

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2013, AT  
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

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**COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

**Present**

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, Chair
UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Past-chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Fish/Wildlife)	Grant Furness
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Ted van der Gulik
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Resource Mgmt)	Ray Crampton
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Ecosystems)	Grant Furness
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Andrew Reeder
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ian Rogalski
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Doug Edwards
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Zoe Kirk (alt.)
Water Supply Association of BC	Patty Meger (alt.)

**Regrets**

BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
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 Littley

**GUESTS:**

B.C. Ministry Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Resource)	Bob Warner (alt.)
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alt.)
CH2MHill	Mark Watt
District of Coldstream	Maria Besso
District of Coldstream	Gyula Kiss
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
OBWB Board Director/WSABC	Toby Pike
Piteau Associates	Craig Baptie
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
UBC Okanagan	Natasha Neumann
UBC Okanagan	Anwar Hussein

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

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

## 2. ELECTION: CHAIR/NOMINATIONS FOR VICE CHAIR

Mr. Dobson was nominated as chair. No further nominations were presented at second and third call for nominations; nominations for chair were closed.

Mr. Dobson was declared chair by acclamation.

Mr. Jatel turned the meeting over to Chair Dobson.

## 3. APPROVE AGENDA

Moved by Lee Hesketh

Seconded by Toby Pike

*"That the agenda for the Oct. 10, 2013 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved."*

**CARRIED**

## 4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held Oct. 10, 2013, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

Moved by Ray Crampton

Seconded by Lee Hesketh

*"That the minutes from the Oct. 10, 2013 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved."*

**CARRIED**

## 5. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on the most recent board meeting noting the adoption of the Strategic Plan and the directors' appreciation of the work of the council.

The board also adopted a 0% increase in budget with existing programs continuing, including: water education (e.g. Make Water Work and Don't Move a Mussel initiatives), zebra/quagga mussel outreach with Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society, irrigation certification training, an improved hydrometric database and installation of hydromet stations, the BC Water Use Reporting Centre, environmental stream flow work, a Land Use Inventory project (part of the Water Supply and Demand work), data sharing with local government, a valley-wide water plan, wetland strategy and implementation of projects for sustainable water management.

The board was pleased with the input of council on the proposed Water Sustainability Act and will be forwarding the response by the Nov. 15 deadline.

RDNO asked for input regarding the use of our Sewage Facility Grants for carriage houses on septic systems. The board turned the request down.

Also, noted Dr. Warwick Sears, Stu Wells announced he was stepping down as board chair, having served since 2009. A new chair will be elected in January.

## 6. COUNCIL AWARD

Mr. Jatel reminded council of the \$1,000 it received from the Council of the Federation in March as part of its Award of Excellence in Water Stewardship and the group's discussion about how to use the funds. After reviewing the suggestions and conducting research, Mr. Jatel recommended the funds be donated to a student in financial need in Okanagan College's Water Engineering Technology program.

After some further discussion, council voted on the recommendation.

***“THAT the council donate the \$1,000 to a student in Okanagan College’s WET program.”***

**CARRIED**

**7. GUEST SPEAKER: A CHANGING LANDSCAPE – 1880-1920**

**Wayne Wilson, Central Okanagan Land Trust**

Chair Dobson introduced Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson spoke on land-use and early water management decisions in the Okanagan and the greening of the Okanagan landscape.

In the 1880s, if someone lived adjacent to water they had a right to it. This changed in the early 1900s with the adoption of B.C.’s Water Act which recognized water as a public good, moving it from private resource to public.

Ms. Neilsen entered the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

As the Okanagan introduced transportation methods (e.g. sternwheeler and rail) that could help move product out of the valley, there was greater incentive to grow and ship items.

From 1904-14 land development companies started up. And, whereas Okanagan farming initially consisted of cattle and grain, irrigation systems were built, greening the valley within 10 years – half a generation, noted Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Jatel thanked Mr. Wilson for his presentation, putting into historical context the current work of the OBWB’s board and council in developing a current water management plan for the valley, helping ensure a sustainable and healthy supply into the future.

**8. WATER ACT MODERNIZATION (WAM) UPDATE**

B.C. Ministry of Environment’s Ted White and Ian Graeme teleconferenced into the meeting. Both are helping lead the WAM process.

Mr. Graeme provided an update on the process and where it is at currently, noting the various reasons why B.C.’s Water Act needs modernizing (e.g. to address population growth and climate change and the impacts on water).

The province’s proposed new Water Sustainability Act (WSA) includes a number of policy directions and include:

- 1) protect stream health and aquatic environments
- 2) consideration of water in land use decisions
- 3) regulate and protect groundwater use

The exception here will be domestic use, Mr Graeme noted, adding that this is based on discussions with other jurisdictions regarding groundwater and responds to stakeholder input. It also cuts down on the number of licences the province needs to regulate, he added.

- 4) regulating water use during scarcity

FITFIR (first-in-time, first-in-right) would be retained but users could be regulated in times of scarcity to ensure supply for essential human and livestock needs and allow temporary restrictions to protect critical environmental flows.

5) improving security, water use efficiency and conservation

The province is looking to: expand the “beneficial use” requirement, set water conservation targets and have audits, have water licences reviewable every 30 years (40 for hydroelectric power), allow area-based regulation for specific regions and, create agricultural water reserves.

6) measuring and reporting water use

The province would require large volume users to measure and report water use. Smaller volume users would measure in specific circumstances under “area-based” regulations.

7) enable a range of governance approaches

The goal here is to better suit local needs, allow for delegation of some activities or decisions to agencies outside of government, and ensure a clear and consistent B.C. framework.

Mr. Graeme went on to discuss the implications for users, most notably fees for large groundwater users, requirement to measure and report for large volume users, assessment requirements for larger projects.

Mr. Hussein entered the meeting.

Next steps in the process are the deadline for public submissions on Nov. 15, finalizing of legislation and introduction into the legislature in spring 2014. Regulations will then be developed and prepared for implementation.

There were a number of questions from council members, including whether or not the province had enough data to make decisions. The ministry noted that it will have to consider this, but that other jurisdictions started with limited information as well. Where there is greater uncertainty, the province will move more cautiously. And, with implementation plans, staff will be requesting more resources, they added.

There was a question as to the cost to implement the new legislation and regulations. The ministry noted that staff have been estimating possible costs and the minister has said there will be more engagement on this.

It was also noted that the one-month given, from the time the proposal was presented to the public to the deadline for submissions, was not enough.

Finally, there was a question regarding how the province would ensure water was considered in land use decisions on private land. The ministry said it was still developing the strategy in response to feedback, but that Regional Growth Strategies, subdivision approvals and OCPs would possibly be used.

## **9. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Chair Dobson provided a brief update on the challenge by District of Lake Country on a provincial water licence that was issued on the district’s already fully allocated Beaver Lake reservoir. The district is still waiting for a decision from an environmental appeal board.

Chair Dobson noted that the council’s submission to the OBWB’s board re: the Water Sustainability Act will be submitted by the deadline. But he also encouraged council members to make sure that each of their organization’s submit comments.

Ms. Bennest, Fan and Mr. Watt exited the meeting.

## **10. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES**

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Birtles: The OBWB letter's to IHA on the need for a response protocol for algae blooms was received and will be taken up by the B.C. Drinking Water Leadership Council
- Mr. Crampton: FLNRO is working with Gorman, Tolko and others re: offstream watering and silvopasture practices, looking at how to orient debris to prevent cattle from congregating around streams. Ministry staff are looking to organize a field day for the council to show the work being done.
- Mr. Rogalski: Environment Canada staff have been providing input regarding B.C.'s proposed WSA.
- Mr. Furness: FLNRO staff are developing a water workshop for local government and qualified professionals. As part of the Okanagan Wetlands Strategy, staff are developing a field guide for volunteers to help identify wetlands.
- Mr. Dickenson: City of Vernon is completing its Liquid Waste Management Plan.
- Mr. Reeder: City of Kelowna is putting its new UV treatment plant out to tender soon.
- Ms. Kirk: Work on the Okanagan Falls waste treatment plant is being completed; Meter installation in West Bench is being done along with education and outreach; Next week, RDOS is hosting a workshop Nov. 19 for local government utility and emergency staff on preparing communities for climate change (flooding, wildfires, drought) with Bob Sandford and Scott Smith. The two speakers will also be giving a public presentation that evening.
- Ms. Meger: The WSABC AGM was successful. The association is also developing a submission on B.C.'s WSA.
- Ms. Masters: ONA is very pleased with the number of sockeye that are returning and with the numbers that have made it over Skaha Lake dam. The fish are being seen in the Columbia River system and Osoyoos. Work on the ONA hatchery is underway. Okanagan River Restoration Initiative phase 1 monitoring is showing great results, with milfoil eradication it seems native invertebrates are doing well too.
- Mr. Hussein: I am conducting work on water policy and governance for marginalized communities.
- Dr. Guy: The CWRA is holding a water management workshop in Vancouver Nov. 15 re. flood frequency and sea level rise, floodplain elevations and dykes. The annual conference is in Hamilton June 2-4 and the call for abstracts is out.
- Mr. Flintoft: BCWF is holding its AGM April 9-12 in Kelowna.
- Mr. Pike: There are new turbidity rules that water managers should be aware before next freshet. If a water supplier is not compliant with drinking water standards that are liable. Based on the province's decision to provide a licence on a SEKID reservoir, eventhough it is fully allocated, we are interested in B.C.'s new WSA and would like to see greater guidance on discretionary decisions.
- Mr. van der Gulik: The Irrigation Industry Association of B.C. convention and tradeshow is Dec. 3 to 5 in Richmond. Sessions include a rainwater harvesting workshop.
- Mr. Edwards: DFO has some funding for habitat restoration projects. Canadian Okanagan Basin Technical Working Group is looking to potentially expand into the Nicola.
- Ms. Clark: RDNO is completing its submission on the WSA.
- Ms. Jackson: Staff are tying up loose ends on the Make Water Work (MWW) and Don't Move a Mussel 2013 initiatives and beginning to gear up for 2014. Staff are also meeting with UBCO on plans for UN World Water Day/Canada Water Week (March 16-22).
- Dr. Warwick Sears: The OBWB received an RBC/Tides Canada grant to hold a workshop to grow the MWW program and plans are underway.
- Mr. Jatel: The OBWB, RDCO and BCWF are holding an open house Nov. 28 re: Okanagan Wetlands Strategy. December council meeting will have RDNO presenting on their Regional Growth Strategy as it relates to water.
- Mr. Littley: Staff are reviewing and developing a report on the WCQI grant program. Contact me if you have feedback.

- Mr. Dobson: The B.C. Forest Practices Board has been conducting a process audit and has concerns about how the watersheds are being managed under the act. APEG has made some recommendations.

#### **11. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be at the Best Western Inn on December 14, 2013.

#### **12. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

**Moved by Rob Birtles**

***“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of November 12, 2013 be adjourned.”***

**CARRIED**

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

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**Chair**

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**Executive Director**