

Minutes

International Kootenay Lake Board of Control Annual Public Meeting

Kootenai River Inn
7169 Plaza Street
Bonners Ferry, Idaho

Thursday, September 30, 2010
7:30 – 9:30pm

Attendance:

	United States	Canada
Chair	Colonel Anthony Wright (host)	Kirk Johnstone
Members	Steve Lipscomb (absent)	Glen Davidson
Secretary	Amy Reese	Daniel Millar
Guests		

Irene Brooks (IJC Commissioner - USA), Dr. Mark Colosimo (IJC), Marko Aaltomaa (Fortis BC), Jamie King (Fortis BC), Dwain Boyer (Environment BC), Amy Stevenson, BC Hydro.

And from the community

Bill Michalk (Bonners Ferry), Bob Graham (Bonners Ferry Emergency Service), David Sims (City of Bonners Ferry), John Drysdale (Creston), Dan Dinning (County Commissioner), Patty Perry (KVRI), Llewellyn Matthews (Castlegar)

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Colonel Anthony Wright welcomed the guests and board members and secretaries introduced themselves. Colonel Wright introduced Commissioner Irene Brooks and Mark Colosimo, Engineering Advisor to the IJC. With a short presentation, he reviewed the evening's agenda, introduced Board members and explained the role of the International Joint Commission and the Board.

IJC and the Kootenay Order Context

Col. Anthony Wright gave a short presentation outlining the sections of the Kootenay Order related to lake levels. (See presentation). Dan Millar gave a presentation on the mechanics of the order and displayed a lake level hydrograph for 2010. Spring rise occurred this year on April 17th. He noted that water levels on the lake have been kept below the upper limit set by the Order during the year to date. He also explained the frequency with which control of the lake level is at Grohman Narrows versus at Corra Linn Dam.

Question: when does the lowering formula limit the Lake elevation. Col Wright: During high flow season.

Question: The order also stated that the Groman Narrows dredging was supposed to be maintained. There is concern over the years that there has not been any dredging to maintain the capacity of Grohman Narrows. Concern for example in 1997 was that lack of dredging increased backwater in the channel. Has there been any maintenance or dredging in the Narrows recently? As far as I know it hasn't been dredged in 40 years.

Answer – Glen Davidson: We don't believe the Narrows has filled in, but there has been talk in recent years that there could be additional benefits from dredging. I'm not aware of any cross sections/surveys of this area to answer these types of questions. It is a question we ask in Canada. I don't think there is a huge sediment source there.

Public Comment: I have heard the opposite from locals.

Davidson: give us some time to investigate. We'd also like to come back to this with a figure.

Question: I built a breakwater on the lake at low water, and your graph there shows it was fairly low, but it wasn't as low as the previous year, so it gave me some problems there. From September, the water seems to increase again in September. There are 1500 of us that live along the lake enjoy our beaches – is there a possibility to have the lake level not increase in September until October? Is that a possibility?

Wright: The way order is written it states August 31st. Those are maximum levels, so it is at the discretion of the applicant on whether they raise the elevation or not. You could bring that up with Fortis BC.

Kootenay Lake Levels 2010

Update on maintenance activities at Corra Linn Dam

Marko Aaltomaa presented on maintenance activities at Corra Linn Dam and future projects. Future projects include the unit life extension program, involving complete rebuilding of the generating units at all of their facilities. There are two units to be rebuilt at Corra Linn Dam. New runners, rewind generators and new control systems. Currently Unit 1 is underway with completion January, 2011. Unit 2 will start August, 2011 and be done 5 months later.

Second project is to refurbish spillway gates. In 2011, Fortis BC will be doing a study to determine an isolation scheme, when approved will allow for planning for spillgate refurbishment. One alternative we will consider is the needle beam cofferdam. Fortis BC will need to go through National Energy Board approval to determine the plan. Fortis BC is also investigating to see if there are more economical solutions.

Questions and comments from the public concerning Kootenay Order and operation in 2010

Question: Question for Fortis BC – they are supposed to inform us of the lake level. A week ago I called to try to get the lake level, I spoke with the secretary, she said she'd call back and I still haven't heard from her. In the south arm there are two levels, one in Queens Bay and one in Nelson but both are quite far from me and I'd like to know the lake level closer to where I live.

Aaltomaa: Generally the way that works is that you called our 1.877 number, which is our call center, and they would send the request to our call center. We don't have any gages closer to you, but that is the best we would be able to do.

Question: There is a gage at Kuskonook. Why can't you use it?

Dan Millar: The gage belongs to Water Survey of Canada, Environment Canada. It is not a real-time gage, but data is collected when a surveyor goes out there every six weeks. The electronics aren't there for providing real-time data.

Wright: From the Board's perspective, we require two gage locations and the applicant has complied with that requirement.

Question: Previous comments have raised a question of terminology. He indicated that a maximum allowable amount. When you are researching what that says.

Wright: I'd like you to point out to me the maintenance clause; I haven't been able to find anything requiring maintenance (i.e., dredging Grohman Narrows) in the order. If you can point it out to me after the meeting.

Public Comment: I haven't read it for years, I believe there were follow-up letters. There is not a maintenance clause but it came up subsequently. For example during WWII there have been waivers and additional discussion of it.

Davidson discussed a maximum water level graph since 1931 – annual peak water levels dramatically lowered when Libby Dam came online – we are not even getting close to high water levels that we were getting before the Treaty projects came on line.

Public Comment: Look at 2006, when Corps screwed up VARQ, that is going to happen again. That is my only concern is if the Narrows becomes a choke point. If no one has looked at it, and no one has done any evaluation of it, then essentially it becomes a dam. Sometimes as little as six inches can be a

tremendous difference to us. State of Idaho groundwater studies show that 1764 to 1765 goes from 5,000 acres inundated to 20,000 acres, which can be life or death for us.

Davidson will review the order and talk with engineers to see what his engineers have found out about potential dredging.

Dwayne Boyer: This came up, an assessment was made by an engineer at Nelson and looked at the difference of the profile through that reach, but since the profile hadn't changed, they concluded that there was no infilling and no need to do cross sections. That was about 15 years ago. This is something we could easily reproduce.

Question: Earlier on your slides you showed certain flood levels indicated actions on the Lake. Is there an elevation on Kootenay Lake that should tell us we should move to an action level?

Colonel Wright went back to the commencement of spring rise slide and the rule curve slide and discussed the operating rules.

Question: Is there the ability at the dam that can reduce the backup during the Spring and do they do that?

Johnstone: Millar made a reference to the lowering formula. Basically what it specifies is that because of the excavation of Grohman Narrows, they are able to bring lake levels lower than what they would have been without the excavation. The calculation starts at the declaration of the spring rise. The pink line is the maximum level that the lake is allowed to be, an ongoing effort, to keep the lake level lower through the whole period of the freshet. The action that is taken is in April when we say now we are going to use the lowering formula.

Question: Department of Fisheries and Oceans has developed a draft recovery strategy and critical habitat – did they consult with the Kootenay Lake BOC during the development of that document.

Wright: They haven't in my knowledge, but they should first coordinate with the applicant to determine if they can operate within any required ranges.

Question: Question for Environment BC: all of these people here are interested of quantity of water but I'm interested in quality of water. I have a bottle here of Kootenay Lake water. UBC tells me there is no bacteria there. I can use for irrigation, secondary water, and in an emergency I can drink this water with UV and filtration. Question is there are three areas (Sanka, Twin Bays and the other at Mtn Shores development), why are they allowing the effluent be discharged into Kootenay Lake? What if treatment plant doesn't work? Where is the common sense here?

Davidson: I don't work for Environmental Protection folks, but most municipalities discharge treated effluent into water bodies into BC. They are monitored.

Many folks had questions outside the purview of the BOC orders and they were taken after the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm. Colonel Wright pointed guests to the website: IJC.org, click on Kootenay Lake. The Chair thanked the guests for coming.