

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, February 11, 2016, AT OKANAGAN REGIONAL LIBRARY, 1430 KLO ROAD, KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.
BC Agriculture Council
BC Ground Water Association
BC Water Supply Association
BC Wildlife Federation - Region 8
City of Kelowna
Environment Canada - West and North
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Interior Health Authority
Interior Health Authority
Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (OSNR)
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program
Okanagan College
Okanagan Nation Alliance
Regional District of North Okanagan
UBC Okanagan

Don Dobson
Hans Buchler
Marta Green
Toby Pike
Lorne Davies (alt)
Andrew Reeder
Ian Rogalski (alt)
Doug Edwards
Rob Birtles (Chair)
Judi Ekkert (alt)
Jeff Robinson
Robert Warner
Scott Boswell
Allison MacMillan
Natasha Lukey
Renee Clark
Bernie Bauer

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch
BC Cattlemen's Association
BC Fruit Growers Association
Canadian Water Resources Association
City of Penticton
City of Vernon
Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource Mgmt)
Okanagan Forest Sector
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board
Regional District of Central Okanagan
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Denise Neilsen/Scott Smith (alt)
Lee Hesketh/Linda Allison
Denise MacDonald/Glen Lucas
Brian Guy/Dwayne Meredith
Andrew Martin
Ed Stranks/Rob Miles
Andrew Petersen
Grant Furness
Murray Wilson
David O'Keefe
Margaret Bakelaar
Evelyn Riechert

STAFF

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

Anna Warwick Sears
Nelson Jatel
James Littley

GUESTS

BC Cherry Association
Irrigation Association of BC
Larratt Aquatic Consulting
Okanagan College
Regional District Kootenay Boundary
UBC-O
UBC-O
UBC-O
UBC-O
Urban Systems
Watershed Watch
Westcoast CED Consulting

Nancy Fuller
Christine Dendy
Bruce Naka
Heather Larratt
Rob St. Onge
Graham Watt
Craig Nichol
John Wagner
Jonathan Bepple
Nargiz Rahineova
Suzan Lapp
Andrew Foster
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 Bob Warner
Seconded by Hans Buchler

“That the agenda for the February 11, 2016 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Moved by Allison MacMillan
Seconded by Bernie Bauer

“That the minutes from the January 14, 2016 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

4. **BOARD REPORT—Dr. Anna Warwick Sears**

The Water Board heard a presentation from Margaret Bakelaar, RDCO’s Environmental/Land Use Planner on a regional floodplain management project currently underway. The importance of this project becomes greater and greater as the potential for high water levels increases due to larger snow packs and predictions for early melt.

OBWB provided comments on the Emergency Program Act. The comment period is open until Feb. 19 providing the opportunity for input and to share thoughts on 12 different topics. Go to: (<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/emergencyprogram/act/>). OBWB also provided comments on the adaptation portions of the BC Climate Action Plan. The comment period on this is open until early March.

There was some discussion on snow packs and there will be a webinar around, April 15th.

Nelson provided OBWB with a memo update on EFN as he was in Vancouver attending an EFN Workshop. He also provided comment on the Wetlands Strategy which is resulting in a number of wetlands being constructed and a number of new wetland proposals being submitted. James provided an update on zebra and quagga mussels and OBWB has sent a

letter to the Provincial Government commenting on their work in this area. Corinne provided a communication initiatives update noting that the Make Water Work program benefited from approximately \$188k worth of support and funding from local governments, OBWB WaterWise, local businesses, radio and billboard companies.

A report on a valley-wide drought plan/gap analysis for the Okanagan was presented to the Board. The plan looks at drought planning efforts that exist in the Okanagan and recommendations on what needs to happen moving forward this summer.

Steel Springs Waterworks brought forward an issue regarding pollution in the Hullcar aquifer and asked the Board for a letter of support. The Board wrote a letter of support asking IHA and MOE to look at all sources of nitrate pollution and help bring the drinking water supply back to recommended levels.

5. **Source Water assessments, drinking water protection, risk & reporting requirements: challenges in a multi-use watershed (Judi Ekkert, Heather Larratt, Renee Clark).**

Ms. Ekkert reviewed the legislation (Drinking Water Protection Act), spoke about some of the reasons for completing a source water assessment and then looked at the purpose of source water protection plans, and provided an example of when an assessment and plan came after treatment and why this is not recommended. Under the Drinking Water Protection Act (section 18) water suppliers are required to prepare an assessment. IH recognized the importance of having a source assessment and made it a condition for all the large water supply systems and for the most part water suppliers have been interested in gathering the information and completing the assessments. There are provincial and federal guidance documents available to help suppliers work through the process. Other reasons for completing an assessment include: understanding the watershed/aquifer; understanding the threats or potential threats in the watershed; helping to decide on the best source (s) and selecting the best suited treatment program; and placing value on these

multi-use watersheds (they are key to lifestyle, environment and economy). The purpose of a source water protection plan is to identify the measures to be used to address identified threats to drinking water. These plans also set out how key stakeholders can work together to protect the water source. Section 21 of the Act requires the public be made aware that an assessment is being prepared and filed. Public awareness is key as the public needs to understand their role in source water protection. Ostersund, Sweden provided an example of treatment being put in before a source water protection plan was created.

Ms. Larratt spoke on source water assessments and science tools that have been developed to try and help with source assessments. In putting together source assessments they are trying to identify reasonable risks that must be accounted for. In terms of lake areas, they looked at developing a way to have a “feasible idea” for what area of a lake would require special protection or more intense care. An intake protection zone is an area with the highest vulnerability. A study on Lake Ontario provided some helpful measures for protecting this zone. For example, the Lake Ontario study provided for two hours of protection (inside the intake protection zone) so when a contamination event does occur the water supplier has two hours to react. Once intake protection zones are identified then decisions on what kind of legislation to put in place are required.

Ms. Clark spoke about water source protection planning and working with stakeholders in the watersheds. Source water protection planning for GVW began back in 2010. As a water utility, their direction comes from the DWPA and the Water Act. While the Acts support each other there are conflicts that exist amongst/within the various Acts. The water source assessment identifies the risks before the treatment. Most of the risks are identified from activities on the land that impact surface/groundwater. Water utilities need to do assessments so they can understand the risks and the potential treatments that may be necessary to protect the source water, and have an emergency

response plan in the case of a threat. The response plan requires a collaborative approach from all partners/stakeholders (forestry, range, recreation, etc) to work together to provide timely information and to find good solutions. This also involves data sharing between the stakeholders. RDNO/GVW has completed the following: Duteau Creek Watershed Assessment and Protection Plan, Duteau Creek Watershed Assessment Response Plan, and the Source Assessment of the RDNO-GVW Utility North Kalamalka Lake Intake. They are hoping to have the Kal Lake Response Plan completed this year. These are available at the RDNO website.

Comments: one of the things being noted is the lack of time available and the thought was voiced about whether an opportunity exists to fund 1 or 2 watershed stewardship positions. Some of the other comments included: how different watersheds have different problems (a number of years ago the Kelowna Joint Water Committee got provincial funding to hire a couple of students-Upper Watershed Awareness Program-shared between the three watersheds); there is a flaw in the DWPA in that there are no punitive measures in place if you are caught contaminating drinking water. The water utilities have limited resources to monitor for offenders. With the lead up to the Water Act modernization there was hope that there would be more integration of policies and legislation but it didn't happen. There needs to be a commitment from the politicians that protecting our water supply is important and they need to commit to enforcement (financial issue). The work that RDNO and now Lake Country is doing goes a long way in promoting the well being of the watersheds. The work of OBWB/OWSC is very important in providing leadership, connectivity and relationship building which keeps watershed issues in the forefront. Source water protection is a huge issue and something needs to be done. The Real Estate Foundation funded the South Okanagan to have a shared environmental planner (this may be something that applies to comments made about watershed stewardship positions and will need to be looked into further).

6. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Mr. Jatel put forth that the Council may want to explore some of the solutions around source water protection that they could propose to the Board.

There are around 56 watersheds in the Okanagan and about 350 water systems. There are a lot of people potentially affected by impacts to watersheds and aquifers. A source assessment is a starting point for identifying hazards in the watershed, putting together a risk matrix and trying to facilitate change within the watershed. If change is not happening or happening fast enough then other things need to be looked at such as Best Management Practices. What can be done to make things better? Can an argument be made that what is happening in the Okanagan regarding source water protection is bad enough that an area based plan is justified? There was a comment that maybe the Council should be ready to move forward if a disaster does occur; making sure the groundwork is in place (demonstrate a trend that is getting worse) for a plan but not necessarily move towards an area based plan at this time. The Board/Council is in a good position to put forth/develop a Water Sustainability Plan for the Okanagan and maybe this makes more sense at this point in time. The Okanagan can benefit from some additional planning around its watersheds to create a sustainable environment.

There was also a recommendation about putting together and getting funding for a program that gets watershed stewards into the watershed providing information, picking up water quality samples, and identifying issues in the watershed. This could work in conjunction with a UBCO Masters or PhD student and in addition the student could potentially look at a gap analysis for the region.

There are a number of Bands in the territory that are in the process of doing watershed assessment and plans. ONA would be interested in moving forward on this whole issue; contact Ms. Lukey as she can build the connections.

RDKB and ONA are partnering on a forum on

headwaters protection on April 19 at Big White. They would like involvement from OBWB and some water suppliers. Invitations will be sent out through Nelson or go to kettlerriveplan.ca.

Suzan Lapp is a big proponent of source water protection and is willing to look into funding opportunities and do some preliminary work to see what it would take to get people into the watershed. Vern White in the South Okanagan is the contact for what they did.

7. COUNCIL WORK PLAN: Committees and Comments

The EFN committee met in the morning and looked at what is happening in phase 1 and 2 of the projects. They are looking at how EFN relate to tradeoffs for licensing decisions. The drought management committee also met and heard from Bob Warner. They are hoping to bridge the gap between what the Province is doing and what local water utilities are doing. In April, there will be a one hour webinar updating Okanagan water supply. Last year, they added Forest Fire risk as it related to water supply in the Okanagan. Let Nelson know if there is additional information anyone would like to see included.

8. ROUNDTABLE - MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Ms. Warwick Sears (OBWB): extending an invitation to all to join them at the Manteo tomorrow for the big funding announcement.
- Mr. Nichol (UBCO): pass
- Mr. Watt (guest): pass
- Mr. Davies (BCWF): many of the clubs are getting ready for game banquets.
- Mr. St. Onge (OC): BC/Canada Water Week coming up next month. Will speak with Nelson on different things that can be done.
- Ms. MacMillan (OC): pass
- Mr. Bepple (UBCO): pass
- Ms. Ekkert (IH): they have a new Medical Health Officer; she is very interested in what is being done in water quality.
- Ms. Dendy (BCCA): as a water purveyor, they are interested in and affected by the Rutland Aquifer and would like to try and get more studies done on it and further data collected.
- Mr. Warner (FLNRO): 250 attended WSA learning lab providing an introduction to WSA

fundamentals and changes that are happening. The Okanagan Shuswap is hiring a co-op student.

- Mr. Naka (IIABC): finalizing work on high efficiency irrigation standards that are coming out. They will be available sometime later this year. Western Canada Turfgrass Association is hosting its annual conference and trade show Feb 23-25 in Whistler.
- Ms. Larratt (guest): pass
- Ms. Clark (RDNO): doing studies on giardia and cryptosporidium at their intakes. Looking at doing vulnerability mapping and hoping it will identify areas where development shouldn't be going.
- Ms. Fuller (guest): pass
- Mr. Reeder (City of Kelowna): working on 1) bio solids strategic review for North Okanagan/Lake Country/City of Kelowna (includes capacity issues with the commonage facility); 2) a UV risk assessment which is in its final stages; 3) a review of sewer connections and ways to finance connections.
- Mr. Boswell (OCCP): working with partners to identify projects. There are currently 33 projects under review. They are proceeding on a connectivity project for a Wildlife Corridor in conjunction with the Centre for Culture and Technology.
- Mr. Dobson (APEGBC): on February 14th the dikes at the MCRI will have been moved back and the first phase will be complete. The 2nd phase will include habitat enhancement.
- Mr. Zeaman (BCWF): the 1st beta version of a conservation application is out. The application allows people to take a picture which is then automatically uploaded and, where able to, relayed to enforcement agencies. It will also be hosted on a website with a Google Earth based platform. Hoping to increase social awareness and show what is going on, on the ground in the area.
- Mr. Robinson (CofC): having a round table for chamber members on February 15th to illicit concerns from members around water supply.
- Ms. Lukey (ONA): there was a source water protection meeting with Elders in the Similkameen. It was a highly charged and emotional meeting. Attended a conference in Washington (River Restoration Northwest).

They do larger scale river restoration projects. Great example to bring to the Council.

- Mr. Pike (WSABC): SE Kelowna expected to have a large runoff this year and possible turbidity issues. Kelowna Joint Water Committee is updating their 2010 drought plan. He will circulate to others for their use. WSABC's spring workshop (focus on drought planning) will be held April 7-8th at the Okanagan Golf Club. They are accepting applications for their annual scholarship which will be announced at the workshop.
- Mr. Rogalski (ECCC): the public consultation on micro beads legislation is open until March 10th. The Prime Minister and several of the Ministers will be in Vancouver for the Globe 2016 Environment and Economy Conference.
- Mr. Bauer (UBCO): UBCO is reinstating the coop program for its Science students. If you have a need for or are thinking of hiring a coop student, please let Bernie know.
- Mr. Edwards (DFO): pass
- Ms. Lapp (guest): pass
- Ms. Rahineova (UBCO/OBWB): pass
- Mr. Littley (OBWB): the WCQI deadline is February 12th at 4pm. A letter has been sent to the Federal Government regarding Zebra and Quagga Mussels asking for more resources for the provinces. Attended a workshop hosted by the Invasive Species Council of BC and PNWER. The Conservation Sciences manager from MOE presented the 2016 plan. OBWB sent an open letter of support to the Finance Minister and Environment Minister. The budget will be out next week. The plan calls for 8 inspection stations which will cover every major highway crossing from Alberta to BC and some BC/US borders and training for the Canada Border Service Agents.
- Mr. Foster (guest): pass
- Mr. Birtles (IH): version 2 of the Groundwater at Risk of Pathogens is complete. IH staff will be undergoing some training on February 18th.
- Mr. Jatel (OBWB): photo competition around wetlands (okanaganwetlands.ca). Working with BCWF on an Okanagan Wetlands Strategy. Working with ONA Fisheries on EFN.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be a joint meeting with the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Thursday, March 10, 2016 from 12:30 to 4:30 at Okanagan Regional Library, 1430 KLO Road Kelowna.

10. ADJOURNMENT

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Moved by Don Dobson

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of February 11, 2016 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

Chair

Executive Director