganization.

- Mr. Jatel: Staff are organizing a one-hour webinar for April 25 to review the state of water supply in the Okanagan. The OBWB's groundwater monitoring project is wrapping up with two additional wells drilled in the Mission area. A final report on the ecosystem valuation project for Okanagan River should be available soon.
- Ms. Jackson: OBWB's held its Canada Water Week/UN World Water Day panel on March 22. Photos can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/c769os9>. Ms. Jackson encouraged those not already following the OBWB/Okanagan WaterWise on Facebook to do so at: <https://www.facebook.com/OkWaterWise> and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/OkWaterWise>. Staff are hiring a communications intern for the summer. The deadline for applications is April 19.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held May 9 at the Best Western Inn.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Moved by Remi Allard

"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of April 11, 2013 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director