

Registration opens on forum for U.S.- Canada water agreement

By [Contributed - Kelowna Capital News](#)

Published: **May 25, 2011 6:00 AM**

The Okanagan Basin Water Board is alerting the public to the opening of early registration for an important forum regarding the regulation of water on Osoyoos Lake between Canada and the U.S.

Currently, lake levels on Osoyoos Lake are controlled by the State of Washington through the operation of Zosel Dam in accordance with Operating Orders issued by the International Joint Commission (IJC) and overseen by the commission's International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control.

The Board of Control is made up of U.S. and Canadian representatives. The orders expire in February 2013.

The forum, Sept. 18 to 20 in Osoyoos, will be held to gather public input in preparation for the renewal of operating orders.

“For the last 25 years the orders have only related to the control of lake levels...for the first time we're talking about how much water should be required to flow south across the border and putting a guarantee on that,” said Stu Wells, mayor of Osoyoos and chairman of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

“The question then becomes one of ‘Who's water is it? Who has first rights to it? And what happens in a drought?’”


These are not easy questions, Wells notes, adding adequate water flows to the U.S. protects fish on the American side of the border but also fish that swim north into Canadian waters.

“These issues are not easy,” agreed Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District's district manager. “If they were we wouldn't need a forum.”

The purpose of the forum is to discuss science related to the lake, such as some recent studies commissioned by the IJC to help inform their decision on renewing the orders, and to get public

feedback. Most of the studies are available online at
www.ijc.org/conseil_board/osoyoos/osoyoos_pub.php?language=english.

© Copyright Black Press. All rights reserved.

 www.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?e...