

Meeting Minutes

Annual Public Meeting, International Kootenay Lake Board of Control (IKLBC)

Thursday, October 19, 2017
7:00 – 9:00 PM

Prestige Lakeside Resort, Nelson, British Columbia

List of Acronyms

IJC	International Joint Commission
IKLBC	International Kootenay Lake Board of Control
PCIC	Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers

IKLBC 2017 Annual Public Meeting

Attendance

	Canada	United States
Chair	Bruno Tassone (Host)	Col. Mark Gerald
Members	Ted White	Kyle Blasch
Secretariat	Gwyn Graham	Kevin Shaffer
IJC Commissioners		Rich Moy
IJC Advisors	Wayne Jenkinson	Mark Colosimo
Guests	Jamie King (FortisBC)	

Welcome, Introductions, Review of the Agenda

Canadian Section Chair Bruno Tassone opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and an introduction of the Board and a roundtable introduction of audience members (16 participants).

Bruno Tassone presented an overview of the IJC (composition, roles and activities) and the IKLBC (roles & responsibilities). Bruno also provided an overview of the IJC Order for Kootenay Lake, explaining the conditions of the Order and explained the significance of Grohman Narrows control on Kootenay Lake levels vs. Corra Linn Dam control on lake levels, indicating that when the dam is in “free fall” mode, the control point shifts to Grohman Narrows. Canadian Board Secretary, Gwyn Graham, reviewed water level management on Kootenay Lake to date and indicated where an exceedance of the IJC rule curve occurred in late March and early April, partially due to increased Libby discharges coupled with naturally high inflow conditions due to low elevation rainfall events (record rainfall for several areas of the Kootenay Basin in March).

Gwyn explained that the Applicant had operated in compliance with the IJC Order for Kootenay Lake during this period of rule curve exceedance, since they were operating in free fall mode and not creating any additional backwater effect through their operations. Conditions in June were extremely dry and this served to offset potential flooding risks that were of concern due to high soil saturation and above average snowpack accumulation in late winter and early spring.

Question (Martin Carver): What is the relationship between the IJC and Libby Dam operations?

IKLBC: The IJC Order for Kootenay Lake is strictly with regard to the downstream operations at Corra Linn Dam and does not have jurisdiction over the upstream CRT dams such as Libby Dam. The Boundary Water Treaty (IJC role) is relevant to the downstream operation since it can create a backwater effect across the Canada/US border and impact interests on the US side. The IJC implemented the Order to mitigate these transboundary backwater effects that might arise from Corra Linn operations.

Question (Robert Olsen): What's the effect of VARQ (Libby Dam operations) on the Kootenay Lake drawdown period.

IKLBC: Libby Dam operations can sometimes result in high inflows to Kootenay Lake and particularly when in tandem with intense rainfall events, the high inflows exceed the discharge capacity along the Kootenay River (even when Corra Linn dam is in free-fall discharge mode), so there can be exceedances of the IJC rule curve during the drawdown period.

Question (Gary Jackman): Given frequent occurrences where Fortis BC is unable to bring the lake down to the 1739.32 ft. low around April 1st, it's disappointing that BC Hydro won't pursue the Grohman Narrows channel capacity enhancement project. Did U.S. and/or Canadian farming impacts factor into the decision? Did the IJC assess the economic benefit of the Grohman Narrows project to the agricultural sector?

IKLBC: The BChydro studies appeared to focus on the power generation returns in conjunction with the relative flood risk reduction potential. IJC did not undertake additional studies.

The Board sought further public questions/comments.

Comment (Kootenay Lake area resident): There's a problem with your Grohman Narrows diagram (presentation). The water level (forebay and tailrace) shouldn't be shown as the same on either side. Gives wrong impression. Also, given the weather pattern changes in the Spring, Libby Dam should adjust operations accordingly.

IKLBC: We'll fix the diagram.

Question (Robert Olsen): What is the status of the Grohman Narrow channel improvement project?

IKLBC: BC Hydro is not pursuing this project as of their decision last year.

Question (John Betts): What is happening with respect to Forestry activities given the unusual climate patterns?

IKLBC: The Board does not have information on this issue but it's reasonable to assume that their activities may be affected.

Question (Martin Carver): How many Boards are there under the IJC?

Rich Moy: About 20 other Boards. There are similar issues in other Basins but context, conditions and approaches can vary.

Question (Gary Jackman): What additional tools would help system performance? (e.g. monitoring, Grohman narrows channel conveyance, etc.). The U.S. side seems to have better data.

IKLBC: Data collection in BC is good (SnowTel sites, etc.) and the national weather forecasting systems are also quite good.

Question (Ramona Faust): Concerned about VARQ and management plans. What more can be done for ecosystem improvement/protection?

IKLBC: Not strictly an IJC issue. Board is aware that Kootenay Lake isn't subject to BC Water Use Planning process because it is not strictly a BC Hydro operated reservoir.

Question (Martin Carver): Does the dam operator just follow a good will approach for operations to support kokanee?

FortisBC: Yes, the operations for kokanee are out of good will.

IKLBC: Fortis BC Corra Linn operations are subject to the conditions of the IJC Order and operate accordingly. They have a history of compliance.

Question (Kootenay Lake area resident): How well prepared is the IJC regarding public attitudes towards rivers and lakes? Is there a push to treat ecosystems as a legal entity?

IJC (Wayne Jenkinson): The IJC has implements watershed Boards in a few places and has been working with governments to explore further watershed boards.

Comment/Question (Martin Carver): Can we be the next one? The Friends of Kootenay Lake group would support this.

Question/Comment (Ramona Faust): understood that Kootenay Lake is under the auspices of the IJC. How often do CRT groups meet with the IJC? There's a lot of interest in water management around Kootenay Lake.

IKLBC: The Kootenay Board is not part of formal discussions, but some Board members are involved in other capacities.

Bruno Tassone thanked everybody and adjourned meeting at 8:30 pm.