

Meeting Minutes

Annual Public Meeting, International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (IOLBC)

Tuesday, September 18, 2018
7:00 – 9:00 PM

Oroville High School Commons, Oroville, WA

List of Acronyms

IJC	International Joint Commission
IOLBC	International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control
OBWB	Okanagan Basin Water Board
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
WADOE	Washington State Department of Ecology
BCFLNRO	BC Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada

Membership

	United States	Canada
Co-Chairs	Cynthia Barton (host)	Bruno Tassone
Members	John Arterburn Col. Mark Gerald Kris Kauffman Ford Waterstrat	Ted White Sue McKortoff Brian Symonds Anna Warwick Sears
Secretaries	Andrew Gendaszek	Gwyn Graham
IJC representatives	Rich Moy (Commissioner, U.S. Section), Gordon Walker (Commissioner, Canadian Section), Wayne Jenkinson (Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section), Mark Colosimo (Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section), Paul Allen (Communications, Canadian Section)	
Guests	Al Josephy (WADOE), Jiri Bakala (Ascent Films, Inc.), Martin Suchy (ECCC)	

Welcome and Introduction

The meeting was opened at 7:00 p.m. by Cindi Barton (Board Chair, U.S. Section) with welcoming remarks and introductions of the board members and IJC Commissioners Rich Moy and Gordon Walker who were in attendance.

IJC Orders of Approval

Cindi Barton presented an overview of the IOLBC and the IJC Orders of Approval for Osoyoos Lake and discussed allowable lake levels under the rule curve established under the 2013 Supplementary Orders of Approval. She also described the role of Washington State Department of Ecology as the owner of Zosel Dam and Applicant to the IJC Order.

2018 Hydrologic Conditions

Canadian Board member, Brian Symonds, provided a brief overview of the hydrology of Osoyoos Lake, the Okanagan/Okanogan River, and the Similkameen River during 2018. A deep winter snowpack accumulated in the Similkameen and Okanagan River basins during 2018, which was measured by snow pillows in each basin. Unlike the 2017 snowpack, which was below normal until early spring (March to April), the 2018 snowpack was above normal from early winter (January to February). Forecasted and observed inflow to and level of Okanagan Lake and flow volume of the Similkameen River exceeded drought criteria and the standard non-drought Osoyoos Lake rule curve was used during 2018.

Osoyoos Lake levels exceeded the rule curve during the freshet period from late April to late June and peaked at 916.38 on May 12, 2018. This exceedance was in compliance with the IJC Orders because the gates at Zosel Dam were fully opened as of March 28 and Osoyoos Lake level was controlled by the stage of the Similkameen River and inflow to Osoyoos Lake. Inflow to Osoyoos Lake is determined by releases from Okanagan Lake Dam at Penticton and the discharge of unregulated tributaries to the Okanagan River between Penticton and Osoyoos Lake. Prior to the spring freshet and high discharge on the Similkameen River and tributaries to the Okanagan River, the maximum design discharge was released from Okanagan Lake Dam. In early May when discharge on the Similkameen River and tributaries to the Okanagan River increased, releases from Okanagan Lake Dam were decreased thereby decreasing inflow to Osoyoos Lake during the peak of the spring freshet when backwater conditions prevented outflow from Osoyoos Lake and unregulated tributaries contributed inflow to Osoyoos Lake. Osoyoos Lake levels returned to within the rule curve on June 28 and gate operations at Zosel Dam resumed on July 17. High discharge during the spring freshet also showed that the Okanagan River channel between Osoyoos Lake and Zosel Dam was able to convey 2,500 cfs in compliance with the IJC Orders.

2018 Flooding – Community Response

Board members Sue McKortoff (Canadian Section) and Ford Waterstrat (U.S. Section) presented the response to Osoyoos Lake flooding on the Canada and U.S. sides of the border, respectively.

Okanogan Valley Flooding Video

The Big Muddy, a film produced by Ascent Films and funded by the Washington State Department of Ecology showing the extent of the 2018 flooding in the Okanogan Valley from Malott, Washington to Osoyoos Lake was shown to the audience and was introduced by film maker Jiri Bakala.

Other Updates

Special Projects Updates

Board Member Anna Warwick Sears (Canadian Section) summarized distribution of the documentary “A River Film” in theaters, which was premiered at the 2017 IOLBC public meeting. Film makers are currently negotiating with public television after which the film will be distributed online.

Documentary Film Updates

Board Secretary Andy Gendaszek (U.S. Section) presented the design of high-water monuments to be installed on Osoyoos Lake in city parks in Osoyoos and Oroville in Fall 2018. He also announced a plan to place a publicly accessible webcam at Zosel Dam in Fall 2018.

Public Comments

Question from Public: Why is it not possible to bring down Osoyoos Lake to 909 feet prior to the spring freshet?

Response: It is not possible to reduce outflow from Okanagan Lake Dam to zero, plus tributaries between Okanagan Lake and Osoyoos Lake are uncontrolled, and becomes increasingly difficult to lower Osoyoos Lake levels further at low lake levels because the difference in hydraulic head at the dam is small.

Question from Public: Why is 909 in the Order?

Response: To reduce milfoil and prevent shoreline ice damage as necessary.

Comment from Public: Concern that Osoyoos Lake was flooded by water that was evacuated from Okanagan Lake.

Response: Without evacuating water from Okanagan Lake earlier, Okanagan Lake operators would not have had the flexibility to lower lake levels in mid-May when tributary contributions to Osoyoos Lake and the backwater effect from the Similkameen River were greatest. Extensive cooperation between Canada and U.S. operations helped prevent further Osoyoos Lake shore damage.

Question from Public: Why was the rule curve overruled?

Response: The rule curve was not overruled since the Zosel Dam gates were freeboarded (opened completely) in March.

Comment from the Public: Are the vertical datums for Osoyoos Lake the same across the border.

Response: For purposes of the Order, lake levels are in feet and in NAVD1929 because Zosel Dam and the USGS gage are located within the United States.

Question from Public: Would flooding have been lesser if the Similkameen River peak discharge had been later?

Response: High snow pack at all elevations and warm weather led to earlier peak; more moderate temperatures would have delayed and attenuated peak flooding.

Comment from Public: Can releases from Okanagan Lake start earlier?

Response: There are a lot of uncertainties with regard to water-supply forecasts and there are other considerations including instream flows for fish that must be met.

Comment from Public: There are invasive mussel concerns on Osoyoos Lake and a 2018 report can be found on the website osyooslake.ca.

Question from Public: What about damming the Similkameen River on the U.S. side?

Response: There is not enough space and inadequate gradient to build a dam with adequate capacity.

Comment from Public: There are invasive mussel concerns on Osoyoos Lake.

Response: 2018 report can be found on the website osyooslake.ca, link will be provided on IJC website.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 PM