

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, February 11, 2010, AT THE KELOWNA AND DISTRICT FISH AND GAME CLUBHOUSE, 4087 CASORSO ROAD, KELOWNA, BC

Council Members:

PRESENT

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	Ted van der Gulik, Vice Chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada	Doug Edwards
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
City of Kelowna	Mark Watt
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Dan Millar
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Ministry of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Science	Steve Matthews
Ministry of Environment, Water Stewardship	Ken Cunningham
Oceola Fish and Game Club	Lorne Davies
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Okanagan College	Douglas MacLeod
Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society	Mark McKenney
Regional District North Okanagan	Anna Page
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Jillian Tamblyn
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

REGRETS

BC Ground Water Association	Doug Geller
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
Community Futures	Don Main
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Gwen Bridge
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Howie Wright
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Chris Radford
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program	Bryn White
Urban Development Institute	Bal Poonian

Staff:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Office and Grants Administrator	Genevieve Dunbar
OBWB, Communications and Research Coordinator	Corinne Jackson

Others:

Ministry of Tourism, Culture & the Arts (MOTCA), Trails Manager - Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch	John Hawkings
MOTCA, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism division	Peter Walters
MOTCA, Regional Manager Southern Interior Recreation(East) - Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch	Wade Anderson
Kelowna Capital News	Judie Steeves
Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club	Doug Flintoft
Ministry of Environment, OWSC Source Protection Cttee.	Solvej Patschke
Ministry of Environment, Water Stewardship	Conrad Pryce (alternate)
OBWB Director/Water Supply Association of BC	Toby Pike
South East Kelowna Irrigation District	Bill Caswell
UBC Okanagan	John Janmaat
UBC Okanagan student	Lisa Dahreuge

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Dan Millar

Seconded by Denise Neilsen

“That the agenda for the February 11, 2010 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held January 14, 2010, at Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club clubhouse, Kelowna

Amendments: Several small amendments to the minutes were suggested and incorporated.

Moved by Lorne Davies

Seconded by Hans Buchler

“That the minutes from the January 14, 2010 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on the Feb. 2 Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting and noted a presentation from the Okanagan Xeriscape Association (OXA), adding OBWB funding helped the group get started. The OXA has launched a website at www.okanaganxeriscape.org that includes a plant database, making it easy for residents to plan their own xeriscape yard. The group’s goal this year is to have institutional examples of xeriscaping, noted Dr. Warwick Sears.

The board was also told about the federal-provincial funding announcement for B.C. that was held in West Kelowna on January 25, in-part announcing Phase 3 funding for the Okanagan’s Water Supply and Demand Project.

Also at the board meeting, directors were provided with an update on World Water Week, being held March 22 to 26. The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen was awarded a grant to assist with the sewer extension in rural Osoyoos, and Dir. Doug Findlater reported on a meeting he attended with the province, regarding the trails policy in the Bear Creek watershed.

In addition, said Dr. Warwick Sears, there was an update on the Antwerp Springs water contamination which, at the time of the OBWB meeting, was still under investigation. In the meantime, she reported, customers had been switched to the Duteau Creek water source. There was also discussion around the Interior Health Authority’s requirement for water suppliers to provide filtration as part of its work to ensure high quality drinking water, noted Dr. Warwick Sears.

Finally, the board had questions around the Water Act Modernization (WAM) process and is looking forward to seeing the recommendations from the Water Stewardship Council’s WAM subcommittee.

5. ROUND TABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

Council members provided an update on their organization's activities.

- Dr. Janmaat: Currently working to have a water demand survey go out by mail this week.
- Mr. MacLeod: Okanagan College is creating a Centre of Excellence in Penticton and water management is an important part of the facility. Water quality technology is also of interest to us.
- Dr. Guy: Phase 2 of the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand (OWS&D) study is coming to a close. Have been working on the Stewardship Council's Water Act Modernization subcommittee.
- Mr. Davies: Ocoela Fish and Game Club is holding its annual wild game banquet Feb. 20. The club is also planning to do some restoration projects.
- Mr. Millar: The Similkameen River Appraisal level study, looking at the proposed Shanker's Bend water storage project, suggests three dam options. It's interesting reading and can be found at http://www.okanoganpud.org/Similkameen/final_report.pdf.
- Dr. Warwick Sears: Plans are underway for a storm water management conference in October or November co-hosted by OBWB and the BCWWA. Organizers are looking for examples of what can be done. The conference will also look at flood control and water improvement.
- Mr. van der Gulik: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands held a drought management workshop for the agricultural community a month ago. We are looking to hold additional workshops, with Ministry of Environment, around the province which would be open to all. Our Ag Water Demand Model for the OWS&D project is now being reviewed by the province.
- Dr. Neilsen: Climate change workshops are being held around the country, looking at how the federal government should incorporate climate change into its planning. Room is still available for presentations to the Canadian Water Resources Association meeting in Vancouver this June.
- Dr. Bauer: Busy with the Stewardship Council's WAM sub-committee. Sitting on a steering committee with Mr. van der Gulik, run by Ministry of Environment (MoE), that is planning a symposium for August or September, to develop a provincial science water strategy. In addition, there is an Aggregate Task Force looking at gravel extraction in the Central Okanagan Regional District. I am sitting on a technical advisory committee to this task force as it pertains to water issues. If there are issues you feel need to be addressed, let me know.
- Mr. Jatel: The WAM sub-committee was acknowledged for their time and work on developing recommendations for the board. Members include Vladimir Agatonovic, Lorraine Bennest, Gwen Bridge, Hans Buchler, Bill Caswell, Doug Geller, Brian Guy, John Janmaat, Dan Millar, Bernie Bauer, Anna Warwick Sears and Nelson Jatel. There's great interest from the Water Board and MoE in the recommendations. The first virtual drought planning workshop (webinar) is set for Feb. 18 – please register. The webinar will include information from AgCanada, Environment Canada, MoE, and the International Joint Commission. World Water Week plans are underway with UBC-O. The week will include a presentation by Robert Sandford, Canadian Chair of the UN International Decade "Water for Life." For details visit www.ubc.ca/okanagan/speakers. There will also be presentations by other water experts, students, and fine art presentations. In addition, a contract for the Stream Water Use Reporting Tool project is being finalized by the steering committee.
- Ms. Jackson: A meeting was held with Think Marketing about the WaterWise strategy to provide them with feedback from a focus group, looking at the mock-up of the website, posters and other components of the project. There was discussion around timelines and content for the website.
- Ms. Dunbar: Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant applications are due in a week. We will be using a new software tool to assess applications uniformly with consistent criteria. Also, we are starting on a project to look at former sewage facilities grants and how we track them.
- Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo: As the new OCCP coordinator, I am working on Sustainable Planning for the Okanagan Environment (SPOKE) project which will provide a hub of online information to assist sustainable planning. We are also continuing work on the Foreshore Inventory Mapping Project.
- Ms. Tamblyn: Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen has recently taken on the operation of Sage Mesa Water System. Foreshore Inventory Mapping is being done on the south shore. And, there's a lot of interest at RDOS in the OBWB's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement grants.
- Ms. Bennest: BC Fruit Growers Association is facing a difficult time. We're watching the water

situation closely. The high Canadian dollar is also a problem for us. And, Washington State has a very large crop of apples this year. They have dropped their prices below production costs, which makes it even harder for local fruit growers to make a profit.

- Mr. Edwards: Surveys are being done on the Lower Fraser, looking at water tables. A meeting was held in Abbotsford, looking at developing a policy around gravel extraction. The biggest issue is what goes back into a pit after all the extracting is done. We are working on a proposal around additional groundwater monitoring. There are some similarities to the UBC-O/OBWB Agriflex proposal and perhaps we can collaborate if both get approved.
- Ms. Page: The boil water notice has been downgraded to a water quality advisory in Coldstream and customers are no longer on the Antwerp well source. Much attention at RDNO is focused on issues in the Shuswap and recently attended a meeting in that area about river stewardship.
- Mr. Pryce: Our MoE division is looking at how to work together better with the OBWB. For example, how to best share information if we're heading toward another drought year. The planned webinars are great. The earlier we prepare the better, and looking at how to adapt to it is a good direction.
- Mr. Cunningham: Ministry of Environment staff has had some discussion around the Water Act Modernization with John Slater, Parliamentary Secretary for Water Allocation.
- Mr. Matthews: We're refining and filling in data gaps in the watersheds. We're working towards protection and drought management planning.

6. PRESENTATION

John Hawkings – Ministry of Tourism, Culture & the Arts (MOTCA), Trails Manager with Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch,

Peter Walters – MOTCA, Assistant Deputy Minister – Tourism division, and

Wade Anderson – MOTCA, Regional Manager Southern Interior Recreation (East) with Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch

Recreation and Water Quality in the Okanagan Basin

Multi-use watersheds: Bear Creek

Peter Walters introduced discussion, noting a recent meeting regarding concerns around trail use in the Bear Creek Watershed. The meeting included Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts Kevin Krueger, Westside-Kelowna MLA Ben Stewart, the Westbank Irrigation District, Water Supply Association of BC Chair and OBWB Director Toby Pike, and West Kelowna Mayor Doug Findlater.

The ministry agrees water issues in the Bear Creek Watershed are paramount, noted Walters, adding MOTCA has agreed to bring more senior levels of government to the table and put a moratorium on new trail development until an advisory committee can identify appropriate plans for the area. A drinking water advisory committee is also being developed for Bear Creek.

According to John Hawkings, a Trails Strategy for BC was drafted in 2008. Its vision was to have a sustainable network of trails with opportunities for all, benefiting trail users, communities and the province. Meetings were held and the ministry asked for feedback on the strategy.

As a result of that feedback there have been revisions and the guiding principles now include sound environmental stewardship and management, collaborative planning, respect for other resource users and existing tenure holders.

Bear Creek is made up of 35,000 ha – an area that has a long history of unmanaged recreation use, noted Hawkings. It includes 800 km of forest roads (active and inactive), and 300 km of user-built trails. There are also two watersheds in the area – both supply domestic drinking water. And, there are several competing issues at play in the area including recreation, forestry, residential development, mining, forest fire and forest disease.

In order to address these issues the province is using various planning approaches, including

working with First Nations, interagency regional management committees, and encouraging stakeholder engagement.

In managing the area, the ministry is using a 4E approach: education, engineering, enforcement and evaluation, Hawkings added, saying \$1 spent on education equals an estimated \$10 in enforcement, so education is very important.

Education includes signage, trail patrols, open houses, and motorized sound checks – all in an attempt to create awareness among users about the need to protect the resource. With engineering, professionally designed and engineered sustainable trails are being developed. This includes the building of structures to mitigate impacts on water, soil and the environment. On the enforcement front, the province is working with Conservation Officers, peer-based trail patrols, RCMP, Ministry of Forests and Range – Compliance and Enforcement staff, and District Recreation Officers. In the next couple of years, new Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) legislation will be introduced added Hawkings. Finally, evaluation includes water quality analysis, sediment monitoring, and compliance monitoring,

(Mark Watt entered the room at 2:19 p.m.)

According to Hawkings, more than \$1 million has been spent in the past two years on mitigating water quality impacts in Bear Creek, through closing trails, rehabilitating others, installing fences and signs, volunteer trail patrols, conducting water quality assessments, and implementing education programs.

Most users don't want to break the rules but they need to know what they are, Hawkings said, adding signage, patrolling and other educational tools help. And just as important, the message cannot be that we don't want people to have fun, but rather there are important reasons for having these rules. And, by getting the riders involved in managing this resource, they take pride in it.

With 50 watersheds in Okanagan and a heavy concentration of motorized recreation, this is an important issue here, Hawkings concluded.

Dr. Warwick Sears questioned what the current capacity is for a site to accept motorized vehicles. Hawkings responded that it is monitored on a site-by-site basis and managing through exclusion and enforcement alone does not work.

Mr. McKenney agreed with the importance of education over enforcement, but asked how much enforcement there is when our Conservation Officers are already stretched to provide service. Hawkings agreed there isn't the capacity for strong enforcement, again noting the importance of education. However, Hawkings added, the new ORV legislation will make enforcement easier because it will link the machine to the name and address of the owner and help identify users. ICBC will be involved in this, he said.

All three MOTCA officials agreed that enforcement has been difficult with few officers available and, in the past, each ministry was responsible for enforcing in their own jurisdiction. However, Mr. Anderson noted, the various departments are working in a more integrated manner now, including on enforcement.

In response to a question from Mr. Pike about introducing a user-pay system to help with costs, Hawkings said users need to see they're getting something for their money. The ministry is looking at trail user-fees but recognize that funds need to go back into that service (e.g. for trail maintenance).

Dr. Janmaat suggested that enforcement is part of education, explaining the message to users should be that if an area doesn't improve it will be closed. Mr. Hawkings agreed and noted riders are being asked to help police the area and educate their fellow riders that the area could be lost if

they don't act responsibly.

Dr. Neilsen suggested Crown land use is likely to expand and asked if there was any likelihood of restricting use in these areas. Mr. Hawkings said there are legislative controls that don't allow mud-bogging, or tree-cutting, etc. But there are 70 million ha of Crown land outside the parks system. As such, the ministry is looking at where there is intensive use and establishing recreation sites in these areas so that they can be managed. This is what it is looking to do in Bear Creek, he added.

The Okanagan and Fraser Valley are especially recreation heavy so these are the areas being focussed on. Mr. Anderson said the approach at this time is to mitigate where there is use (e.g. put in outhouses and have someone look after garbage if the ministry sees an area being heavily used).

In answer to Mr. Pike, Mr. Hawkings said that it was clear from public consultation on the 2008 draft Trail Strategy that there was not enough emphasis put on environment. Another draft has been developed acknowledging environmental issues, but the ministry recognizes more work needs to be done.

(Lisa Dahreuge entered the room at 3:10 p.m.)

7. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Bernie Bauer, Sub-committee representative

- Update: Water Act Modernization (WAM) – Committee Report / Discussion

Dr. Bauer introduced discussion around the subcommittee's work. The issues reviewed and recommended on are based on the province's own stated areas of interest: Improving Water Governance, Flexible and Efficient Water Allocation, Groundwater Regulation, and Protection of Stream Health and Aquatic Environments.

The committee includes Bernie Bauer, Hans Buchler, Lorraine Bennest, Bill Caswell, Brian Guy, Nelson Jatel, Dan Millar, and Anna Warwick Sears. There was also input from Vladimir Agatonovic, Gwen Bridge, Doug Geller, John Janmaat, and Denise Neilsen.

Improving Water Governance recommendations:

There was general consensus with Dr. Warwick Sears suggestion that the recommendations not promote the OBWB model, but rather "a mechanism to allow regions to manage water issues, like the OBWB." Dr. Guy added the recommendations should avoid being prescriptive.

Mr. Pike added that it is important not to suggest downloading onto local jurisdictions when water management is a provincial responsibility.

Mr. Cunningham asked for greater clarification around suggesting First Nations as full participants. There was discussion around the treaty process and how it is still unclear what First Nations will be requesting for water. Dr. Bauer suggested that being vague may be appropriate in this instance, but agreed with Mr. Buchler that perhaps First Nations inclusion should also be included in the recommendations under "Governance."

Mr. Pryce noted the province is holding First Nations workshops to ensure their input in the WAM process.

Flexible and Efficient Water Allocation recommendations:

Mr. van der Gulik said he was happy to see water storage addressed since it makes sense to be able to carry over captured storage as part of a drought strategy. Also, with the

Okanagan Water Supply and Demand project already underway, it might make sense to do an Agriculture Water Reserve pilot project here.

Mr. Hrasko noted that recognition of the need for conservation is missing from most licences. He agreed that conservation needs to be formally recognized in the Water Act since we have over-allocated some water sources.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that the recommendations include allocation planning to determine what is available and what's needed. And, he noted, Ministry of Environment struggles with the number of projects they are currently required to look at each year and how more could be put under regulated activity, freeing them up to look at fewer adjudicated items. Mr. Watt agreed. Dr. Bauer asked Mr. Cunningham to provide some wording around notification versus licences which will then be passed along and the board will determine if it wants to include it in their recommendations.

Groundwater legislation recommendations:

Mr. van der Gulik noted that if we want to have groundwater licencing it's important to do the science and determine what is out there and then let the province bring in the legislation. Also, it's important that in introducing this that we make it clear we are not looking to licence people's domestic wells. Mr. McKenney agreed. Dr. Guy suggested giving examples (e.g. regarding domestic, versus minor and major wells). He stressed his concern about being too prescriptive here and further suggested changing some of the "recommendations" to examples.

Ms. Dahreuge asked about the interest in groundwater and geothermal interaction. Dr. Bauer said it is of interest to the Stewardship Council and something could be included in the recommendations around this.

Mr. Edwards added that Alberta required wells to be registered. There was no charge for registering but the province had information workshops because there was a lot of suspicion. It was explained to the public that it was in their best interest to register so if someone else registered a well near them it would be on record that they were registered first.

Mr. McKenney suggested volunteer registration occur when a property changes ownership so that unknown wells are eventually registered.

Protection of Stream Health and Aquatic Environments recommendations:

Ms. Bennest noted that it is important to note how stream health affects quality of life here. Dr. Bauer asked that Ms. Bennest send some recommended wording to the sub-committee.

Mr. van der Gulik suggested removing the reference to licencing and livestock in this section since it is already mentioned elsewhere.

Dr. Warwick Sears suggested there be some reference to dock approvals under the Water Act because it is an environmental issue. Dr. Bauer agreed. Mr. Price added that this is a multijurisdictional issue. That a dock licence comes through ILMB, but it should also require something for working in and around a stream, stating that it meets certain standards. Dr. Bauer agreed and asked that a suggestion be provided to the sub-committee.

Dr. Bauer added that recommendations will be redrafted over the next week and will be provided to the board by its March meeting.

Dr. Guy requested that when the OBWB presents these recommendations to the province that it ask for a follow-up meeting to discuss the report. Mr. van der Gulik agreed this is a good idea. Mr. Jatel responded that this is the intention.

Mr. Watt said that local government will be submitting their own input as part of WAM.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that this document does not include everything and represents what the Stewardship Council agrees on. She encouraged council members to take advantage of the Living Water Smart blog and provide specific input from their group.

Ms. Bennest stated that the process seems rushed and asked to see the recommendations before they are forwarded to the board. She doesn't like the appendix and some other parts, she added. The simpler we keep it and less prescriptive the better, Bennest said.

Mr. Pryce added that he would like the submission to make note that this is the OBWB's first submission and they would like to provide follow-up comment.

Mr. Buchler asked if the appendix was going to be provided as part of the submission. Mr Jatel said that was the intention, but Dr. Bauer added that the sub-committee recognizes this is a concern.

7.2 OBWB 2010 Goals & Objectives

Mr. Jatel explained that the Goals and Objectives for 2010 went to the board in December. If any council members have suggestions, please let him know.

7.3 Other business

Mr. Jatel noted that Celine Davis, Manager of Science and Adaptation with the Ministry of Environment's Water Stewardship Division, has been invited to speak about the drought workshops at the next OWSC meeting.

Regarding the NASA project, Mr. Jatel, Ms. Neilsen and Dr. Guy, have been looking at what technologies are available. The project would supplement the information coming out of the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand study. Mr. Jatel noted that the group is now looking at what resources are available to help develop this project.

8. NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held March 11, 2010 at Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club clubhouse.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Moved by Ted van der Gulik

"That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of February 11, 2010 be adjourned."

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director