

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

AMENDED MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, June 2, 2015, AT Summerland Resort Hotel, Summerland, B.C.

OWSC MEMBERS:

Present

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.
BC Agriculture Council
BC Fruit Growers Association
BC Ground Water Association
BC Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource Mgmt)
BC Water Supply Association
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8
Interior Health Authority
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board
Regional District of Central Okanagan
Regional District of North Okanagan

Don Dobson
Hans Buchler
Denise MacDonald
Marta Green
Grant Furness
Toby Pike
Doug Flintoft
Lorne Davies (alt)
Rob Birtles
Carol Luttmmer
David O'Keefe
Margaret Bakelaar
Renee Clark

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch
BC Cattlemen's Association
BC Ground Water Association
BC Ministry of Agriculture
BC Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (OSNR)
Canadian Water Resources Association
City of Kelowna
City of Vernon
Environment Canada – West and North
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Okanagan College
Okanagan Forest Sector
Okanagan Nation Alliance
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
UBC Okanagan

Denise Neilsen
Lee Hesketh
Remi Allard
Andrew Petersen
Ray Crampton/Shawn Reimer (alt)
Brian Guy/Dwayne Meredith
Andrew Reader/Jason Ough
Rob Miles
Ian Rogalski
Doug Edwards
Leif Burge
Kerry Rouck
Natasha Lukey/Zoe Masters
Evelyn Riechert/Roger Houston
Bernie Bauer

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director
OBWB, Office and Project Manager
OBWB, Communications Director
OBWB, Technical Writer

Anna Warwick Sears
Nelson Jatel
James Littley
Corinne Jackson
Ted Wannop

OBWB MEMBERS:

District of West Kelowna
Okanagan Nation Alliance
Regional District of the Central Okanagan
Regional District of the Central Okanagan
Regional District of the North Okanagan
Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen
Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen

Doug Findlater, OBWB Chair
Alan Peatt
Tracy Gray
James Baker
Juliette Cunningham
Peter Waterman
Sue McKortoff

GUESTS:

Okanagan Nation Alliance
Regional District of the Central Okanagan
UBC Okanagan
Water's Edge
Westcoast CED Consulting

Mark Watt
Nancy Fuller
Allan Peatt
Chris Radford
John Janmaat
Jillian Tamblyn
Karol Hansma

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Nelson Jatel called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. and welcomed members and guests. The meeting was turned over to Rob Birtles, OWSC Chair, and Doug Findlater, OBWB Chair.

2. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Doug Findlater, OBWB Chair, welcomed all members of OWSC and Board members, extending his appreciation of the role that the OWSC plays and the advice that is provided to the Board. Introductions were made around the room. Rob Birtles welcomed OBWB members to the meeting indicating that this meeting provides a great opportunity OWSC members and OBWB members to get together and recognize all of the members' interests.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

**Moved by Marta Green
Seconded by Don Dobson**

“That the agenda for the June 2, 2015 meeting of the Joint Okanagan Water Stewardship Council and Okanagan Basin Water Board be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Couple of errors were noted with the May 14th OWSC meeting minutes:

Denise McDonald noted that fruit growers are “investigating areas of expansion for cherry growers”. This is a process that is just starting. It has not been completed as indicated in the minutes.

Rob Birtles noted that Algo on page 8 should be Algal.

Rob Birtles also noted that the spelling of his last name was incorrect throughout the minutes.

Corinne Jackson noted that Bylands was spelled wrong on page 3 and that the short film documenting the mussel threat can be found on the Make Water Work website.

Moved by Don Dobson

Seconded by Marta Green

“That the minutes from the May 14, 2015 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

5. BOARD REPORT

Anna Warwick Sears shared some of the highlights of the morning meeting of the OBWB. One of the main parts of the meeting was the audited financial statements which were adopted and passed. This is a positive milestone for OBWB to get a clean audit. Right now staff is working on the Annual Report for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2015 which is being presented at the Annual General Meeting on September 4, 2015. The AGM is a public event held at the Rotary Centre for the Arts. More information will be distributed soon. This year's theme is “It Starts with Water”.

Regarding source protection, one of the OBWB directors alerted the Board of an article in the Morning Star regarding off road activity. It is getting extremely bad on the Duteau Creek plateau. The Board had a great deal of discussion and will be writing a letter to FLNRO about the need for increasing enforcement and levying stiff public fines and possibly public shaming. RDNO will be arranging meetings at UBCM to address this growing concern. The Board will be revisiting their statement about multi-use of Crown Land in the watersheds and toughening up and putting more emphasis on water protection. OBWB will also be having discussions with other RDs about what kind of collective initiative can be done around this issue. Renee Clark has spent time looking into the Land Act and WSA and feels there are some portions of them and the Drinking Water Protection Act that they should be moving forward on. The Land Act gives the ability to look at license of occupation or leasing the land. The Forest Practice Board put out an audit about a year ago that talked about community watersheds and some of the issues one of which was under the Forest and Range Act where a lot of improvements need to be done. How can we protect the water by being a bit more prescriptive on what is being done on the land around the reservoirs. Anna and Renee will follow up and provide information back.

Regarding Staff reports, Nelson gave a detailed report on the water supply webinar where there were some very interesting presentations. In terms of operations and grants, there were a couple of new grants to the City of Vernon for sewage extension. There was also an announcement that on September 3 at the Laurel Packing House there will be a Workshop of the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant program with a lot of networking and celebrating of past grants awarded. Corinne provided a great report on the communication department's ongoing programs, of special note this year is the new MWW plants program in partnership with

Bylands Nursery and other's throughout the valley.

6. **Committee Reports**

The Environmental Flow committee is planning to meet next week. The agenda and invites are going out soon. One of the key things on the agenda will be hydrometric monitoring installation priorities for the next couple of years. They are not planning a groundwater meeting but will check with Marta and Hans to see whether they should get together and formalize thoughts around some items. One of the things that has come up in Penticton is an internal competition for research around ground water to gear up for the licensing framework. There is a standing request to forward research ideas to Ministry of Environment, Penticton office.

Nelson did a quick review of the structure of the sub-committees for the OBWB. The OWSC meetings are a great place to share ideas but not as great for being able to really get into the meatier topics. OWSC will often form sub-committees that are part of the Strategic Plan. The SP is just being formalized and in September the question will be put to Council as to which priority committees will move forward.

7. **OKANAGAN WETLAND STRATEGY PHASE II (Jillian Tamblyn)**

Phase 1 of the Okanagan Wetland Strategy involved collecting together a mass of different data sets throughout the Okanagan and prioritizing them. There is a high level of wetland loss in the Okanagan. From the 1980's to 2010, there has been about a 38% conversion of wetlands to other uses. While Phase 1 involved public outreach, data collection, prioritization, and mapping of Okanagan wetlands, Phase 2 includes two years of hands-on wetland restoration and rehabilitation. The objectives of Phase 2 include: action (projects on the ground); communication and outreach (raising the profile of wetlands); data management (have brought together a lot of different resources and now have to figure out how to improve the database and manage it over the long term); and collaboration. They have had funding through Environment Canada and joint applications with ONA to the National Wetland Conservation Fund. Currently, they have proposals in and are hoping for some good news soon to continue with some more projects.

The first project to be completed was McLachlan Lake, between Summerland and Peachland in the upper watershed area, which was being impacted by ATVs and cattle. There was an existing tenure in the area that required working with a lot of partners to fence in the wetland. They will be checking back this spring to see how it is doing.

One of the major partners that they have been working with a lot work is BC Wildlife Federation and their program around wetlands – education and restoration projects. Jillian joined them on a project at Clarence Fulton Secondary school in Vernon which is a large wetland that was not in the database. The wetland is now mapped and added to the database.

They have also partnered with MFLNRO to fence off Stink Lake which is a South Okanagan Grasslands protected area. This site has three different tenures and different times that they require access to the wetland. It has been a complicated project as it required three different access points and they have had to fly in all of the equipment. There have been further challenges with water levels and precipitation this year.

They have been involved in work on Ritchie Lake for a few years now. It was initiated, previously, due to cattle and off road vehicle use. The area has been fenced off and has started to recover and as a result of the success an extension of the fencing has been completed. The area is also an important ungulate winter range and has been the focus of EDNA where water samples can be taken to determine the presence of certain species. In this wetland, tiger salamanders, which are endangered, have been discovered.

Jillian attended the BCWF Wetlandkeepers workshop and gave a presentation on the Wetlands Strategy. There were lots of eager participants and a really diverse age group and backgrounds.

With regards to data management, they have put in proposals to refine the database for the information they do have. They are working on where to host that database and they are looking at ways to add and share information with the hopes of having a formalized data management approach.

They are planning for more on the ground projects for the fall and spring based on funding. She is working on some policy projects looking at the protection of wetlands and the ALR. They are working on a story website which takes the reader through the wetlands of the Okanagan and is aimed at youth and those interested in finding out more about wetlands. Phase III will be starting up next year which is the strategy development phase.

Q: How are they prioritizing projects? In the first year, they understood they would have to take opportunities as they arose on the ground due to the small window of opportunity available. They have a smaller steering committee and have looked at having a representation throughout the

valley with a variety of different types of wetlands. They are looking at opportunities that can be higher profile for the next year. So areas that are higher profile where people can see what is happening on the ground and where there are partnerships in place. They are also looking at different types of projects.

Q: With the areas that have been fenced, did they have to replant or did they just regenerate naturally? If they haven't been impacted for too long of a time then there is usually a seed bed available in the soil but this is not always the case. Overuse, invasives, etc. cause there to be issues with natural regeneration.

8. ONA INITIATIVES (Al Peatt)

One of the unique characteristics of the Wetland Strategy is the partnership with ONA. ONA is essentially a tribal council consisting of 7 Canadian Indian Bands and the Colville Confederated Tribes. The territory is an international one. The nation extends across the border. One of the main differences between the US tribes and the Canadian tribes is that the Canadian reserves are more or less postage stamps while the Colville reservation is a little over 1 million acres. As a bit of background, the Okanagan is a Syilx Nation. The root of that word means an intertwining (i.e., different strands of a rope all twined together and collectively there is strength in that rope). Entrenched in Okanagan/Syilx tradition is the element of care and respect for the land and that plants and animals are, in all essence, relatives to the people meaning they can only survive with the help of those plants and animals and what they offered. The way the people show respect to the plants and animals is to use them, care for them and ensure they are carried on in the future which, essentially, is a conservation biology ethic.

ONA is developing a water strategy of its own but there is a great desire to be collaborative and show leadership around natural resource management. The document is still in draft. There is a wetlands initiative that is a subset of the water strategy. They are collaborating with OBWB on the initiative and Jillian on the implementation of the wetland projects. The initiative has great promise. The desire of ONA is to care for the land and develop it; engage Syilx youth in some of the projects and encourage an opportunity to learn and apply stewardship/caregiving duties/responsibilities.

Pictures were shown that had been taken within the last six weeks from a pond located on the Penticton IR between the flood control channel and the Penticton Airport documenting a number

of species thriving there. The pond has a long history of being used as a winter pasture area. It is their showcase pond within their National Wetlands Conservation funding and other collaborative funding for species at risk.

Penticton Indian Band brought in ONA to help look at issues arising with the blockage of the pathway for Painted Turtles getting to their nesting grounds from the Oxbow by the airport. With funding from OBWB and Ministry of Transportation they came up with an idea for gridded slots inserted in the fence to allow most painted turtles to pass. This has not been done before to his knowledge. This study has allowed them to trapped turtles and put radio tags on them to allow them to study the turtles' movements. A local farmer has helped them out by harrowing a path alongside the fence.

There are many significant wetlands that have had various impacts to them and there are lots of opportunities to help restore and bring back the values that have been lost over time. From the Nation's perspective, this is highly critical to their culture. Over time, the Nation will continue to build its efforts around natural resource management and expand outward in terms of wetland creation and bringing back riparian values.

Local government has a tremendous opportunity to up the bar a little bit in terms of influencing land development and how these areas are treated in the first place. The Nation will want to be involved in collaboration, leadership and stewardship. There is a National Wetlands Fund Proposal in place for the coming year and they have received multiyear funding under AFSAR to start the process of restorative planning for the site and there is a good opportunity for collaborative efforts. In terms of opportunities on the site, he sees a restored cottonwood stand, restored riparian vegetation, collaborative fencing project and ultimately having a riparian forest and providing a showcase. In the community strategy, there has been some identification of areas for species at risk.

Q: Are there any plans/opportunity for an interpretive centre? There is a plan for a kiosk and work is being done on getting interpretive information together.

Q: How much cattle access is going on in the wetland? How damaged is the wetland? Are large amounts of the Oxbow being protected? Or are cattle accessing most of the Oxbow and the numbers of wildlife show how rich the wildlife is there? The area is heavily used by the cattle and it is actually shocking how diverse the wildlife is that use the site.

Nelson Jatel brought forward further information on the development of a new website, briefly touch on in Jillian's presentation, called okanaganwetlands.ca. The first prototype was displayed on the overhead. It has been designed for kids as an educational tool but will have a broader audience as well. It is intended to be geographic in nature and will contain links to various wetlands throughout the Okanagan with pictures and a description (provided in English, French, and Syilx) of the wetland. It will be unique in that it will provide exposure to the Syilx language and culture but will also allow students and others to take pictures and use the hashtag to post the picture on the website. 90% done with 12 wetlands almost complete. These 12 are the closest to schools and they are hoping with additional funding they will be able to grow from the original 12.

9. Council/Board Discussion

The Council/Board discussion is an opportunity for members to bring forward items for discussion. Renee Clark was asked about NORD's recent issues with Source Water Protection. Over the past few years, NORD has been becoming more and more concerned with the growing amount of activity on their dam and recently had some conversation with Ian Maclean (Recreation and Trails BC), Kyle Beadman (Natural Resource Officer), and the Senior Dam Inspector about this activity and dam safety and liability as dams are impacted and fail. Who is responsible for dam failure? As dam owners that would be their responsibility but how do they protect the dams when they don't own the land? How do they create more awareness? Their strategy has been to put up some large signs on the dams about staying off the dams and if any activity is seen to contact the Tips line and RAPP in the hopes of making the public more aware that it is their duty to report. As well, they put an article in the paper to make people aware that these are community watersheds and activities on the land near the reservoir affect their drinking water. They have had calls from CBC and Infotel.com. The discussion is ongoing regarding strategies that can be used and tools that are available but it was reported that there were over 100 rigs around the Grizzly Dam area during the long weekend (there are no rec. sites at Grizzly and Spec Lake has 7 sites but there were over 17 rigs there by Friday afternoon). This is a real issue as there are 56 community watersheds where there are dams and drinking water stored for the communities. This brings forth the question as to whether this is just a North Okanagan problem or one throughout the Okanagan Valley. They are looking for some ideas for moving forward and understanding how to deal

with these issues as people continue to recreate around community watersheds.

Toby Pike commented on the regulatory aspect and the designation of a community watershed. In the current legislation that designation doesn't really get any traction but under forestry provisions there is certain conduct that forest companies and users have to exercise when it comes to community watersheds and this might be key in trying to tie into regulations under the WSA and the Drinking Water Protection Act. The Province is in the middle of developing a new system for natural resource permitting where they are trying to streamline the FrontCounter BC Online Application process.

Grant Furness – have been dealing with off road vehicle use for at least a decade. What is evident is that the type and amount of use is increasing dramatically.

Q) Off road vehicle licensing program – came into effect June 1st with three things: have to wear a helmet, vehicle to be licensed, minimum age requirement.

Q) Is there a master recreation plan for the Okanagan?

Q) With regards to the WSA do they know about this as a problem? The understanding is that WSA will not cover these issues.

10. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Findlater (OBWB, District West Kelowna): pass.
- Ms. Warwick Sears (OBWB): pass.
- Ms. Jackson (OBWB): MWW plant collection has been launched. MWW contest is on with \$8500 in prizes committed by Kelownagardens.com, Bylands, Pro Source Irrigation, and Eco Turf. Don't Move a Mussel is putting out a news release about invasive species awareness month and the province's three-year \$1.3-million Don't Move a Mussel program. Last month, the OBWB passed a position statement calling for proper (permanent) inspection stations at the Alberta borders; that the Federal government work harder/faster to get their regulations in place for border patrol to stop and inspect; and that OBWB feels it is not their responsibility to take on protection of our lakes once mussels enter.
- Ms. Cunningham (RDNO): pass
- Ms. McKortoff (RDOS): inviting all OWSC members to the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum (Oct 7-9, 2015) in Osoyoos.
- Mr. Martin (RDOS): interesting and illuminating

- discussions of the issues that the OWSC has to deal with. Feels the concept of a Master Recreation Plan is something that should be addressed.
- Ms. McDonald (BDFGA): just recently participated in an exercise with a member with that had overused their allocation. Through those meetings, would like to recommend that water purveyors work with the industry to help extreme case water users come into line. Feels that better protocols need to be developed in the valley to deal with those who overuse to help them along.
 - Mr. O'Keefe (OMREB): pass.
 - Mr. Peatt (ONA): pleasure to be here.
 - Mr. Furness (FLNRO): brief update from the Environmental Flow committee - tried to establish something at a regional level for the Thompson Okanagan region but didn't get that off the ground so they (Rich and himself) have decided to join the provincial committee.
 - Ms. Tamblyn (Okanagan Wetland Strategy): pass.
 - Ms. Fuller (guest): good to be here and learn what is going on.
 - Mr. Radford (RDCO): CO continues to work on flood protection plan. They are putting together a scope of work terms of reference and will be moving forward on Phase 1. They continue to work on water quality plans and for the water systems. Another project they are working on is public engagement around water pricing. They looking at implementing new user rates. They just recently went through legitimization of water extraction off of Mission Creek and have obtained a water license. With regard to waste water, they continue to look at potential partnership with Bylands Nursery. The past couple of years they have had a summer student working with waste water collection helping to ensure that regulatory by-laws are enforced. The Okanagan Lake Collaborative Monitoring Agreement is an initiative put together a few years ago and it has been renewed for another 3 year term.
 - Mr. Flintoft (BCWF): pass.
 - Mr. Davies (BCWF): Go Fish in a Regional Park program is going on right now. The Okanagan Wetlands Institute/BCWF Wetlands Education Program is taking place from Sep 28 - Oct 4. Contact BCWF for details.
 - Mr. Buchler (BCAC): commented regarding the recreation issue indicating that there are still a fair number of people out there that are responsible and we have to be careful not to lump them all into the same category. He would be concerned if the outcome is prohibiting access to Crown land; maybe a kinder approach.
 - Ms. Luttmer (OCCP): their focus right now is to realize the vision and goals outlined in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Okanagan region. Working with OBWB on the Wetlands Strategy. Two other projects that they are working on are: the Allan Brooks Nature Centre/OSSS have secured \$54,000 for the next two years to work on outreach and stewardship projects; and working with RDNO on monitoring and evaluation for a regional growth strategy with the idea being to work towards basin wide indicators.
 - Ms. Clark (RDNO): First, in agreement with Mr. Buchler in that there is only about 2% of the population that is out there being destructive. She has been working on the Duteau watershed for almost 20 years and have found that they have done well with the designated use groups and there is a great understanding and support among these groups. It is the undesignated use group that has cropped up that they are hoping to come up with a good solution where they are not keeping people out of watershed. RDNO has a rain garden workshop happening tonight talking about water conservation.
 - Mr. Janmaat (UBCO): two projects of interest. One is working with the environmental planning group on environmental farms plans where you get landowners to coordinate together. The other is a hopeful project with the Urban Development Institute to find funds to see about investigating the impact of water quality on property values.
 - Ms. Green (BCGWA): ongoing private meetings with WSA people in Victoria. New regulations should be coming out soon.
 - Mr. Wannop (OBWB): pass.
 - Mr. Watt (): need to make sure everyone is talking the same lingo in terms of source water quality and protecting Okanagan Lake from the waste water discharges.
 - Mr. Pike (BCWSA): Province released a Recreational Trails Strategy for BC in 2010 and there was a draft proposal for how the Province was going to go about developing recreational trails but there wasn't any mention of source water protection in the entire document. There was a comment about helping growers stay within their allotments which could be an interesting initiative in terms of raising water use awareness amongst growers valley wide.
 - Mr. Jatel (OBWB): July 6-8 is the International Conference on Forest and Water at UBCO. One of the things that has become quite evident with the talks from other countries like China, Brazil, the Netherlands, is that the questions

being asked around watershed management very different between then the ones that are being asked here. It will be very interesting to get the different perspectives.

- Mr. Dobson (BCAPEG): with regard to the hydrometric network, he has been working on selecting a number of candidate stations to put together the framework for the program. The original goal was for five stations, dependent on funding, but if they are successful in funding they can move beyond five stations. They have also been doing work with Mr. Janmaat on a process to assist very small water suppliers to in conducting source protection plans in their water sheds. They have an idea to run some case study workshops in the Kootenays. There is effort being put into this to secure sources of funding to run this as a no cost event for 3-4 small water supply groups with the long term picture of having a tool to be used by small water suppliers across the province.
- Mr. Birtles (IHA): pass.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be on Thursday, September 10, 2015 from 12:30 to 4:30 pm at Okanagan Regional Library, 1430 KLO Road Kelowna.

12. ADJOURNMENT

On behalf of OBWB, Mr. Findlater thanked everyone for their attendance. There has been some interesting discussion and a lot of commonality.

Mr. Birtles extended thanks to all for their attendance as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Moved by Don Dobson

"That there being no further business, the joint meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council and Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 2, 2015 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director