



Photo by William Arndt



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: February 3, 2011

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OBWB Directors

Stu Wells - Chair,
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Rick Fairbairn - Vice Chair,
Regional District of North
Okanagan

James Baker, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Bernie Bauer, Okanagan
Water Stewardship Council

Buffy Baumbrough, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Michael Brydon, Regional
District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Gordon Clark, Regional
District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Doug Findlater, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Graeme James, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Doug Dirk, Regional District of
North Okanagan

Toby Pike, Water Supply
Association of BC

Gwen Bridge, Okanagan
Nation Alliance

The next regular meeting of
the OBWB is scheduled for
10a.m. on March 1, 2011 at
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Water Board welcomes new directors: The Board of Directors re-elected Stu Wells, representing Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, as their chair and Rick Fairbairn, from Regional District of North Okanagan, as vice-chair. Two new board members were also welcomed: Doug Dirk for RDNO and Gwen Bridge for Okanagan Nation Alliance. Thank you to Gyula Kiss (RDNO) and George Saddleman (ONA) for their service.

Water Management Program up for review: The board was reminded that the current three year term of the agency's Water Management Program (WMP) expires March 31, 2012. Staff will be meeting with Okanagan regional districts in the coming year to review the program. The WMP oversees the Water Supply and Demand Project, Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants, the Water Stewardship Council, Education and Outreach and 13 other initiatives.

Web-based tool to track valley water use launches Friday: After a year in development, the Water Board is unveiling its Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool (SWURT) Feb. 4. The web-tool will replace the written and faxed form water utilities currently provide to the province once a year. The tool will allow utilities to report water use monthly, helping them manage water supplies better. This will be especially useful to help prepare for water shortages that are expected with increased population and climate change.

Board to ask province to allow more input on revised Water Act: The OBWB will be producing a response to the province's "Water Sustainability Act," by the Feb. 21 deadline. However, the board will also be asking the province to allow another opportunity for feedback, noting this is the first document that outlines significant changes to the century-old Water Act, including regulating groundwater and selling of water licences.

Letter to feds will urge protection of Canada's water needs: Directors asked staff to write to Okanagan MP Stockwell Day and Canada's Foreign Affairs Department, encouraging protection of Okanagan interests as the U.S. and Canada renew the operating orders, controlling water levels on Osoyoos Lake. The agreement is up for renewal in 2013. Of interest is a recent U.S. study that suggests flow rates also be negotiated. The board believes this could impact the Okanagan, including water for fish. A bi-lateral forum is planned in Osoyoos, Sept. 18-20, 2011, to allow public consultation before the order is renewed.

For more information, please visit: www.OBWB.ca