



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD MARCH 1, 2016, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN,
101 MARTIN ST., PENTICTON, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice-chair Juliette Cunningham	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Dirk	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Tracy Gray	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Andre Martin	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Peter Waterman	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt. Director Brian Guy	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

REGRETS

Director [Undesignated]	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC

OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
James Littlely	Operations and Grants Manager
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Findlater called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

7.2 Water Sustainability Act update

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 1, 2016 be approved."

CARRIED

4. DELEGATION

Ian McLellan, Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) District Recreation Officer with Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC)

Mr. McLellan was invited to present based on the board's ongoing concerns about multiuse in watersheds and the impact on water supplies from some recreational users.

Mr. McLellan noted that his office manages Crown lands, other than BC Parks, and works with FLNRO's Range Branch, local governments and others. Their responsibility is with authorized recreation. They don't ticket, he added.

In all, RSTBC is responsible for more than 1,350 recreation sites and over 800 trails in the province. In the Okanagan alone, there are two staff who manage more than 190 sites, and more than 60 trails covering over 1400 km, from north of Enderby to Osoyoos.

While there are 350,000 residents in the Okanagan, the region attracts 4 mill. visitors per year. As a result, Mr. McLellan added, they work with partnership agreements (PAs) to help manage the area. PAs have been developed with naturalist clubs, First Nations, local government, and others.

Bear Creek is one example of a PA in action. The Bear Creek recreation area includes more than 30,000 ha and is B.C.'s largest site, established in 2007 by FLNRO. Initially there were problems with off-road vehicles (ORVs) damaging sensitive areas and affecting drinking water sources. So the ministry brought in experts to help develop a trail network, deactivate some roads and create others. At the same time, Mr. McLellan explained, efforts were made to help sensitive grasslands regenerate, and protect and improve source water areas. A PA was created with the Okanagan Trailriders who now collect a fee to help with maintenance and operation costs, added Mr. McLellan. Today, they are nearly self-sufficient, receiving only \$5,000 in tax dollars, he added. In response to questions from the board, he noted that the group doesn't want to lose the ability to use the area for recreation so they are pushing riders to use the trails.

There are still other sediment sources polluting water ways, Mr. McLellan said, with two gravel pits and logging in the area, but there have been improvements.

RSTBC is managing recreation improvements using education (through signage and trail patrols), engineering solutions (e.g. installing proper toilet facilities, trails, etc.), enforcement (paying overtime to Conservation Officers, RCMP and others to do trail patrols and enforce recreation regulations) and evaluation (through water quality and sediment monitoring, compliance monitoring, and more).

A similar management arrangement has been reached with the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) in the Grizzly Lake area, Mr. McLellan added. There were concerns about inviting recreation into an area that is a source of drinking water but the recreation community is already there and it needs to be managed, he said. As such, plans were developed to have three campgrounds with 35 sites and picnic tables. There were concerns about ATVs on the area's dam and weakening it. Two pit toilets have been installed to prevent defecation around the water source.

The province is paying for a site host as a transition and will eventually enhance the site and charge a camping fee to help pay for operations, he added.

Mr. McLellan provided an update on upgrades to other sites around the Okanagan being used for recreation.

Chair Findlater noted the issues at Bear Creek and how there has been considerable success in addressing them.

5. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of February 2, 2016 at Regional District of Central Okanagan.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 2, 2016 at Regional District of Central Okanagan be approved."

CARRIED

6. STAFF REPORTS

6.1 Executive Director Report

Progress on Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Partnerships and Protocol Agreement

Dr. Sears provided an update on the Protocol Agreement with ONA and noted discussions are underway to have a presentation from ONA at June's joint board/council meeting.

Drought Response Project, Phase II

A half-time staff person will be hired to assist with implementation of the Drought Response Plan recommendations, working with local governments and integrating efforts with the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program and its Make Water Work campaign.

Weather Projections – Drought &/or Flood

Dr. Sears updated the board on current weather forecasts, noting that the snowpack is healthy but there is concern that a warm spring could bring an early melt and the potential for flooding. If water levels get too high, water managers will need to release some of it to prevent flooding, in which case utilities will need to manage for the potential of low rainfall in the following months.

There was some discussion and a recognition by directors that a healthy snowpack and warm spring can still bring flood and drought in the same year. It was noted that the need for caution still exists.

The board was reminded of the annual Okanagan Water Supply Webinar which will be held April 15 from 11 am to noon. The meeting will provide an update on reservoir levels, snowpack, groundwater and weather forecast and is of interest to water managers, local government, those in agriculture and water professionals.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Feb. 24, 2016, be received.”

CARRIED

6.2 Water Stewardship Director’s Report

Environmental Flow Needs (EFN) Project

Mr. Jatel noted that the EFN project team is now working to create a methodology to determine EFNs specific to 18 priority streams and will look at current and future demand for water on them.

Okanagan Wetlands Project

The board was told that the wetland project team has been talking with the District of Summerland about a possible partnership on a wetland project at a local school.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated Feb. 24, 2016, be received.”

CARRIED

6.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Water Conservation & Quality Improvement (WCQI) Grant Program

Mr. Littley provided an update on the WCQI program, stating there were 27 applications for a total ask worth about \$495,500 with \$300,000 available. The applications will now be reviewed and recommendations will come forward to the board in April.

Milfoil Control Program

Mr. Littley noted that winter rototilling is now complete in parts of the valley and finishing up elsewhere. It is hoped that the extra hours that were put in this winter will help should it be another strong growth year for milfoil.

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager’s Report, dated Feb. 23, 2016, be received.”
CARRIED

6.4 Communications Director Report

Make Water Work (MWW)

Ms. Jackson provided the board with a final report on the Make Water Work 2015 pledge survey of residents who went to the MakeWaterWork.ca website and took the pledge to conserve. The survey was intended to determine how many followed through on their pledges and if not, why not, and to identify barriers to behavior change. About 550 surveys were delivered and 215 completed, which is said to be accurate within +/- 5.2%.

Survey results suggest the majority followed through with all the pledges they made. Only 5% indicated they did not, and most of these indicated that, for example, instead of following through on watering during certain times, they just didn’t water at all. Among those who followed through with their pledges, 75% made additional changes to conserve. Some 95% indicated they participated to save water and help the environment (vs the chance to win prizes, etc.). Those pledges most difficult to follow through on were “Change lawn to drought-tolerant turf &/or low water plants” and “Aerate my lawn and top dress with compost.” The top reasons given for difficulty were cost and time.

The board was also provided survey results regarding: how much cost motivates conservation, appetite to pay for irrigation and landscape improvements, awareness around last summer’s drought and more.

There was lengthy discussion about the survey results.

Ms. Jackson added that the results will help inform the MWW 2016 campaign and may be useful to local governments in assisting additional water conservation efforts.

Rain Barrel Sale Pilot Project

The board was told about a pilot project to sell rain barrels in partnership with RDCO’s Waste Reduction Office and their sale of composters. The pilot is in response to ongoing public interest expressed to the OBWB as well as RDCO, and will be limited to the presale of 100 barrels. The barrels will be sold at-cost but a bulk buy will allow residents cost-savings.

UN World Water Day/Canada Water Week

Each year the Water Board holds an annual panel discussion during Canada Water Week. This year staff are partnering with UBCO’s Biodiversity, Resilience and Ecosystem Services (BRAES) Institute to hold the event March 22 at the Laurel Packinghouse in Kelowna. The event will begin with a keynote address by international water champion Margaret Catley-Carlson.

Details can be found on www.OkWaterWise.ca and www.OBWB.ca.

Other communication initiatives

Ms. Jackson reported on the EFN news conference held Feb. 12. Although the event was pulled together quickly and included several partners, including ONA, provincial ministers, our local

Kelowna MP and UBCM, creating some organizational hurdles, the event went very well. Both UBCM and the federal government followed up to say they were pleased with the event and the coverage that followed.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Feb. 24, 2016, be received.”
CARRIED

7. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Mission Creek Groundwater Memo

Dr. Sears provided an overview of her memo and the reasons for moving ahead with a Kelowna groundwater study in partnership with Kelowna Joint Water Committee (KJWC) member utilities, Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the University of B.C. – Okanagan (UBCO).

The project, she added, will help answer some of the KJWC’s concerns around groundwater, based on recent research results by UBCO, funded through the OBWB. It is also a logical extension of the EFN work being done on Mission Creek with ONA and FLNRO.

The partners have agreed to help design and fund the research, and the intention is for it to begin before freshet begins.

The board was asked to approve the project.

“THAT the OBWB lead the collaborative project to determine groundwater flows to Mission Creek, in partnership with the Kelowna area water utilities, UBCO, B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, and the Okanagan Nation Alliance.”
CARRIED

7.2 Water Sustainability Act (WSA) update

Directors were updated on B.C.’s WSA and the fact that it is now in force. Of particular interest is the licencing of groundwater for the first time, noted Dr. Sears. Up until now, anyone could drill a well and draw groundwater and not report their use. At the same time, the province could issue a surface water licence without understanding the implications to groundwater, even though the two are connected.

Dr. Sears added that it is important that people register their groundwater wells as a way to protect their water rights. Old wells will be grandfathered and given priority and added to the licence database, she explained. By getting a licence, the licensee is protected from industrial users or others who get a licence after them, ensuring that their water allocation cannot be impinged upon.

Mr. Jatel suggested that the Water Stewardship Council could review the OBWB’s own recommendations on the WSA and the actual act, and provide a report back to the board. Directors agreed.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Council review the B.C. Water Sustainability Act based on the OBWB’s recommendations and report back to the board.”
CARRIED

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be April 5, 2016 at Regional District of North Okanagan in Coldstream.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 1, 2016 be adjourned at 1:39 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director