

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, September 10, 2015, AT OKANAGAN REGIONAL LIBRARY, 1430 KLO ROAD, KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch
BC Fruit Growers Association
BC Ministry of Agriculture
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8
Canadian Water Resources Association
Canadian Water Resources Association
Environment Canada – West and North
Interior Health Authority
Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
Okanagan College
Okanagan Forest Sector
Regional District of North Okanagan
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
UBC Okanagan

Denise Neilsen
Denise MacDonald
Andrew Petersen
Lorne Davies (alt)
Brian Guy
Dwayne Meredith
Ian Rogalski
Rob Birtles (Chair)
Jeff Robinson
Allison MacMillan
Murray Wilson
Renee Clark
Zoe Kirk
Bernie Bauer

Regrets

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.
BC Agriculture Council
BC Cattlemen's Association
BC Ground Water Association
BC Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (OSNR)
BC Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (OSNR)
BC Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource Mgmt)
BC Water Supply Association
City of Kelowna
City of Vernon
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program
Okanagan College
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board
Okanagan Nation Alliance
Regional District of Central Okanagan

Don Dobson
Hans Buchler
Lee Hesketh
Remi Allard/Marta Green
Shawn Reimer (alt)
Ray Crampton
Grant Furness
Toby Pike
Jason Angus/Jason Ough
Rob Miles
Doug Edwards
Carol Luttmmer
Leif Burge
David O'Keefe
Natasha Lukey/Zoe Masters
Margaret Bakelaar

STAFF:

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

Anna Warwick Sears
Nelson Jatel
James Littley
Corinne Jackson

GUESTS:

BCFGA
Freelance Writer
UBC Okanagan
UBC Okanagan
Water Cycles
Westcoast CED Consulting

Dawn Ryan
Nancy Fuller
Natasha Neuman
Glen Lucas
Tom Walker
Craig Nichol
John Janmaat
Christine Mettler
Karol Hansma _____

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Rob Birtles called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

**Moved by Bernie Bauer
Seconded by Denise Neilsen**

***“That the agenda for the September 10, 2015 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”
CARRIED***

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Two errors or omissions were noted and have been corrected: 1) Margaret Bakelaar was in attendance at the June 2nd meeting, and 2) Denise MacDonald is no longer the alt. for BCFGa but the main representative.

**Moved by Andrew Petersen
Seconded by Ian Rogalski**

***“That the minutes from the June 2, 2015 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”
CARRIED***

4. BOARD REPORT—Dr. Anna Warwick Sears

The last OBWB meeting was short as it was just after the AGM. At the AGM, Julia Lew, certified water treatment plant operator, from the South Nevada Water Authority addressed the group on the adaptation of Quagga mussels in Lake Mead and all the different modifications they have had to do to their infrastructure; including approximately \$8 mil spent on a titanium pipe to carry water to stop the mussels from settling. Anna noted that some of the things that they are doing in Lake Mead won't work here in the Okanagan because of the chemistry of our water. Much of the focus in the Okanagan has been on preventing mussels from entering our waters so it was interesting/important to have someone discuss what happens when they have the invasive mussels.

At the Board meeting, the Board was given an opportunity and endorsed staff sending letters regarding the new national park in the South Okanagan and Water Board supporting the aspects of the National Park that are related to water source issues. The letter will be written and reviewed by the Board before it goes out.

They had an opportunity to comment on the BC Climate Leadership Plan. The comment period is open until September 14th. There are a number of

areas related to climate adaptation and things being worked on in the Okanagan.

The Board has proposed writing a letter to the Ministry of State regarding emergency preparedness. This comes from OBWB's involvement with the flood plain mapping working group.

A letter has been prepared for the comment period related to the WSA indicating what a good job has been done to date and encouraging forward movement in the area.

The Columbia River Treaty workshop is being held October 7th. The Board encourages all to attend.

Anna spoke on the Okanagan drought status. In the Thompson-Okanagan, we are still at a drought level 4. The Lower Mainland/Victoria areas were upgraded to a Level 3. FLNRO had a drought call yesterday and there are still a number of streams in the region that are on a watch list, i.e. Fortune Creek. Most of the regulation during this drought has been through section 9 of the Fish Protection Act which means they are looking especially at fish bearing streams. Anna has provided feedback, which will come out in her drought update, about the need to look more broadly at the factors of drought beyond fish, i.e., how much reservoir storage we have, and consider Agricultural droughts as well as fisheries droughts. The province has been doing a broader, higher level communication about the drought level 4 for the Thompson Okanagan area. They have done three drought calls giving updates on which streams are on which watch list but the Water Board has also been giving updates that are more of a local government level focus, interpreting what the drought means and what different water suppliers are doing to respond. There is a new drought communication web page on the OBWB website. Currently, Anna is working with Summit on a Gap Analysis of all the different drought plans and how they relate to the provincial drought response plan.

C. Jackson noted that OBWB also added information to the MWW website. They had drought messaging and links to utilities throughout the valley so residents could find what the water restrictions were.

D. Neilsen commented on the confusion of municipal drought levels versus provincial drought levels which have very different meanings. Anna responded indicating that this is one of the big gaps in the Okanagan drought response. OBWB will hopefully have an opportunity to attend the meeting in Victoria where they will be assessing what happened this year and provide feedback on the gap. The province didn't have a strategy for

communicating with local government and local governments didn't really know what to do with the declaration of drought level 4, if they even knew about it. This just shows that we weren't really ready for what happened this summer. As Nelson indicated, part of the problem is that there are two planning processes in conflict, one at a utility level and one provincial level, as both use the description of drought level 1-4 which makes things difficult. B. Bauer talked about how the province is doing what is expected of them within their mandate which is to raise the flag in terms of water levels in the streams but the challenge is, as individuals, we want to know how it affects us, i.e., can I water/wash my car/irrigate, etc. There needs to be a better understanding of the implications. That connection hasn't been communicated clearly. If the province goes to a level 4, how does that relate to municipalities/local water utilities? D. MacDonald - handing it down to the local purveyors is the logical area to manage the water but what is interesting is all the differences which makes it complicated. Going from Stage 1 to Stage 2 is different among various areas/utilities. Some kind of phased communication process needs to be worked out. B. Guy was involved with the Ministry of Agriculture and FLNRO in trying to triage the areas where they wanted to focus. He saw over the past month or so that even in the absence of enough information, or a plan, or a good communications strategy, the people that were involved in this crisis situation did a good job. There are lessons to be learned but under the circumstances they did do well.

C. Jackson heard from the various partners that the messaging about water conservation every summer may mean there is a greater understanding of the situation and people were, maybe, already thinking about it. It has been in the forefront of the media. Kelowna Now is asking the federal candidates about various water issues which suggests that people are aware of the problems. R. Clark - in 2006, the province put out for drought management plans and a lot of utilities didn't go forward with it. RDNO was able to put one together. In 2010, they utilized their drought management plan. This year was not critical for RDNO but looking at their drought management plan early. They had a 19% reduction with customers early on. They are looking ahead to snow pack this season and the effect that will have on next year's levels.

Agenda Amendment -N. Jatel talked about the Council Work Plan as the guest speaker had not yet arrived.

5. COUNCIL WORKPLAN (Nelson Jatel)

An early first draft of the work plan was completed this summer and has been reviewed by past OWSC chairs. They have given some feedback. OWSC members have the opportunity to read through the work plan and provide any comments, suggestions, revisions now. There will be another opportunity in October to review and put forth recommendations for committees that could be formed as a result of the work plan. The work plan is still missing the piece on how Council wants to move forward to be able to act on some of the issues that have been flagged as priorities.

One of the interesting things that came out of the meeting with the past Chairs was the idea that the working plans should not only reflect what is happening as the Council moves forward in each term but also to make sure they consider and recognize that many of the initiatives and projects have a history as well as long time scales. They need to be able to track what has been done in previous Councils and how they have responded to new and emerging issues but also addressing the long standing, large projects, i.e. source water protection.

The first section of the work plan is an introduction to the Council. The context and details have been moved to the web site (there is a new web page and a link to it is provided in the document). There is also a diagram that provides a visual for the relationship between the Board, Council, and projects. Section two looks at where the Council has come from, recent projects that have been completed and where they would like to go. Section three is the working plan: what do we want to do in the next 18 months as a Council. Key issues, key topics, and important questions are examined. This document supports and helps N. Jatel determine who should be invited as guest speakers to Council meetings. For the committees being formed, they will develop a one page description of their objectives that will be included in the appendix section. The document is very much in draft form and members are welcome to dissect the document and provide comments. Feedback can be given as written comments and emailed. Nelson has already received some comments and he is looking for more.

BCFGA DROUGHT POLICY: Advocating on behalf of the tree fruit sector (Glen Lucas)

Mr. Lucas is the General Manager of BCGFA. BCGFA is an industry association representing BC fruit growers' interests and activities through things like lobbying governments and providing services and products to growers. They are proposing some Agriculture Water policies to ensure a secure supply of water that is affordable. They have prepared a list of suggestions for the water purveyors to adopt. There are 550 growers under one organization. When they interact with the Regional Districts and Municipalities they are looking for some uniformity in regulations and policies/rules. With regards to water purveyors, there are different rules and regulations for Agriculture water use. BCGFA understand that there is a need for some differences but there should be some commonality. The hope is that the OWSC/OBWB will support and provide feedback on the Drought Policy in order to help develop a common approach among water purveyors/municipalities regarding water use restrictions. They are looking for input on the policies being put forth as to whether they are the right policies; are there other policies they should have implemented? They are also looking for OWSC/OBWB support for the long-term on this common approach to water restrictions/policies. Glen walked through the eight policies that they have developed.

The BCFGFA endorses the following policies to protect orchards during drought and will promote the policies to the municipalities and other water purveyors in the Okanagan. They are as follows: 1) there should be common drought policy between all Okanagan water purveyors for agricultural irrigation. 2) Agriculture water rationing should be implemented only after extreme water restrictions have been implemented for landscaping and recreational use. 3) Agriculture water rationing should take into account the large, intensive investment in perennial crops (i.e. tree fruit). 4) Agricultural irrigation should not be rationed using pricing. 5) BCFGFA supports the continued adoption of technology for greater irrigation efficiency. 6) Food security should be a major consideration in allocating water. 7) BCFGFA will support the water purveyors in seeking provincial and federal funding to expand water storage reservoirs. 8) BCFGFA supports collaboration, communication, education and outreach to irrigators and irrigation districts to move the tree fruit industry to an environmentally sustainable, food secure and profitable position.

The presentation and policies put forth generated a great deal of discussion amongst the Council members. A couple of things were put forth: 1)

suggestion that someone from the BCFGFA attended the water supply association conference in Nelson, October 22 & 23. There needs to be direct outreach and communication with the Water Supply Association so that it is really clear what the issues are. Suggestion to contact Cheryl Pala and getting on the Agenda. With respect to the in-depth response being asked of OBWB/OWSC, Anna would like to wait to give feedback until some of the work has been completed with Kelly Garcia on the drought response plans and the gaps. BCFGFA has done a good job and there is a lot of information there has been put forward. Some of the other comments centered around: water turn on/turn off issues, water pricing, aquifer levels, reservoir levels. Also, comment was put forth requesting some clarity on what BCFGFA is asking from Council. Glen indicated that these policies are meant for water purveyors and that BCFGFA is looking for more formal discussions on priority of water usage and formalizing a hierarchy of water use; looking for more consistent approaches and less ad hoc responses in drought conditions. See the role of OWSC as making a recommendation and getting the word out there to the water purveyors in terms of encouraging them to look at some of these policies when they are setting their policies for water allocation. Nelson thanked Glen for presenting to the group as it has provided some very useful conversation and he hopes that it will be the start of further conversation on the issues.

6. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Ms. Jackson (OBWB): This summer was busy with MWW and DMM activities. MWW launched the Xerioscape plant collection. Seven garden centres throughout the Okanagan partnered with them. They had mayors take the pledge to make water work and encourage their residents to do the same. This year they had almost 1000 individuals take the pledge which was made easy by going onto the website. They had \$8500 in prizes available to be won for taking the pledge. The City of Armstrong was awarded a prize for the greatest number of pledges per capita and they awarded a \$6000 WaterWise yard upgrade to a Kelowna resident. DMM partnered with OASIS and radio stations to deliver the message. RBC leveraged the campaign with a \$100,000 contribution. The roving inspection stations were up and operating this summer. The Formula One tunnel boat driver, Mike McLellan, got on board and helped spread the message. He now has his boat and boat trailer decorate with DMM decals.

- Mr. Littley (OBWB): A new briefing note has going out to a couple of the Ministers addressing the mussel issue. He has had a chance to speak with the invasive species coordinator for Alberta, Idaho and Washington State and compared their numbers with BCs. BC announced last week at a news conference that they had inspected 3200 boats, 24 were decontaminated with 4 being quarantined. Alberta inspected 18800 boats and saw 540 high risk boats with 10 being contaminated. Their budget is about \$1.5 million. Idaho inspected 60822 boats with 22 being infested. They have a \$1.3 million budget which is covered by their user pay sticker program. The briefing note touched on what could be accomplished by BC and what is being accomplished by other jurisdictions. The briefing note is going through the UBCM meetings, the three regional districts, OBWB and the City of Vernon will all have one meeting with the Premier and they will all be using the same briefing note.
- Mr. Rogalski (EC): They are in maintenance mode right now as a result of the upcoming election. There was an announcement just before the election call was regarding the banning of micro beads in cosmetic products with the intention to classify them as toxic substances under their chemicals management plan. There is a science summary available on their website. Statistics Canada has released 2014 data on their Agriculture Water Survey. He will send the link to Nelson.
- Ms. Clark (RDNO): thank you to OBWB for getting the letter out about the watershed protection. They had Recreation come to them with a plan to create recreation site at Mt Grizzly reservoir. The Greater Vernon Advisory committee will work in collaboration with Recreation in protecting their dams. They are hoping to get a land lease (or Crown lease?) for that. This will mean installing toilets and creating 35 sites. They are still working on the plan. RDNO has put in some comments on WSA especially on the dam safety and enforcement piece. Summer was busy with drought response.
- Mr. Davies (BCWF): BCWF are holding their Wetland Institute in Kelowna. Work on the Pentiction Creek restoration has been completed.
- Ms. Mettler (guest): has been working on a few different projects: 1) the Columbia River Treaty workshop which is coming up; and 2) writing some grants on organizing and designed an exhibition on the social life of water in the Okanagan Valley.
- Ms. Fuller (guest): no comments.
- Ms. Kirk (RDOS): it was a busy season with the fires and some are still burning. They are conducting some back burning as well. They have drilled a well in Faulder which is producing 160g/min. They are working on a water regulations by-law. With a grant from OBWB, they are implementing a homogenized system. One of the things they are implementing is Stage 1 restriction all year round throughout the region. Pleased that they had a 27% reduction in the West Bench, which is the only full-scaled water metered area, this summer. Local nursery staff spent time educating locals on watering and its importance; people are starting to take notice. With regard to the RBC grant to DMM, it is the largest grant they give out, the majority of the money will be going into a roving unit which will attend all the recreational boating shows and home shows early next season. Last year, RBC put \$90,000 into the MWW which helped to establish seven rain gardens throughout the Okanagan Valley. She taped the presentation that Julia Lew made at the AGM and is just getting the final okay to distribute the recording. RDOS have sent out letters in support of groundwater regulations.
- Mr. Meredith (CWRA): CWRA's 69th National Conference is being held May 24-27, 2016 at the Hotel Bonaventure in Montreal. The CWRA BC branch is hosting their conference, Floods, Droughts and Everything in Between, November 18-19, 2015 in Vancouver. The BC Institute of Agrologists is having a professional development day at UBCO on October 8th dealing with water, wetlands, soils and fungi.
- Ms. Neilsen (AAFC): They are on an election hiatus. It is grant proposal time and some of the things they are putting proposals in for are: 1) deficit irrigation strategies for tree fruits, 2) making fully automated irrigation for tree fruit more acceptable, 3) make use of the improvement of soils data in the water supply demand model by taking the soil, irrigation, and land use information and do a drought level ability assessment.
- Mr. Petersen (MAG): this summer saw drought begin extremely early which kept them busy with weekly updates for the Ministry. The soil and water moisture study is continuing. The BC Water Use Reporting centre is in progress and has received further funding for continuation. The water demand model data has been extremely useful with this year's drought.
- Ms. McDonald (BCFGA): The August 14th South Okanagan fire and wind storm did a lot of damage to the tree fruits. Q for OBWB staff: In the letter to Mary Pollack on Sep 8th regarding the modernizing of the BC Water Act, there were some recommendations. Recommendation 4 talked about land use and water positions. The

Agriculture Industry is concerned with the view of the right to farm legislation and Ms. MacDonald wonders why it was included as a water issue. Suggestion that maybe this needs to be talked about.

- Mr. Walker (freelance writer): wrote a story about Coldwater. He found that the two ranches most heavily affected by it, didn't feel consulted at all. They didn't feel there was any process for their input and felt caught in the middle with very high value animals that they weren't able to take care of. They had a lot of questions that they couldn't find answers for.
- Ms. MacMillian (OC): part of the water engineering program. They are looking for student projects that are relevant and timely. Looking for community partners. If you know of anything that might be suitable, contact Allison.
- Mr. Robinson (Kelowna CoC): indicated that each time the CofC sits down with an MLA or MP they drill them on the mussel issue and what other jurisdictions are doing, etc. The answer they get back from them is that the government would be happy to put in a user pay system if there is an appetite for it. It is seen as a tax or potential tax and they don't want to be accused of implementing a tax that people don't actually want. They need some sort of public support for the model. CofC is an advocacy group for businesses. Water is a focus and they have two issues they are looking at: 1) Kelowna's potable water supply, and 2) predictability and uniformity in terms of drought response. (J. Little commented on the DMM and a user pay system – the Board has not been advocating for user pay but for more resources. That said, BC already has a few user pay systems that are directly relatable – hunting & fishing. C. Jackson indicated she would like to discuss this further with the Chamber and the possibilities of working together.)
- Mr. Wilson (OFS): they planted around 10 million trees this summer and weren't really impacted by the drought. From a logging side, they didn't stop deliveries for the whole summer. It wasn't an unusual summer for them. The fire in Falkland was one of the biggest impacts in terms of Tolko. They are still noticing the explosion that continues in recreational activity in terms of mountain bike trails, motorcycles, etc. and they are cutting trails in the middle of nowhere.
- Mr. Bauer (UBCO): spoke about OWSC priorities list – source area protection is not listed and feels like/seems like it should come back again. UBCO campus is buzzing with activity. Enrollment is down slightly and recruiters are actively recruiting students. In terms of water issues, there has been no feedback from the water faculty at this time. John and Bernie are collaborating on a project they got funded and have the money in place to move ahead on. They are looking at a couple of small watersheds in Armstrong in terms of riparian restoration, water quality and ecosystems in relation to agriculture production. They are hoping to get a report within a year or even half a year.
- Mr. Janmaat (UBCO): he has been working with Debra Robertson a group that is looking at new strategic direction for UBC as a whole. They are looking to have a workshop in March and are in the process of identifying keynote speakers. He is working on a stream rehabilitation project. They have just received ethics approval for the surveying and are moving into pretesting before they go into the field. They will be looking for some rural landowners to sit with the team. They are writing a grant proposal to try and look for evidence that water quality relates to property prices (statistical evidence). The hurdle is that they have to purchase data that will cost around \$100,000. He is also trying to develop a research project with the City of Revelstoke to look at poverty issues.
- Mr. Nichol (UBCO): he has been visiting at UVic since March. He is now back at UBCO and has finished up some geology papers on the North Okanagan. He has also has a student finish up this summer on a project looking at nitrate leaching in the Abbotsford aquifer. Also, doing work with Agriculture Canada on irrigation management and green house gas impacts. He has done two larger studies on the North Okanagan on groundwater. Available at MOE online monitoring.
- Ms. Neumann (guest): the Middle Vernon Creek Action Plan is in year 4 of 5. They have done a lot of hydrometric monitoring in the upper and middle Vernon Creek system. The goal is to come up with recommendations on water use planning but also some tools. They have put together a decision support system.
- Ms. Warwick Sears (OBWB): The 3rd Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum (Oct 7-9). Five of the six commissioners will be in attendance. There is an interesting mix of people in attendance. They have worked hard at getting an even balance of speakers (from both sides of the border). Getting a good sense of how BC and Washington complement or compete with each other.
- Mr. Guy (CWRA): on a personal note, 21 years ago he started Summit and 2 months ago he handed over the reins to his colleague and now he is more directly involved in working with clients, with staff and on projects. The Columbia

River Treaty Workshop is being spearheaded by BCCWRA with help from SFU. The treaty was signed in 1964 in order to promote hydro power and flood control. The first opportunity to modify it is in 2024. There are issues today that were never thought about in the day, i.e., First Nations were left out, there are climate change issues, there are impacts on Agriculture that were not considered. There will be a panel of expert speakers. Other Columbia River Treaty workshops have happened elsewhere and hosted by Columbia Basin Trust. Because the Okanagan is not within the Treaty area, we haven't had access to hosting the workshop so this is an opportunity for people in the Okanagan to contribute.

- Mr. Jatel (OBWB): Jillian Tamblyn has joined the province as a biologist and Don Gayton has been hired as the project manager to finish the Wetlands Strategy Phase 2 project. This summer was largely dominated by webinars. In July, there was an international Forest and Water Conference at UBCO. There were close to 200 attendees. Natasha is working on an extension note for forestry companies that will be distributed.
- Mr. Birtles (IHA): Interesting summer with the wildfires and what does IH do. IH regulates water systems, public safety, food safety, etc. and when issues occur they have to inventory the area affected by the fire, create public messaging, get in touch with the various permit holders, etc. In terms of the drought, there used to be a definite split between responsibilities (IH – Quality, Province – Quantity). Now, it appears the BC Government wants to collaborate on some work on water quantity which entails IH talking to water suppliers about their conservation by-laws. The Ministry of Health has granted \$500,000 to BCWWA to create solutions around water sustainability and small water systems. On a personal note, he was in Ontario this summer and got to see some zebra

mussels which was quite interesting. The Province of BC has been mulling over some guidelines for Blue Green Algae. They have created a protocol but are missing the communications component. This is still being worked on.

The discussion was opened up to the work plan to see if anyone had any recommendations or suggestions. He would like to be able to get to consensus at the next meeting that this will be the OWSC's work plan.

There has been a request from a number of Council members for a workshop that was driven by ONA around interfacing with First Nations. Nelson has been in discussion with the En'owkin Centre in Penticton and it looks like at the next meeting there will be a two hour session facilitated by one of the members of the En'owkin Centre. Let Nelson know if you would like to bring a guest, prior to the meeting, so they can make sure and accommodate any extra attendance.

ONA is hosting a water forum on Oct 14th in Kelowna at the Four Points hotel. David Suzuki is the keynote. Registration is through Eventbrite and is \$105. The topic is "From Knowledge to Forward Thinking".

Anna's Christmas Party will be December 10th following the Council meeting.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be Thursday, October 1, 2015 from 12:30 to 4:30 12:30 to 4:30 at Okanagan Regional Library, 1430 KLO Road Kelowna.

8. ADJOURNMENT

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

Moved by Murray Wilson

"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of September 10, 2015 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director