

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, October 12, 2017, AT COAST CAPRI HOTEL, KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen (Vice Chair)
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Tom Forge (alt)
BC Ground Water Association	Marta Green
BC Ministry of Agriculture	Andrew Petersen
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Doug Flintoft/Lorne Davies
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy (Chair)
City of Kelowna	Rod MacLean
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Irrigation Industry Association of BC	Bruce Naka/Ted van der Gulik
Min of Forests, Lands, Nat. Res. Ops. & Rural Devt (Resource Mgmt)	Amy Nixon
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Scott Boswell/Tannis Gieselman
Okanagan College	Allison MacMillan
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Danika Dudzik
Regional District of North Okanagan	Renee Clark
UBC Okanagan	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo (alt)

Regrets

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson/Susan Lapp
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh/Linda Allison
BC Fruit Growers Association	Glen Lucas/Richard MacDonald/Kevin Day
BC Water Supply Association	Bob Hrasko
City of Vernon	Ed Stranks/Rob Miles (alt)
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Doug Edwards
Kelowna Chamber of Commerce	Tom Dyas/Jeff Robinson
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O'Keefe/Howard Newfeld (alt)
Min of Forests, Lands, Nat. Res. Ops. & Rural Devt (OK Shuswap)	Robert Warner
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Zoe Kirk
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Assn	Murray Wilson

STAFF

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

GUESTS

BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Brian Symonds
City of Kelowna	Rick Simpson
FLNRORD	Ed Hoppe
FLNRORD	Hillary Ward
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Shawn Reimer
Trail Mix Author/Columnist	Richard Bussanich
UBC-O	Judie Steeves
UBC-O	Marni Turek
UBC-O	Nargiz Rahimova
Westcoast CED Consulting	Michael Russello
	Karol Hansma

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Brian Guy called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Syilx Peoples. He also welcomed members and guests.

Nelson Jatel provided an introduction to the new web based technology. It allows members to share information real time and record what is happening at their meetings. The tool show who is online (logged in for their meeting). It allows having an ongoing chat and users are able to upload/download files (i.e. PDF, Excel, PPT, Word). This tool has been designed for the use on OBWB website and hosted on OBWB platform, so there are no extra costs or user fees. Contact Nelson if you wish to have a chat room set up or have any other questions with regard to format, access etc.

Marni Turek thanked the Council members and OBWB staff for all of the thoughtful letters sent in supporting the creation of a water research cluster at UBCO. The tremendous support really helped strengthen their fund proposal.

2. **APPROVE AGENDA**

Moved by Denise Neilsen

Seconded by Andrew Peterson

“That the agenda for the Oct 12, 2017 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.” CARRIED

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Moved by Allison McMillan

Seconded by Doug Flintoft

“That the minutes from the Sep 7, 2017 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.” CARRIED

4. **BUSINESS ARISING (from previous meeting):**

Mr. Guy provided an update on the nomination committee presentation from the last meeting. Nelson Jatel presented the nomination committee recommendations to OBWB last week. OBWB approved the recommendations and now has the ability to appoint up to three individuals who have an opportunity to make a substantial contribution to Council and provide a strong leadership role. The nomination committee will now become Standing Committee of Council and will provide ongoing support to Nelson on the composition of future boards.

5. **BOARD REPORT (Dr. Warwick Sears)**

The Board met on October 3 at the RDNO premises. The Board was hoping for a presentation from OKIB regarding recent flooding issues but Colleen

Marchand was unable to attend. Jennifer Miles from GVW gave an overview on the communication tool they have been developing for working with the agricultural community during drought. Zebra and Quagga mussels were the main focus of the meeting. Dr. Sears and a few other Board members attended UBCM a few weeks ago. The importance of preventing an infestation of invasive mussels into BC was the focus of meetings with MoE Minister who called for a separate round table meeting with the Water Board contingent. He has asked for a list of ranked recommendations on how the Province should move forward with the issue. Some new funding opportunities arose out of UBCM as well. There is \$150,000 available for flood mapping projects and there is an expectation that there will be a lot of small applications from local governments. The Osoyoos Board of Control is holding a public meeting on October 17. There will be a screening of The River Film, a documentary about Osoyoos Lake. Kellie Garcia reported on the mainstem drought triggers project which is an effort to get standard drought triggers for any large water system drawing from any one of the main valley lakes. She also presented on the Planning toolkits and guides project. There is a website being created through Civic Info BC that will have all the toolkits and guides on it. OBWB has applied for a large grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for extension and outreach to local governments. The OBWB draft budget will be presented at their next meeting. The next fiscal year is the year when OBWB has a large water management review followed by the re-endorsement from all three regional districts.

6. **OKANAGAN SOCKEYE SALMON AND NATIVE KOKANEE (Michael Russello, UBCO)**

Mr. Russello is with the Biology Department at UBCO. He recently published a paper summarizing his research on Sockeye and Kokanee in the Okanagan. He provided overview of that paper and his findings. He also spoke to the work they do in his lab related to the challenges and opportunities for genetics based fisheries management and specifically cases where stocks are not readily discernible. There are a number of organizations and people that his group collaborates with that help drive the research, and he acknowledge the efforts of some of those groups/individuals. The research efforts are linked back to the collapse of the marine fisheries worldwide. As a result of this collapse and the diversity of threats leading to the decline of fish stocks, innovative and diverse solutions are required. Genetics and genomics are one avenue for innovation. His report, “Sockeye salmon repatriation leads to population re-establishment and rapid introgression with native

kokanee”, assessed the success of the hatchery-assisted reintroduction of anadromous sockeye salmon into Skaha Lake, and evaluated the genetic consequences for native kokanee. The results of the study indicate that the reintroduction is succeeding; however, hybridization with native kokanee is of concern due to the potential for demographic or genetic swamping. Ongoing genetic monitoring is necessary to assess the long-term effects. (Abstract: Original Article). Mr. Busanich noted that the work being done is very positive and important indicating that if this type of information was available 20-40 years ago, the river types in the Columbia system might still exist.

2017 OKANAGAN FLOOD REVIEW (Shaun Reimer, FLNRORD & Brian Symonds)

The unusual combination of spring/early summer weather patterns this past year led to unprecedented conditions and high water levels in the Okanagan. This year was highlighted by a trifecta with floods, fires, and droughts that speaks to where we are at in terms of being symptomatic of climate change. The protection of sockeye and kokanee is one of the guidelines for drawing down the Okanagan Lake levels. However, the primary focus of the Okanagan Lake water regulation system this year was flood control. Early in 2017, when initial snowpack was low and no flooding was anticipated, the focus was on ensuring the survival of the fish eggs. Therefore, early decisions regarding lake levels reflected snow conditions at the time. The maximum snowpack remained just above normal and even below in the beginning of the spring. If regulators had known in the third week of April what the levels of precipitation, temperature and melt rates occurring in May were going to be, then the discharge level could have been increased accordingly. This year more water came into the lake in May than any other year. In the first week of May, the watershed was already quite wet from the melting snow in the lower to mid-elevations and the snowpack at higher elevations was quite saturated. There was a lot of rain in April followed by intense storm. Normally, the peaks do not occur until late June. This year the peak was reached around the first week of June which was unprecedented. Because the peak came in such a short time period coupled with the ability to release water and the design release system out of Okanagan Lake, four-times the water was coming into the lake as could be let out of the lake at the same time; this was exacerbated by a number of rain on snow events. Not only was the weather extreme this year, the pattern in which it

developed was rather unprecedented and the likelihood of experiencing these types of events is probably going to be greater than it ever has been. How do we adapt? Is it time to revisit the river flows and lake levels targets, particularly the management of the Okanagan Lake? What will the consequences be? What is the feasibility of modifying works, i.e. modifying the channel capacity? What about changing outflow targets for the channel because of restoration work that has been done or future restoration work? This year may not be the worst case scenario. It still could have been worse and can be worse.

OKANAGAN INVASIVE MUSSELS – STATUS UPDATE (James Littley, OBWB)

Mr. Littley handed out a Draft Action Items for BC Invasive Mussel Prevention. The infestation of mussels will damage a lot of things and have a major impact on our economy. They are impossible to eradicate and will alter the ecosystem. OBWWB has been lobbying both the Provincial and Federal governments for a number of years to take increased action. They had been getting a lot of action from the previous provincial government to expand the prevention systems and the first priority of OBWB was to make sure they didn't lose momentum with the new government. Following meetings at UBCM 2017, the OBWB was asked to put together a comprehensive, prioritized list of action items to enhance invasive mussel prevention in BC. The deadline for submission to the standing committee on finance and government services is Monday. The two big overarching ideas are: *we call on the Province of BC to do a full costing of all action items as outlined below and to budget permanent, sufficient funding to guarantee ongoing mussel prevention, preparation, and response efforts; and further we call on the government to continue to make prevention and preparation decisions based on science and data, and to further develop scientific and data gathering and analysis capabilities for effective management.* Mr. Littley asked the Council to review the list of action items provided and if warranted submit feedback that he will incorporate as he moves forward with submission to the government. BCWF is concerned about the inspections going on as there are a number of boats coming into the Province in the early mornings and are not being checked. Is there a way to have a stickering or decal program? They have heard of a new detection technique at the University of Montana. If we can use these techniques, then they (Province) should be doing

that. The more groups that push the information at the government, the better. OBWB has been proactively pushing the information to other groups and the Province.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The **Source Protection and Wetland Committee** (Renee Clark) met on Oct 5th. The first group is looking at acts and regulations and how they speak to source water. There is more than one agency that looks after water. There needs to be a place that people working with source protection can go to see where and to what extent different acts reflect on water. The group involved in task #4 is looking at Front Counter BC and how water is protected (for example, reporting a spill or emergency or other referrals for things that might affect source water). There is a need for a user-friendly portal where people can visit for more information, sorted by relevance and application. The group working on the wetlands task is getting information together. Amy Nixon is working with the government on a workshop for November. Task #3 performed a SWOT analysis on source protection. Marni Turek is working on this and looking at what is in common with watershed protection and where changes are needed in policy and in regulations. They are getting close to meeting their objectives set forth by their work plan. They are meeting again in November. They have a lot of committee people in the group and there is a lot of great work happening. Dr. Sears noted that in her meetings with the Minister of Environment he noted having an interest in source protection and she recommends that the committee connects with Nelson to strategize ways to get some clear messages to the minister or deputy minister. There is no agency that is just water. It seems to have been lost. Water is referred to in the Acts but it is not the main focus.

The **Drought & Flood Committee** (Scott Boswell) met a few times in the spring. Their main objectives are looking at the three regional districts and seeing what everyone is up to for flood planning, as well as their activities and communication channels. They are meeting in October. There will be a workshop in November where they will be presenting their findings on gaps and funding opportunities to elected officials and staff. This is being run by Kellie Garcia. They are hoping to have some recommendations for the OWSC by January. UBCM flood mapping applications deadline is Oct 27. The program administrator is hoping for a 90 day turnaround on those applications.

The **Irrigation Committee** (Bruce Naka) noted that they saw the effect of climate change and its

impact on irrigation this year. The initial start up for irrigation was later but the drought conditions that followed have affected irrigation. Feels that it will be interesting to see what post harvest will be like. The main goal of this group is improvements in irrigation efficiencies which involves a whole host of topics. They are looking at: 1) how to best invest, promote and budget for this effort. They feel that one of the main concerns needs to be education; 2) who will they need to be targeting/talking to (end users, irrigation people, politicians); 3) an assessment of the systems (i.e., capabilities of leak detection); 4) how irrigation systems are operated and schedule being utilized to operate; and 5) promotion throughout the valley that all irrigation designs should include a certified irrigation design. There is a disconnect between irrigation design and knowledge about the crops being irrigated which is not necessarily addressed. Need to look at a master plan for irrigation systems taking into account the idiosyncrasies specific to the different crops. Need to develop programs integrating all of the different information.

The **OK Supply & Demand Study Committee** (Denise Neilsen) noted that the previous water demand and supply study didn't take into account extreme rainfall events and the thought is as they move forward on the supply and demand study to focus attention around how to deal with extreme events.

The **Sustainable Water Strategy Committee** (Kellie Garcia) - Mr. Jatel provided comment. The draft annotated outline is almost complete and will be distributed to Council in November.

The **Communication Committee** (Zoe Kirk) - no report

The **EFN Committee** (Doug Edwards) - no report

The **Policy Committee** (Rob Birtles) - no report

8. MEMBER UPDATES: ROUNDTABLE

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Bussanich (guest): ONA is hosting an ecosystem based management assessment event which will impact the Okanagan Basin. It will be held the first week of December. The WA-BC Chapter of American Fisheries Society Executive Committee is has their next Annual General Meeting in Kelowna, BC from March 19-22, 2018. Mr. Bussanich suggested that OBWB could take part in the event.
- Mr. Petersen (MoAg): drought has pretty much been wrapped up. There is a provincial drought management meeting today. He was part of a flood damage visit last week which included surveying damage to intakes in Westwold. Next week is the First Nation's Agriculture forum. They

are doing policy work again.

- Mr. Littley (OBWB): on behalf of Ms. Jackson he noted that the Conservation application 2nd version for Androids is now available to download. There were rack cards available for OWSC members to take and distribute. Residents around Vasseaux Lake are asking when the milfoil rototilling will be starting. It will be put off for another year as there are some high risk questions that need to be answered before they start any activity in the water. A number of different agencies are looking at the issues.
- Ms. Rahimova (guest): pass
- Mr. van der Gulik (IIABC): the IIABC and the Partnership for Water Sustainability are partnering to co-host a workshop on Blue Ecology – interweaving First Nations cultural knowledge and Western Science (Nov 28th in Richmond). IIABC has instituted a CEU system and a certification fee which started this Fall.
- Ms. Clark (RDNO): WSA AGM is Oct 26-27 in Salmon Arm. There is a lot going on in the Regional District with water supply. The lakes are low but the RD have stayed within the Stage 1 restrictions. They are waiting to see how the snow pack levels are for the winter.
- Ms. Gieselman (OCCP): working on a lot of education outreach. She has been working on a curriculum guide for leading water-related outdoor education in schools. The connectivity project is advancing and they are working on an education piece with researchers at UBCO that are cultural technology, digital artists. They are developing an immersive experience for participants to look at connectivity from the perspective of a Kokanee fish. Working on the foreshore outreach to landowners.
- Dr. Sears (OBWB): – reported on behalf of Corinne regarding communication initiatives for the OBWB. The MWW campaign is now complete. The grand prize winner was from Kelowna. The City of Armstrong brought in the most pledges. The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce brought a resolution to the Canadian Chamber urging stronger action by the Canadian government against zebra and quagga mussels. Tonight is the Kelowna CofC 30th Anniversary Gala and Business Excellence Marketing Awards. DMM has been nominated for a marketing award. Corinne, Tracy Gray and Anna are attending the awards dinner.
- Mr. Simpson (guest): BCWF is very supportive of the work being done by OBWB and OWSC. He has been watching it evolve since 2006 and the influence it has achieved is being recognized as well as the practical contribution it has had. He is part of the fisheries section of the BCWF

Region 8 and they have been pushing for better transboundary fisheries information sharing. His group is also very supportive of the habitat restoration work being done.

- Mr. Davies (BCWF): – reminder that the Conservation application can be downloaded at the BCWF website. Many of their members are out harvesting at this time.
- Mr. Flintoft (BCWF): pass
- Mr. Boswell (OCCP): they were awarded \$85,000 from ECCC to contact every lakeshore owner. Money is also going towards two restoration sites on the lake over the next two years.
- Mr. Naka (IIABC): their annual convention is being held in Richmond Nov 27-30.
- Ms. Dudzik (RDCO): they are ramping up to get projects going. The Regional Floodplain Management Plan Phase 2 is well underway.
- Ms. Nixon (FLNRO): Ecosystem FLNRO – working on flood recovery projects, and working with local government on emergency works they completed during the flood; restoration work happening.
- Ms. Green (BCGWA): their fall regional meeting is being held in Vernon on Oct 20th and will include an update on licensing.
- Mr. MacLean (City of Kelowna): as the Utility Planning Manager he plans to be in attendance at the Council meetings on a regular basis. The Kelowna storm system was under a lot of pressure this year. They have a 10 year capital plan going out for all of the systems. With regard to water, the City has a new team in the RDCO office and looking at the system separation. Rails to trails is moving forward.
- Mr. Jatel (OBWB): reminder that the next OWSC meeting will involve council members' presentations. There will be 4-5 presentations about 10 minutes each. These presentations will highlight or showcase something the organization is doing.
- Mr. Guy (Chair): CWRA has two upcoming conferences. Their annual conference is May and OBWB has agreed to help supply speakers. They are hosting an EFN conference in Oct 2018.

9. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Guy addressed his desire to open the OWSC with an acknowledgement that we are on the unceded territory of the Syilx Peoples. It is his personal decision to make the acknowledgement but he wanted to have a broader discussion with the Council for their thoughts and input. Tracy Gray begins the OBWB meetings with a similar acknowledgement and other organizations are beginning to make these statements as well. Chair Guy believes that this is an important step of

acknowledgement and recognition and movement towards reconciliation.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be Thur., Nov. 9, 2017 from 12:30 to 4:30 at the Coast Capri Hotel, 1171 Harvey Avenue, Kelowna. The meeting will be dedicated to presentations from Council members showcasing their organizations projects. December will involve talks around climate change (globally but also how the Okanagan is nested within that).

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

Moved by Tanis Gieselman

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of October 12, 2017 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director