

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2014, AT BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles, Vice-Chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Fruit Growers Association	Denise MacDonald
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alt.)
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Andrew Petersen
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Resource Mgmt)	Bob Warner
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Zoe Kirk (alt.)
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Murray Wilson (alt.)
Water Supply Association of BC	Darwyn Kutney (alt.)

Regrets

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, Chair
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
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
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carol Luttmer
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer

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:

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Scott Smith (alt.)
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko (alt.)
BC Dairy Association	Lorne Hunter
BRAES UBC Institute	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
City of Coldstream	Maria Besso
Freelance writer	Judie Steeves
Kelowna Capital News	Jennifer Smith
Member of the public	Glenn Sinclair
Member of the public - Spallumcheen	Al Price
Okanagan Basin Water Board	Doug Findlater
Steele Springs Waterworks	Brian Upper
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
UBC Okanagan	John Wagner
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat
	Nicole Louiseize
Westcoast CED Consulting	Victor Cumming
Westcoast CED Consulting	Kate Cumming

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Moved by Denise Neilsen

Seconded by Remi Allard

“That the agenda for the May 8, 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 April 10, 2014, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

Two small amendments were noted.

Moved by Hans Buchler

Seconded by Bob Warner

“That the minutes from the April 10, 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, noting a presentation by Wayne Wilson with Central Okanagan Land Trust and an Okanagan water historian.

Also discussed:

- A joint council/board meeting will be held June 3 at Penticton Lakeside Resort. There will be presentations on recent work by Okanagan Nation Alliance and on source protection.
- Staff are working with IHA for a blue green algae protocol in response to an issue in Osoyoos last September and a recognition that procedures were needed.
- A report was provided on a proposed Water Allocation Licencing Tool for the province.
- A summary of UBCO’s Endocrine Disruptor research is being created to have as a reference for the public and will be available on OBWB and Okanagan WaterWise websites.
- An update was given on work to prevent invasive mussels from coming into the Okanagan including a citizen engagement initiative on the www.DontMoveAMussel.ca website, boat launch signs for local governments, research into a possible decontamination unit for the Okanagan, letters sent to the provincial and federal ministers, MLAs and MPs asking that pending legislation be passed to allow Canada Border Services agents to stop and inspect watercraft and that provincial inspection stations be set up. Letters were also sent to municipalities in south Okanagan asking for support.
- The Board voted to send a recommendation to the provincial government that they take on the BC Water Use Reporting Centre webtool for use throughout the province. A separate commission was recommended to run the tool and collect water rents which could be used to help fund the new water related services outlined in the new Water Sustainability Act.
- Directors also voted to send a letter to IHA in support of Urban Development Institute concerns regarding a new water reporting strategy.

5. GUEST SPEAKER: John Janmaat – UBC Okanagan

Changing agriculture and water pricing policies in B.C. – exploring Okanagan priorities

Dr. Janmaat provided an overview of B.C.'s new Water Sustainability Act noting its objectives, if implemented, are going to be expensive. In determining how to pay for it, the province released a "Pricing B.C.'s Water" document, he added.

Funds are proposed to be collected in part through fees, water rentals, charges for applications and services provided. While the proposal is based on principles for conservation, added Dr. Janmaat, the suggested rates are likely too low to encourage conservation. The province outlines its principles for pricing include: simplicity, fairness and equity, implications for water users, impact on water resource, cost recovery, efficiency, food security and public health.

Dr. Janmaat went on to provide an overview of the Agricultural Land Reserve and the Agricultural Land Commission Act, how it began and changes through the years, including boundary changes, the allowed by golf courses for a time, strengthening of local government in decisions for a period, and then providing the Oil and Gas Commission authority to approve changes.

B.C. farmers produce 48% of all food that people eat in the province, he said, adding our population is growing faster than our ability to produce food.

Currently the purpose of the ALC is to preserve ag land and encourage farming on this land in collaboration with other community interests. The proposed changes include dividing the province into two zones (1 – Island, Okanagan and South Coast, 2 – everything else). It would also establish six regional panel and applications must go to those panels for final say. Panel members would be appointed based on merit. It was noted that panels will have the option to bring items of provincial significance to a B.C.-wide panel.

The province has said the changes are based on a 2010 Attorney General report that outlined problems with the existing ALC: that it was not encouraging farming, and that there was poor oversight of delegated authorities to ensure land was protected. However, Dr. Janmaat argued the changes don't seem to address these issues.

There was lengthy discussion by council members around the proposed changes, including a lack of recognition that northern B.C. has quality farm land that will likely improve as a result of climate change and a warming in the area. The need to promote food security and support for farming was also stated.

In response to Dr. Janmaat's comments regarding the WSA, it was suggested that having a system of different user groups and people paying for what they use is a good way to promote conservation.

Other comments:

- B.C. in the future may need to look at desalination to meet its water needs
- The Okanagan needs to adopt a different water ethic re: outdoor watering, similar to other parts of the world
- There needs to be greater effort to twin water systems and divide ag and domestic use, and price water appropriately
- Non-conforming use on ag lands needs to be addressed
- Perhaps local governments need to look at ways to coordinate land and provide incentives to encourage farming

6. PLANNING: Joint June Board and Council meeting

Mr. Cummings gave an overview of the meeting format for the joint council-board meeting on June 3 at Penticton Lakeside Resort. Members were asked to provide input on source protection – what two issues and/or questions they want to discuss at the joint meeting.

7. BC WATER USE REPORTING CENTRE (BC WURC) STRATEGIC WATER PRIORITIES FOR THE OKANAGAN

Mr. Jatel reported to the council about a Board proposal submitted to the province, recommending that the province incorporate the BC WURC web tool, piloted in the Okanagan and Nanaimo, as a method to track and report water use in B.C. (surface and ground, by utilities and farmers), as well as a tool to collect water rents (water license fees). These rents could then be used to help fund new services outlined in the new Water Sustainability Act. Different models were identified including a recommendation that a new commission be formed to independently take-on some of the new service delivery needs identified in Bill 18, or alternately a better resourced division of staff in the existing Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations could take on these new service delivery needs.

There was some discussion about the proposal with strong support voiced by some of the council members.

8. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Ms. Bakelaar: OBWB funding for recycling water project at RDCO's wastewater treatment plant saw a large reduction in water used (75%). The regional district is looking to approve the Regional Growth Strategy this summer.
- Ms. Clark: RDNO's Duteau Creek assessment plan has been forwarded to its advisory committee and will then go to the board for review. We're pleased to see that the Forest Practices Board review of forestry work in watersheds and its recommendations reflects the same concepts as outlined in our recent response plan to protect watersheds.
- Dr. Fan: I have been invited to presenting my paper on Okanagan water sustainability at the international Symposium on Environmental Sustainability in Philadelphia in August.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: The OBWB and UBCO BRAES will be presenting a Water and Biodiversity Research Forum Sept. 16-17 in Kelowna.
- Mr. Petersen: provincial staff are creating regulations for ag and range to address water use for the WSA.
- Ms. MacDonald: BCFGAs has some concerns about unmanaged pests emerging on hobby farms and the impact it may have on commercial growers. This is an emerging problem in relation to discussions around pesticide use.
- Mr. Buchler: An Oliver-based campground society that hosts farm labourers recently lost its water supply. The group is seeking infrastructure funding. Anyone with suggestions is asked to contact me.
- Ms. Jackson: As part of Drinking Water Week, two school classes were named winners of the Okanagan WaterWise Challenge: a Grade 1 class from Okanagan Landing Elementary in Vernon and a Gr. 7 class from Summerland Middle School. Work is underway to relaunch our valley-wide outdoor water conservation campaign www.MakeWaterWork.ca with 15 local government/utility partners, as well as a MWW plant palette with OXA and Bylands. Staff are also working to re-launch the www.DontMoveAMussel.ca campaign and add a citizen engagement component.
- Mr. Upper: Silver Springs received a grant from OBWB which has resulted in 36,000 cu m water saved.
- Mr. Birtles: IHA is working with Dr. Janmaat and UBCO on water system sustainability with small systems. The Forest Practices Board's recent report reviewed 48 of 131 community watersheds and was a 10 year report card on how licencees are doing. There were several recommendations

including those for protection of drinking water. The issue of manure entering into water systems and impacting aquifers was noted. We're looking to see BMPs introduced for manure management.

- Mr. Jatel: Okanagan Wetland Strategy Phase 1 is wrapping up, aimed at addressing the loss of 95% of the valley's wetlands. Part of the work includes working with BCWF and local Fish and Game Clubs to find priority areas for restoration.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be a joint council/board meeting on June 3, 2014 at Penticton Lakeside Resort on June 3, 2014.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Moved by Andrew Petersen

"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of May 8, 2014 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director