

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 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 Fruit Growers Association	Denise MacDonald
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Andrew Petersen
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Ecosystems)	Grant Furness
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Vernon	Rob Miles (alt.)
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ian Rogalski
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Doug Edwards
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carol Luttmner
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Natasha Lukey
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Harold Waters (alt.)
UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer

**Regrets**

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Resource Mgmt)	Ray Crampton
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft
City of Kelowna	Jason Ough
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles, Vice-Chair
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
Water Supply Association of BC	Toby Pike

**STAFF:**

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

**GUESTS:**

BRAES Institute	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
BRAES Institute	Lael Parrott
District of West Kelowna	Carol Zanon
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
UBC Okanagan	Natasha Neumann
UBC Okanagan	Craig Nichols

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

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

**2. APPROVE AGENDA**

Moved by Brian Guy

Seconded by Hans Buchler

*“That the agenda for the April 10, 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 March 13, 2014, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

A couple small amendments were noted.

**Moved by Bernie Bauer**

**Seconded by Brian Guy**

***“That the minutes from the March 13, 2014 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”***

**CARRIED**

### **4. BOARD REPORT**

Dr. Warwick Sears provided an update on the most recent board meeting and a report from Greater Vernon Water’s Zee Marcolin on the well contamination case in North Okanagan, the resulting lawsuit and lessons learned.

The board continued its discussion on the discharge of wastewater from the Ok Falls treatment plant. The plan was to originally discharge into a wetland before it entered into Okanagan River, but because of opposition by Canadian Wildlife Service, alternative solutions are being looked at.

Other topics included: the Water Stewardship Council committee’s proposed OBWB submission to the Water Sustainability Act proposal, WCQI grants were awarded, a wrap-up of Canada Water Week events was given. There was also lengthy discussion around the recent close-call at the Osoyoos border with a boat carrying quagga mussels and a possible citizen engagement plan by the OBWB to assist the public in connecting with their MLAs and MPs and ask for action on the mussel issue.

Noting the slow response from senior governments on invasive zebra/quagga mussels, Chair Dobson asked about discussions with Oroville, WA. Dr. Warwick Sears responded she was unaware of any, but that it was a good idea.

### **5. GUEST SPEAKER: Lael Parrott**

Okanagan Institute for Biodiversity, Resilience, and Ecosystem Services (UBCO - BRAES)

Mr. Jatel introduced Ms. Parrott who gave an overview of BRAES, noting it is a research institute with 22 UBCO faculty members. The focus of the research is on the connection between the natural environment and our interaction with it. Among the various topics looked at are water conservation and quality, she noted.

Members of BRAES have conducted research on Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels, Endocrine Disrupting Compounds and their impact on fish and humans, forest hydrology, kokanee, the impact of mulching and irrigation methods on GHG emissions in agriculture, and much more.

The institute is interested in research collaborations and members of the WSC were invited to get in touch if there’s a topic they would like to collaborate on. BRAES also holds seminars and public events, she added. The institute is teaming up with the OBWB to offer a water and biodiversity research forum Sept 16-17, 2014 at Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna.

In response to questions, Ms. Parrott noted there are three institutes on campus: BRAES which looks at the environment, Institute for Healthy Living which looks at human health, and the Okanagan Sustainability Institute which focuses on the built environment and regional economic development.

## **6. STRATEGIC WATER PRIORITIES FOR THE OKANAGAN**

Mr. Jatel introduced discussion, noting the previous month's discussion around the water priorities of the various groups represented at the WSC, and the plan to now review the council's 2008 Sustainable Water Strategy – Action Plan 1.0 in light of the new Water Sustainability Act (WSA) and other issues that have come up since '08 (e.g. invasive species like mussels). A potential Action Plan 2.0 would also consider the OBWB's recently adopted Strategic Plan and the ongoing Water Supply and Demand Project.

Another priority, he added, is the potential for a local Water Sustainability Plan – something discussed in the new WSA. Council members discussed best approaches in possibly moving forward on a plan, with larger visions and smaller plans to follow up on.

There was discussion about other possible priorities. Proposed changes to the ALR were noted and the council's interest in water for food. It was suggested that perhaps ALC Chair Richard Bullock could come talk to the council.

As for additional priorities for the council, a plan for an Ag Water Reserve was also noted. Source protection plans that consider the whole watershed were also mentioned.

With a joint council/board meeting on June 3, it was suggested that a set of priorities be developed to take to the meeting and, perhaps, council should ask if the board has priorities.

Other comments:

- Learn from successful Source Protection Plans done in RDNO and follow the template in other communities;
- Share successes from Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant program projects with other communities.

The following exited the meeting following a coffee break:

Dr. Guy, Mssrs. Miles, Rogalski, O'Keefe, Waters, Nichols, Ms. Bakelaar, Clark and Zanon.

## **7. THE BC WATER USE REPORTING CENTRE/WATER RENT COLLECTION**

Mr. Jatel gave an overview of the BC WURC program, an online tool purveyors can use to report water use and meet provincial requirements.

The program was developed between the OBWB, working with local water utilities, and the province. The Water Board is now recommending it be adopted province-wide to meet their need for reporting under the new WSA, he explained.

Mr. Jatel went on to lay out a proposal to the province to create a new Crown corporation to collect water rents (paid by large water users e.g. utilities) which could be used to help pay for items within the WSA. There was some question about the creation of a new Crown corporation vs having FLNRO continue to collect the rents, even if it means hiring more staff. Council members cautioned about the potential for future privatization and warned that although it allows for an administrative disconnect there isn't a political disconnect.

There was some discussion about water rent rates and the province's discussion paper "Pricing B.C. Water." Chair Dobson noted that rents are currently too low to effectively manage the system or to pay for the commitments noted in the WSA.

## 8. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Ms. Luttmer: the OCCP and SOSCP are co-hosting a joint AGM next Wed. at the EECO Centre in Kelowna.
- Dr. Bauer: UBCO is holding an “Aspire – envisioning our future” meeting on campus which may include discussions around water.
- Mr. Waters: SOFA is working with FLNRO on a forest management plan which we can forward.
- Mr. Edwards: DFO will be announcing funding approvals next week, including nine projects in B.C. (nothing in the Okanagan). The next grant intake is in May.
- Mr. Rogalski: the Council of the Federation awarded WSC member Lee Hesketh and the Farmland Riparian Interface Stewardship Council with the Water Stewardship Award for B.C.
- Ms. Clark: RDNO has moved from using the Okanagan Irrigation Management (OKIM) program for metering ag users to a different program. Current policies state that if an ag user goes over their allocation they pay a domestic rate so it is important to them to ensure the program is operating properly. We are keeping an eye on potential flooding in our area.
- Mr. Buchler: BCAC is reviewing the application of manure and how to reduce impacts on surface water. Long-term storage is also being discussed. There is also concern about land being removed from the ALR.
- Dr. Neumann: As a consultant with ONA, we are looking at the hydrological connection around Wood Lake and the impact on fish and water supply for people. A software tool was also created which allows us to review nutrient chemistry, helping parties make informed decisions on how to help fish. An annual report on the project is available. I am also working with Tricia Brett re: the Ok Falls treatment plant and possible options to address the disposal of treated wastewater.
- Mr. Allard: the 2014 CANWELL conference is being held June 10-14 in Kelowna with topics including fracking. The technical agenda is available.
- Ms. McDonald: a test orchard in Oliver, owned by BCFGa, has been leased to a private grower for the last 15 years. The lease is coming up and the group is looking at various options, including perhaps research on 90 ac. with 60 of them planted.
- Ms. Neilsen: The Summerland Research Centre celebrates its 100 years on Oct 3-4 with various events, including a lecture series. More info. to come.
- Chair Dobson: There are reports of flooding because of watershed issues just north of Okanagan where a channel filled and diverted the flow.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: The OBWB is hiring three interns this summer, one for communications, another to assist with Water Stewardship projects and a heavy equipment operator. Also, I was appointed to the Real Estate Foundation board.
- Ms. Jackson: Canada Water Week celebrations included the screening of Watermark – where there was a great turnout. There was also the re-launch of the OKWaterWise Challenge contest for youth, as well as the annual panel discussion – this year MCed by Phil Johnson of AM1150. The panel event began with the presentation of a Water Leadership Award to recently retired journalist Judie Steeves. Work on the Don’t Move a Mussel and Make Water Work campaigns are also underway.

**10. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be at the Best Western Inn on May 8, 2014.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

**Moved by Bernie Bauer**

*“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of April 10, 2014 be adjourned.”*

**CARRIED**

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

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Chair

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Executive Director