

**OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**

*A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board*

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2014, 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
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
BC Fruit Growers Association	Denise MacDonald
BC Ministry of Agriculture	Andrew Petersen
BC Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Ecosystems)	Grant Furness
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alt.)
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Jason Ough (alt.)
City of Vernon	Rob Miles (alt.)
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ian Rogalski
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Doug Edwards
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles, Vice-Chair
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carol Luttmmer
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Natasha Luken
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Murray Wilson
UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer

**Regrets**

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
BC MFLNRO Resource Mgmt)	Steve Matthews
Water Supply Association of BC	Toby Pike
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe

**STAFF:**

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Office and Project Manager	James Littlely
OBWB, Communications Director	Corinne Jackson

**GUESTS:**

District of Coldstream Councillor	Gyula Kiss
Freelance Journalist	Judie Steeves
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Dobson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

**2. APPROVE AGENDA**

Moved by Bernie Bauer

Seconded by Hans Buchler

*“That the agenda for the March 13, 2014 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”*

**CARRIED**

### 3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held Feb. 13, 2014, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

Moved by Rob Birtles

Seconded by Margaret Bakelaar

*"That the minutes from the Feb. 13, 2014 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved."*

**CARRIED**

### 4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on the most recent board meeting and a presentation by Tricia Brett on Endocrine Disrupting Compounds and best practices for disposal of waste water. The OBWB will follow up with a report which will be made available to the public.

The board also agreed to renew the Water Management Program on a four-year cycle rather than a three-year cycle to match the local government election cycle.

Directors were pleased with proposed provincial off-road regulations and will be sending a letter of support to the province.

The board has agreed to provide subsidies for training to certify irrigators in the valley. The training is provided by the IIABC.

FLNRO recently completed research into the prevalence of Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels in the valley which were thought to be endangered. They found many more live and juvenile mussels than expected, indicating a healthy population. The species will likely still be red-listed since they exist only in the Okanagan. FLNRO is currently studying how milfoil operations may affect this species.

The Board also made a recommendation to the province to create a business case for a Made in BC sticker program for watercraft, that could fund inspection stations to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species. Dr Sears noted that inspections are important especially now with news of Asian Clams in the U.S. Okanagan water system.

Ms. Jackson provided an update on the various Canada Water Week events including the Watermark movie, the panel and the Okanagan WaterWise challenge for youth.

### 5. COUNCIL – IDENTIFYING COUNCIL MEMBER PRIORITIES

Chair Dobson asked members to introduce themselves and to identify their organizations' priorities for the 2014-15 council term.

Vice-Chair Birtles: Source water protection is the water priority for Interior Health.

Mr. Wilson: Education is a big priority in forestry.

Ms. Clark: The Regional District of North Okanagan Water Priorities for 2014 is extensive and fall into two categories 1) Planning 2) Water Utility

The Top three issues that have been brought forward are:

- Watershed planning and protection - The implementation of the Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan. There are over 100 recommendations that vary in the levels of involvement required from various government agencies and first nations for successful implementation. The biggest challenges will be getting all of the parties together to discuss the

issues or action items that the community has identified as needing change. The Duteau Creek Watershed Assessment Response Plan has been reviewed by the TAC and will be presented to the RDNO Board and Interior Health by May for endorsement. The Kalamalka Lake Watershed Assessment Response Plan will be going to the TAC by May for review. This Assessment Response Plan will be used to set the Watershed Control program needed to apply for Filtration Exclusion for Kalamalka Lake.( Mission Hill Water Treatment Plant)

- Secondly, Greater Vernon Water Utility is moving forward with recommendations from the Master Water Plan. The entire system is metered and we have been told there is 30% unaccounted for water. This is the difference between system flows and water that is accounted for through meters. This links with the rising cost of water and how we maintain a water system that meets Water Quality Objectives and sustainability.
- Thirdly, Understanding our water supplies better. For Quantity - GVW will be looking at a Water Supply analysis based on collected information over the past decade along with work completed by the Ministry of FLNRO. For Quality at the request of community members we also continue to facilitate Water Quality Monitoring on the Shuswap River to see if water quality in the region is meeting minimum standards. (The Ministry of Environment has very little capacity to carry out this work and citizens are concerned about the impact that development and different land use activities are having on water quality in the area). A challenge around this WQM moving forward is the costs associated with testing and the lack of expertise in house to interpret the data for the community groups. (This program relies solely on data interpretation by MOE staff).

GVW is working with MOE to complete a water quality sampling station on Coldstream Creek.

How can the Water Stewardship Council best serve RDNO's needs?

- The Water Stewardship Council's support in the initiatives listed above would be useful. WSC can be a sounding board to ensure collaboration on inter-jurisdictional issues and the development of partnerships. At the council level as many of the agency representatives that we would need to pull together in a discussion sit around that table.
- A media campaign which promotes the "true" value of water may help the public realize how precious this resource is.
- A tool for inputting and analyzing supply data (i.e. precipitation, run-off, flow, etc.) on the WURC would enhance the usefulness of the Reporting Centre.
- Develop tools for storm water and drainage from both urban and rural activities.

Mr. Furness: The WSC should continue to collaborate with members to provide a coordinated and objective perspective to the OBWB. Additionally, the WSC outreach efforts on the vast array of water related initiatives and issues is greatly appreciated.

The following are the most significant issues to the Fisheries and Ecosystems Sections.

- The cumulative effects of lakeshore development to fish productivity, and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems function. Included in this issue are:
  - The sheer number of Water Act applications for works below the natural boundary of the lake
  - The number of works that are not compliant with the Water Act authorization process
  - The continued monitoring and compliance efforts related to the Riparian Areas Regulation
  - The need to update regional regulation and policy after the recent changes to the Fisheries Act
  - Development of an outreach strategy aimed at the real estate community to ensure that the regulatory requirements for waterfront properties are understood

- Large lakes conservation management including the collection of information to support recreational fisheries opportunities and objectives, and rare species and ecosystems assessments, trials and inventories to support related management decisions. Included in this issue are:
  - Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel inventories, operational trials and data gathering for lakeshore modelling
  - Annual kokanee lakeshore spawning inventories
  - Mysis harvesting trials
  - Collection of angler success use data
  - The development of an invasive species (mussel) strategy (seeking HCTF funding)
- Wetland conservation, including assessment, inventories, policy assessments and mitigation. Included in this issue are:
  - Amphibian inventories through eDNA approaches (several funding applications submitted)
  - Participation in the Okanagan Wetland Strategy P2
  - Developing mitigation and offsetting tools in conjunction with the Wetland Stewardship Partnership
  - Review of Official Community Plans for relevant wetland conservation by-laws Development of wetland inventory tools, such as plant identification tools and BMPs

Mr. Hesketh entered the meeting at 1:31 p.m.

Ms. Riechert: The RDOS is looking for:

- better information and data on water purveyors as we're being asked to take over small water systems and consolidate delivery of water;
- getting more information and data on groundwater, so we can make recommendations to the board, but also so staff can make appropriate decisions;
- floodplain mapping updates; and
- water quality indicator – valley-wide.

Ms. Lukey: The ONA mandate is to work collectively to advance and assert Okanagan nation Title and Rights over the Okanagan Nation Territory. This is the vision and future of the Syilx people and a fundamental strategic direction for today, and the following are the Chief Executive Council strategic priorities:

- Protection, preservation and enhancement of the peoples, lands and resources of the member bands of the Okanagan Nation;
- Promotion, enhancement and preservation of the Okanagan Native history, language, and culture;
- Promote and create a public awareness of the Okanagan Nation Alliance concerns, position and accomplishments in the areas of political, social, economic and cultural development;
- Protection, enhancement and preservation of the environment, fish and wildlife resources located within the traditional territories of the Okanagan Nation.

Mr. Ough: City of Kelowna Infrastructure Planning priorities related to OBWB WSC include several ongoing initiatives in line with the concept of sustainable community.

I will briefly touch on the three types of water systems we are responsible for within municipal boundaries:

- Distribution Water Utility: Delivery of safe reliable drinking water that meets WQ Objectives set out by IH, to our customers while keeping user rates affordable. This has been challenging in recent years and taxing of capital resources. Construction of a UV Treatment facility in the south end that is currently underway will complete the terms for conformance with our standing Filtration Deferral Agreement.
- Storm Drainage System: We continue with source protection programs within municipal boundaries. With respect to our agreement to defer filtration we are interested what initiatives are underway or planned by authorities and OBWB affiliates in watershed areas upstream of

municipal boundaries. A noticeable trend of higher intensity/short duration rain events in recent years is triggering infrastructure improvements and discussion surrounding Bylaw specification review.

- Sanitary Sewer Utility: We are going to tender with an update assignment for our existing Sewer Master Plan. Our Sewer Connection Area process has slowed in recent years as sewer projects seem less popular for available infrastructure grant programs. However it remains our priority to expand municipal sewer via Local Area Service process into remaining neighborhoods still on septic fields.

Ms. Bakelaar: The current priority for RDCO environmental services:

- land application of biosolids and the impact on water. We're working with UBCO and doing a test on Brenda Mine;
- Water pricing is an issue as well;
- Using treated effluent for water working with Bylands;

For Planning Services:

- flood hazard is an issue; and
- wetlands are also a priority – mapping and restoring, stream restoration and protection and conservation in parks.

Mr. Miles: For the City of Vernon:

- using reclaimed water. We're looking to have this spearheaded by a body on benefits of reclaimed water as a solution to drought;
- Education and outreach also a priority/interest;
- Stormwater mgmt. is a priority and we'd like to look at alternate standards to reduce impacts on water sources;

WSC can best serve our needs by striking a committee to deal with reclaimed issues and work on consistent policies on source water.

Mr. Davies: BC Wildlife Federation Strategic Objectives:

- To ensure the sound, long-term management of British Columbia's fish, wildlife, park and outdoor recreational resources in the best interests of all British Columbians, and to coordinate all the voluntary agencies, societies, clubs and individuals interested in that objective, and
- To develop and support a comprehensive educational program to make all British Columbians aware of the value of British Columbia's fish, wildlife, park and outdoor recreational resources, and to arouse in the public conscience a recognition of, and a respect for, the place of fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation in the wise integrated use of the nation's natural resources.
- High priority is youth programs:
  - The 'Go Fish' recreational fishing program
  - Youth Ice fishing days
  - Everything you wanted to know about fishing go to [www.bcfishn.com](http://www.bcfishn.com)
- High Priority is Wetlands
  - BCWF Wetlands Education Program
  - Wild Kidz Camp to be held in Peachland this year. It provides a real-life connection between children and nature.
  - Supporting Okanagan Wetland Strategy.
- High priority is Education and Awareness
  - The "*Becoming an Outdoors Woman*" (BOW) program is designed for women 19 years or older and provides them an opportunity to learn outdoor skills in a relaxed non-competitive atmosphere. May 23 - 25, 2014 Easter Seal Camp Winfield, B.C.

The Council can best serve our organization's needs by helping to protect fish and wildlife habitat.

Mr. Rogalski: Environment Canada prioritizes sustainable development

- we are a science-based department and pride ourselves on providing good advice.
- we have regulations that guide our work for species at risk, deleterious substances;
- we have an interest in a regional perspective ensuring that where there is capacity to do ecosystem mgmt. a plan can be established
- we've been active in the Okanagan in the last 10 years to bring along those Water Sustainability Management Plans.

We work with the WSC to help further each other's goals. We see the importance of the council continuing and would like to see an actionable ecosystem mgmt. plan and this is the group to do this;

- would like to see a better indicator framework to see what we're accomplishing.

Mr. Petersen: For the Min of Ag:

- increased food production is an issue and improved irrigation use and ensuring ag water use;
- ag waste control regulations are in the works;
- working on BC WURC allowing farmers to report their use online;
- environmental Farm Plan is also rolling out again;
- ag demand model – doing a re-look at Vernon and Kelowna and S Thompson to Lytton area this year; and
- Moisture studies are also being done.

Ms. Luttmer: The Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP) is a partnership of 30+ organizations. The OCCP's mandate is to coordinate and facilitate conservation and stewardship efforts on public and private lands, set conservation and stewardship goals and objectives, and generate the support and resources needed to maintain this effort.

The water-related priorities for 2014-2015 for the OCCP are:

- Protection of water to support conservation (e.g. support wildlife, habitats, species at risk) and how conservation can support water protection;
- Supporting our Partners in implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy; and
- Updating our OCCP Strategic Plan to better meet our mandate and serve our partners

The council can serve the OCCP by providing a forum for sharing information and collaboration.

Ms. McDonald: BCFGA priorities for 2014:

1. Develop an understanding of what crop water demand means to water conservation. Continue to support Watershed Planning, and Drought Management Plans for the Okanagan.
2. Identify implementation gaps in the new WSA and the in the Water Regulation Act (yet to be presented)
3. New Pricing model aims to improve services, sustainable water management, improve program cost recovery and enable new programs and initiatives.
  - Must be fair, easy to understand and implement.
  - Question who will manage the WSA when staff and resources are diminishing.
  - There appears to be a multitude of methods of how the WSA will be implemented depending on the watershed and weaknesses of that watershed. What does it mean for the Okanagan?
  - Irrigation Districts need to work together and develop a fair pricing model reflecting historical improvements, costs of those improvements while recognizing the intention of long term sustainability which includes food security.

Mr. Edwards: DFO prioritizes:

- having water at the right time for fish;

- sediment and its impact on quality and spawning;
- temperature is a concern – areas where fish won't go now because of high temps e.g. Osoyoos Lake.
- future looking at developing groundwater springs as spawning channels to cut down temps in some smaller streams. Also looking at the effect of climate change and it is making work more difficult;
- EDCs and impacts are also a concern – some science is being done but DFO is losing scientists so we're looking at 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to conduct studies; and
- access to spawning habitat;

Collaborations through WSC are going to become more critical with the cutbacks.

Mr. Buchler:

- secure access to water for ag and crops and livestock;
- we want to make sure that as many water reserves are set up under water sustainability Plans as possible; and
- pricing of water for ag. is a serious concern so that it is not used to push ag producers out.

Dr. Guy: CWRA Key Issues (contributed by Brian Guy with input from the CWRA BC Branch Executive):

CWRA and OBWB are well aligned – CWRA is concerned about national water issues, OBWB is concerned with Okanagan – Similkameen water issues.

- Data/water information: Continuous erosion of federal and provincial commitment to acquisition of good quality climate, hydrometric, water quality and groundwater information
- Climate change adaptation: The climate is changing and Canadians have to understand this and adapt to it.
- Water governance: Lack of a coordinated federal Water Strategy to identify, measure, evaluate, protect, and manage water across the country; fragmented provincial responsibilities for water make clear and consistent treatment of water difficult. CWRA has been working on this for decades.
- Communication./education: Ongoing need for outreach, education, knowledge-sharing

HOW Can OBWB help?

- Provide funding and act as a catalyst for federal, provincial, or local agencies to obtain data; direct funding support. Examples: new hydrometric station on Clark Creek, hydrometric database project (bringing all Okanagan WSC and private data into one database); WURC project, funding for new groundwater observation wells; getting Env Canada to conduct lake evaporation measurements; support for Water Research Chair (in other words OBWB is doing lots in this area). Examples: floodplain mapping and risk analysis (last months topic at the OWSC). OBWB could be supporting research and implementation on this (already doing this). Supporting running climate scenarios (already doing this). Looking at valley-wide drought planning (already doing this). Supporting studies and models of supply and demand; (OBWB is already doing all this)
- OBWB can be a leader and advocate and lobbyist for better federal and provincial water policy and governance. Already doing lots of this – eg IJC and Osoyoos Lake; eg input to Water Act Modernization (resulting in a new WSA introduced on Monday)
- CWRA does primarily conferences and workshops. OBWB does this and more - eg 2005 and 2008 conferences with CWRA in Kelowna; Water Wise program; World Water Day events, Don't Move a Mussel; Make Water Work; educational programs, many other examples that Corinne could highlight.

In summary, CWRA is happy with the partnership between the two organizations. One recommendation: Keep doing what you're doing.

Mr. Hesketh: Priorities for the Cattlemen's association in the Okanagan watershed:

- Water quality and waste management;
- Water volume;
- then scarcity.

All three will be important in the fall, and they are cyclical. In all the issues we deal with, the key is collaboration.

Chair Dobson: Identified that some basic themes emerged from this exercise, about 24 items, came up and many were repeated in areas we are already working in.

Dr Sears asked that written notes be sent to Corinne for inclusion in the minutes.

## **6. UPDATE ON WATER SUSTAINABILITY ACT**

Mr. Jatel provided an update on the WSA, including that water management plans are likely synonymous with water sustainability plans referred to in the Act.

Dr. Sears reported that she has been in correspondence with Deborah Curran, who will come up with her own plain language presentation and will give it to the council.

Mr. Jatel continued that in 2008, the WSC and OBWB made a number of recommendations to the province to include in the Act. Mr. Jatel asked that the committee get back together to look at how those recommendations made it into the current version of the Act. He also said that the Act has modernised the language around water pricing and groundwater as it needed to be. The very last section of the WSA talks about how the other acts need to be changed in relation to this new act.

Discussion.

Coffee Break, 2:54

Back to order: 3:28

## **7. PRESENTATION – KEEPING NATURE IN OUR FUTURE**

Ms. Luttmner – OCCP Coordinator presented an update on the Okanagan Biodiversity Conservation strategy.

Discussion followed that the strategy had been endorsed as a planning tool by the province, as well as by several local governments.

## **8. OKANAGAN WATER INDICATORS – INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Jatel gave a presentation about water sustainability indicators in the Okanagan. The presentation looked at a number of indicators used by the World Wildlife Fund. A limitation with macro-indicators is that they are not that informative at the sub-basin level.

Dr. Sears reported that she has been doing some interviews with local governments in which some of the answers are thematic and could help to develop indicators.

Discussion followed regarding various organizations use of indicators and how they could help to inform the development of valley-wide indicators.

Mr. Jatel will send invitations to form a sub-committee on indicators.

**9. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES**

Ms. Clark asked about the reorganization within the Ministry of Environment?

Mr. Furness replied that he could probably get someone here to give an update at some point. It is really complicated now, since it is sector based.

Mr. Furness: Yesterday I was part of a qualified professional workshop, and one of the intents of it was to look at QEPs, and Lora Neild updated them on the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel. She asked who could identify the Zebra and Quagga mussel, and only 3 out of 53 could confidently identify them. So I wonder if we could add some information about how to identify them.

Mr. Edwards: ORRI is moving forward a bit, there is the latest proposal to put up signage on the trail. There is also a Wolsley Dam meeting tomorrow for the entrainment project.

Mr. Edwards offered to get a presenter on the new Federal Fisheries Act that came out.

There is a recreational Fisheries Partnership program. They've just announced that the program will be extended through the next two cycles.

Dr. Guy: CWRA is hosting a workshop in May, about Dam safety, more details to follow.

**10. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be at the Best Western Inn on April 10, 2014.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

**Moved by Rob Birtles**

**Seconded by Renee Clark**

***“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of March 13, 2014 be adjourned.”***

**CARRIED**

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

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**Chair**

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**Executive Director**