

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2013, AT
BEST WESTERN INN, 2402 HWY. 97N, KELOWNA, B.C.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson, Chair
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles, Vice-Chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8	Lorne Davies (alt.)
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Ecosystems)	Grant Furness
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Jason Ough (alt.)
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Ian Rogalski
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board	David O’Keefe
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar
Regional District North Okanagan	Renee Clark
UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer
Water Supply Association of BC	Toby Pike

Regrets

BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Cattlemen’s Association	Lee Hesketh
B.C. Ministry of Agriculture	Ted van der Gulik
B.C. Min. Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops.(Resource Mgmt)	Ray Crampton
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Doug Edwards
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Okanagan College	Leif Burge
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Zoe Masters
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Evelyn Riechert
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
OBWB, Communications Director	Corinne Jackson

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Office and Project Manager	James Littlely

GUESTS:

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Scott Smith (alt.)
BC Fruit Growers Association	Denise MacDonald (alt.)
Canadian Water Resources Association	Dwayne Meredith (alt.)
CH2MHill	Mark Watt
District of Coldstream	Gyula Kiss
Regional District North Okanagan	Anthony Kittell
UBC Okanagan	Grace Fan
Western Water Associates	Laurie Welch

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. ELECTION: CHAIR/NOMINATIONS FOR VICE CHAIR

Mr. Birtles was nominated as vice-chair. No further nominations were presented at second and third call for nominations; nominations for vice-chair were closed.

Mr. Birtles was declared vice-chair by acclamation.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Moved by Bernie Bauer

Seconded by Renee Clark

"That the agenda for the Dec. 12, 2013 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved."

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held Nov. 14, 2013, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna.

Moved by Rob Birtles

Seconded by Lorne Davies

"That the minutes from the Nov. 14, 2013 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved."

CARRIED

5. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on the most recent board meeting, noting a presentation from the Town of Osoyoos regarding a manganese removal pilot project.

The board also received a staff report about an Okanagan MLA and MP caucus meeting and there was significant interest in the zebra/quagga mussel issue and a potential pilot inspection program for the Okanagan.

There was discussion around the Water Conservation Quality Improvement grant program. The board voted to give priority to projects that meet the goals within the strategic plan. The call for applications went out today.

Staff are planning a number of activities for World Water Day/Canada Water Week, March 16-22.

Also, the Okanagan was chosen by Tides Canada as one of three locations in Canada for an RBC Blue Water-funded strategic workshop to address urban water issues. The Okanagan was chosen for its leadership in this area and the work being done on Make Water Work. The focus for the Okanagan session is on growing the MWW campaign and residential water conservation efforts in the valley.

The board approved funding for a land use inventory update to the OBWB's water demand model and the information will be made available to local governments.

Finally, the board received a letter from Interior Health confirming it will be developing a standard response protocol for blue-green algae.

6. WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL – 2014 OBJECTIVE AND GOALS

Mr. Jatel provided a framework for the discussion with a brief presentation.

Mr. Jatel noted there are plans for an update to the existing Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS).

During the discussion it was suggested that work on groundwater be made a priority. It was also noted that the existing strategy be reviewed and efforts be made to move forward on the issues named within the report. Mr. Jatel agreed, adding the council should review the list and ensure that the issues identified are still priorities.

Additional comments:

- The OBWB is continually asked to justify its existence. Perhaps these progress reports in simple metrics are not strong enough. Data that shows the improvement and maintenance of good water quality, despite climate change, population growth, etc., may be helpful.
- The council should be working towards implementing an Ag Water Reserve.
- As we head into another election, the Water Board and Council needs to raise awareness for the important work its doing and its successes. The SWS can help frame that discussion, around the importance of the work and successes.

7. GUEST SPEAKER: RDNO REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY (RGS) & WATER IMPLICATIONS

Anthony Kittell, Regional Growth Strategy Coordinator

Mr. Jatel introduced Mr. Kittell.

Mr. Kittell provided an overview of the RGS process for RDNO. He noted that the objective was to develop a strategy through collaboration which could be implemented and monitored. The board adopted the strategy unanimously, however it was understood that limited resources meant that the regional district could only address a handful of actions over the implementation period.

A major issue that needed to be addressed in the plan was population growth – estimated to reach another 25,000 by 2031. There are nine inter-related policy areas – six of which address water directly, he added.

As part of the strategy a full-cost accounting for the cost to provide of water was considered.

There was much discussion around the presentation, including a question around municipal compliance with the RGS. Mr. Kittell responded that there are formal and informal mechanisms in place including arbitration if necessary. However, this is why collaboration from the beginning is important he added.

In response to a question about whether water availability was considered in determining potential growth, Mr. Kittell said no, but that servicing must be in place to approve development. For these areas to develop to a residential standard, it must have water and sewer services.

8. WATER ACT MODERNIZATION (WAM) UPDATE

Mr. Jatel provided an update on the WAM process, noting that council's report and recommendations to the board were accepted and forwarded to the province.

The Water Sustainability Act is expected to go to first reading in spring 2014 and the OBWB will be able to provide feedback again at that time. Some council members noted the importance of being able to review the legislation and regulations before it is passed.

Mr. Furness added that the province had the same issue previously with the Riparian Area Regulations and it operates as a continuous improvement model.

9. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Jatel invited council members to come forward with topics of interest to be covered at upcoming meetings. He also invited feedback regarding potential business models to address zebra/quagga mussels in the Okanagan.

Mr. Dobson suggested feedback on the mussel issue be included as part of members' updates.

10. ROUNDTABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Ms. Clark: Greater Vernon Water is looking at hiring water ambassadors for summer. Re. mussels: believe Idaho's outreach model should be adopted – one on-one discussions with boaters, etc. but also boat washes and restrictions. RDNO is looking at procedures for identifying blue-green algae. The regional district has removed itself from the Okanagan Irrigation Management (OKIM) Tool project aimed at helping the ag. sector save water. RDNO is still looking at ways to make it useful to orchardists and farmers. Looking forward to 2014 and the work of council: water supply and demand is really important.
- Dr. Guy: CWRA's national conference is in Hamilton June 2-4. My wish for 2014 is to see more rigorous measuring and monitoring of our progress.
- Mr. Birtles: Looking at who our collaborators could be on invasive species, Columbia Basin Trust and Fraser Basin Council. They could help prevent invasives from coming into our watershed. IHA is looking at how best to work with smaller water suppliers and whether we will concentrate on enforcement inspections, or educational inspections. My wish is to move closer to an Okanagan source protection plan.
- Mr. Meredith: Performance metrics in the basin could be very useful for the Sustainable Water Strategy. My wish is to develop the performance matrix.
- Mr. O'Keefe: Real estate is improving, and we are seeing more Albertans here.
- Mr. Kiss: The cost of the Greater Vernon Master Water Plan will be difficult to sell to the public. My wish is to have a more reasonably priced WMP for 2014.
- Mr. Rogalski: Env. Canada's Paul Kluckner announced his retirement effective in July. My wish is also to see the development of a performance matrix.
- Dr. Fan: I'm organizing a sustainability symposium for UBCO's management department next year. I'm also willing to provide my findings on this council to the board and council in June.
- Ms. Bennest: I'm pleased to hear that politicians are paying attention to the Z/Q mussel issue and I hope that a response can be found quickly. My wish for 2014 is to see this addressed.
- Ms. MacDonald: Last spring we had a meeting with MOE on the WAM process. Out of that meeting with farmers, it was determined that more information (e.g. a one-page flyer) to be delivered to Okanagan irrigators/farmers could be useful.
- Dr. Smith: I would like to see us modernize how we manage our community watersheds.
- Dr. Neilsen: We will be updating the land-use database in the North and Central Okanagan, and next year in the South Okanagan. Hopefully we will also be able to update the non-agricultural side, identifying parcels that have been irrigated. My wish is that the Water Board facilitate a discussion between the modellers and the regional planners, so that we have a sense of where the growth is going to occur.
- Ms. Bakelaar: An Okanagan Wetland Strategy workshop was held in December with strong attendance, indicating this is a priority in the Okanagan. The RDCO's RGS has gone out to member municipalities for approval. They will have 60 days to respond.
- Mr. Pike: I've been re-appointed the chair for WSABC for another year. Bob Hrasko has been appointed vice-chair. Patty Meger will fill in at the council once confirmed. WSC council members should consider attending an occasional OBWB board meeting – it would probably serve both bodies well. My wish is to have the province help us update SEKID's domestic water system.
- Mr. Ough: Re. Z/Q inspection stations, the OBWB should reconsider its role and perhaps take on a stronger one. The OBWB and its WSC are very strong stewards in the local basin and there's interest. Mr. Furness added that a committee of council could possibly be struck to help develop a plan.
- Mr. Dickinson: City of Vernon begins budget discussions soon. My wish is that awareness and acceptance of reclaimed water would become a reality.

- Mr. Furness: FLNRO is working on a cumulative effects project (looking at cumulative effects on the environment). It is gaining recognition among elected and is intended to help make informed decisions. Re: Riparian Area Regulations, training is being done with QEPs, then local government staff and elected officials. FLNRO is also working on wetlands as a major focus in 2014. My wish for the WSC in 2014 is to look at performance measures.
- Mr. Davies: BCWF convention is in Kelowna April 8-9. My wish is for some groundwater legislation.
- Dr. Bauer: Canadian Water Network has put out a call for proposals for a project to integrate risk management into water decision making. My wish for 2014 is to develop some metrics and further the water sustainability plan.
- Ms. Welch: With the interest in groundwater, perhaps there is interest in renewing the council's groundwater committee. In addition to my regular work, I am now assisting with a newsletter for an international association of hydrogeologists.
- Mr. Allard: Dave Rudolph, an eminent hydrogeologist, will be speaking at an upcoming Canwell conference in the Okanagan. Council members are encouraged to go hear him. My wish is for a pilot project to get some groundwater regulations in place.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: We're working with Ms. Welch on a decision tool for water licencing in the valley. WWF and Loblaws have grants which could be useful for wetland projects. OBWB is working with OXA, SOG and others to develop a grant proposal to RBC for a valley-wide water conservation project, extending the work of Make Water Work.
- Chair Dobson: Based on the feedback today regarding WSC priorities for 2014, I will speak with Mr. Jatel and Mr. Birtles regarding next steps.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be at the Best Western Inn on February 13, 2014.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Moved by Rob Birtles

"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of December 12, 2013 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director