

As IJC signs off on dam agreement, mayor wants larger watershed initiative

BY RICHARD MCGUIRE
Osoyoos Times

With a new order for operation of the Zosel Dam now finalized, Osoyoos Mayor Stu Wells hopes there will be further international co-operation on the management of Osoyoos Lake and the Okanagan watershed.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) formally issued the new Order of Approval on January 31, less than a month before the existing 25-year order which the new one replaces was to expire.

The new order, which was signed off in mid-January by outgoing Washington Governor Chris Gregoire, makes minor changes to permitted lake levels and also requires better communication about the dam's operation through a website.

The current Zosel Dam began operation at Oroville, Wash. in 1988 and is operated by the State of Washington.

Because it controls the level of Osoyoos Lake, an international body

of water, its operation is controlled by the IJC, which is made up of Canadian and American appointees.

Wells says he's happy with the new terms on water levels and improved communications, but he's hopeful that future co-operation can lead to a broader International Watershed Initiative (IWI).

"I would like to see that enacted," he said, noting the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), whose board he chairs, would also like an IWI.

The agreements have always dealt with the quantity of water, Wells said, but he would like to see a focus on the quality of water as well.

He's encouraged by acknowledgement of the role of the fish hatchery and salmon migration in the new order, as well as by recent trans-boundary co-operation on controlling milfoil in Osoyoos Lake.

The process of renewing the orders for Zosel Dam began in 2000 and led to studies

and public meetings. In July 2012, public hearings were held in Oroville and Osoyoos, which heard from residents concerned about water levels and lack of communication about operations of the dam affecting levels.

As a result of concerns raised in those hearings, the IJC recommended that the maximum level of Osoyoos Lake be 912 feet in non-drought years and 912.5 in drought years – six inches lower than the previous 913-foot drought-year limit.

The new orders also change the formula for determining drought years and non-drought years. The new formula takes into consideration both the flow of water in the Similkameen River and the volume of water in Okanagan Lake.

"The lake level being that half foot lower I think would appease a lot of people," said Wells. "With high lake levels people lose their beaches and you always have erosion as an issue."

Wells is encouraged

by a new condition in the orders requiring timely publication on a website of the current status of dam operations and planned operations.

The public hearings, he said, underlined the desire for more information, especially for boat owners who are caught by surprise when levels change abruptly and without notice.

"We definitely need better communication," said Wells, adding there are plans for both the water board and the Town of Osoyoos to provide information about lake levels on their websites.

Although the new orders establish maximum controlled lake levels, Wells emphasizes there are often long periods when levels exceed 913 feet and can't be controlled by the dam.

At these times, the gates of the dam are fully open, but the volume of water entering Osoyoos Lake is greater than what can leave as a result of high volumes of water in the Similkameen River just below the dam.

Osoyoos Home Hardware

Workshop on Feb 19th

Osoyoos Home Hardware is pleased to announce that Joanne Hebig from Designing For You, will be giving a workshop entitled "Freshen up your home" on Feb 19th at 7pm. This workshop will be sure to get your creative juices flowing while working within a strict budget and Donna Watson will be doing a segment called "Freshen your home with flowers".

Please call to register (250-495-6534)
No Charge. Space is Limited.



OSOYOOS HOME HARDWARE
8501 MAIN STREET, OSOYOOS, BC
PHONE: 250-495-6534
www.osoyooshomehardware.ca



Osoyoos PHYSIOTHERAPY and Active Living Clinic

ACUPUNCTURE NOW AVAILABLE
NO REFERRAL NECESSARY

- MYOFASCIAL RELEASE
- BACK PAIN/CARE
- JOINT PAIN
- PREVENTION CARE
- PRE/POST SURGICAL CARE
- ULTRASOUND/IFC/LASER
- CONDITIONING PROGRAMS
- NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS
- HOME/JOB SITE VISITS
- MUSCULOSKELETAL CONDITIONS
- WCB/ICBC/MSP/VETS/RCMP

I'll pretend to give a crap about the Super Bowl if you pretend to give a crap about Valentine's Day.



ALL PATIENTS WELCOME
Proudly serving the South Okanagan area

VISIT US @ WWW.OSOYOOSPHYSIOTHERAPY.COM

TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE CALL VIA THE OSOYOOS PHYSIOTHERAPY CLINIC @ (250)495-2225

WATERMARK WINE BAR

OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK



Open Mic Night Every Thursday

Treat your sweetheart to a special Valentine's Feast! Call to reserve your table.

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL 250-495-5508

watermark

BEACH RESORT

Find Your Oasis.

Downtown Osoyoos at Main Street and Park Place

Follow us on



watermarkbeachresort.com

Whispers are discreet. So is your new hearing device.



Great savings on select models.

Advanced technology now exceptionally priced at less than a \$1* per day.

*Life span of hearing aid conservatively estimated at 5 years.

Penticton
250.770.2255
101-1301 Main St.
In the Safeway Plaza

Oliver
250.498.2966
135-5717 Main St.
Southwinds Crossing Shopping Centre

Osoyoos
250.495.7008
105-8309 Main St.
Next to Shopper's Drug Mart

Expert Hearing

Proudly non-manufacturer owned since 1993

Registered under the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC

To learn more about hearing, hearing loss, tinnitus and to find other Expert Hearing locations, visit www.experthearingsolutions.com

