

**RECORD OF MEETING OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL OSOYOOS LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL  
ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING AT OSOYOOS, BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Elks Hall  
October 7, 1999  
7:00 PM**

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>United States</b>
Chairmen:	Mr. Kirk Johnstone (presiding)	Garald G. Parker
Members:	Mr. Pradheep Khare (absent)	Col. James M. Rigsby
	Mr. Brian Symonds	Kris G. Kauffman
	Mr. Neil Banera (alternate)	
Secretaries:	Mr. Larry Adamache (recording)	Mr. Thomas Zembrzuski
Observers:	Mr. James S. Mattison (BCMOE)	Ms. Cynthia Barton (USGS)
		Mr. Larry Merkle (USACE)
		Mr. Ray Smith (USGS)
		Ms. Lisa Bourget (IJC)
		Mr. Ray Newkirk (WDOE)
		Mr. Christopher Fisher (Colville Confederated Tribes)

**1. Introductions**

Mr. Johnstone and Mr. Parker introduced members of the Board and IJC. There were 9 members of the public present at the meeting.

**2. Presentation by Kirk Johnstone**

Mr. Johnstone presented a series of slides on Osoyoos Lake, Zosel Dam and IJC Order.

A member of the public questioned the validity of the terms of the drought conditions. There is a serious condition with septic tanks along the lake when water level reaches 913 feet the sewage runs into the lake. That is why we wanted the level to be 912 feet. There is an agreement between the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Department of Ecology on a year-by-year basis when it is warranted - when a drought is declared and there is adequate storage in the Okanagan system it may be possible to keep the level at 912.5 feet. In most years they will be able to work that kind of arrangement but there is no guarantee.

Another member of the public asked what the current level of the Lake was. The answer was 911.24 feet.

**3. Presentation by Mr. Brian Symonds**

Mr. Symonds gave a presentation on the 1999 hydrologic conditions of the Okanagan and Similkameen watersheds. A summary of his report is appended to these minutes.

- A member of the public asked about the maximum level that has occurred on the Lake. Mr. Symonds said that the maximum level of a flood in the 1800's was reported to be about 919 feet but in recent years the maximum levels were between 915 and 917 feet. Someone has reported that the level had reached 921, but Mr. Symonds pointed out that this is the flood construction level required. A member of the public recalled that the lake level once rose to the level of the old Customs House in Oroville in 1894. This building still exists so it is possible to find out what that level was.

#### **4. Presentation by Mr. Ray Newkirk**

Mr. Newkirk stated that 1999 was an easy year for water management because there was lots of water available. All gates were out of the water until mid-June. High water occurred May 29<sup>th</sup> at 912.53 feet. The current water level of the Lake is 911.24 with a flow of 336 cubic feet per second. The water level was above 911.5 feet for 54 days due to backwater from the Similkameen River and high flow from Canada. The flow events showed that the channel capacity is in compliance with the Order.

#### **5. Public Discussion**

- A member of the public expressed concern that the water level is kept too high towards the end of April and early May. Mr. Newkirk stated that the Order of Approval must be followed so the Lake reaches 911.0 on April 1<sup>st</sup> and also that it must not go below 910.5 for the irrigation pumps. He could reduce the level as much as one-half foot if the Order were amended. Mr. Symonds explained how Lake levels are affected by inflow, outflow and backwater from the Similkameen.

- It was pointed out that there were considerable safety factors built into the project in terms of an extra gate and a dredged channel that allowed more flexibility of operation than might have occurred.

- Statement from a member of the Public that Osoyoos people feel they are being sacrificed for Okanagan Lake residents. Mr. Symonds replied that Okanagan residents felt the same way. In extreme events such as in 1948, there is little that can be done to reduce the flood levels.

- Statement from member of the Public that in the U.S. the standard set by Okanagan County for construction is 918 feet but in Canada it is 921 feet.

- Mr. Fisher asked what are the benefits of the straightening of the river channel north of Osoyoos. Could the oxbows be replaced? The straightening hasn't affected water quality, but has affected riparian areas habitat values. Mr. Symonds stated that the system could probably be operated the same but with higher operating costs if the oxbows were replaced.

- Mr. Fisher asked if the system could be manipulated to reduce the thermal barrier to fish passage. Mr. Newkirk stated that the high temperatures were due to natural heating and that system operation has no effect. Mr. Symonds noted that Canadian fisheries agencies were currently looking at how improvements can be made.

#### **6. Meeting adjourned.**