

INTERNATIONAL OSOYOOS LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL
Quarterly Conference Call
Monday June 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM PDT
MS Teams

BOARD MEMBERS

Dave Hutchinson	Chair, Canadian Section
Cindi Barton (absent)	Chair, U.S. Section
Ted White	Board Member, Canadian Section
Sue McKortoff	Board Member, Canadian Section
Brian Symonds	Board Member, Canadian Section
Anna Warwick Sears	Board Member, Canadian Section
John Arterburn (absent)	Board Member, U.S. Section
Col. Xander Bullock	Board Member, U.S. Section
Kris Kauffman	Board Member, U.S. Section
Arnie Marchand (absent)	Board Member, U.S. Section

BOARD STAFF, BOARD MEMBER ASSISTANTS and GUESTS

Cameron Marshall	Secretary, U.S. Section (outgoing)
Andy Long	Secretary, U.S. Section (incoming)
Martin Suchy	Secretary, Canadian Section
Sonja Michelsen	Technical Assistant to Colonel Xander Bullock
Kate Alexander	ECCC Student Intern
Chris Leveau (absent)	Acting USGS Washington Water Science Director

IJC REPRESENTATIVES

Paul Allen	Communications, Canadian Section
Rob Caldwell	Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section
Adam Greely (absent)	Senior Advisor, U.S. Section
John Allis	Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section

ACRONYMS

IJC	International Joint Commission
IKLBC	International Kootenay Lake Board of Control
IOLBC	International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control
IWI	International Watershed Initiative
IWB	International Watershed Board
OBWB	Okanagan Basin Water Board
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

1. Introductions and Approval of the Agenda

The meeting was led by Canadian Co-Chair Dave Hutchinson who reviewed the agenda. Dave welcomed everyone and started the meeting by explaining changes to board membership. Andy Long will be replacing Cameron Marshall as Secretary, US Section, at the end of June. Col. Xander Bullock is set to retire from the Board on Aug 1 and will be replaced by Col. Sanborn. Martin Suchy (Secretary, Canadian section) introduced Kate Alexander, student intern at Environment and Climate Change Canada as a guest.

2. Review of March 2023 Conference Call Minutes

The board reviewed and approved the minutes from the March 2023 conference call with clarifications and corrections made in Section 4. Col. Bullock moved to approve the minutes and Ted White seconded the approval.

3. Hydrologic Conditions

Martin Suchy summarized the current basin conditions with a special focus on the early snow melt. In the past three months, daily precipitation has been close to the historical mean. Since the end of April, temperatures in Kelowna and Osoyoos have been warmer than normal. Snowpacks in the basin saw a rapid and early melt. The Okanagan Basin had a near-normal snowpack whereas the snow in the Similkameen Basin was well below the mean. As of June 12, all snowpacks in the region are well below normal. There are no flood advisories in the region. Drought conditions are very dry to severely dry on the Canadian side. No current drought advisories for the Okanagan.

The inflow into Okanagan Lake was above normal in early May due to the warm temperatures and snow melt but dropped off in June. The drought threshold is not expected to be met as the current inflow value is standing at 399,900 ac-ft, well above the 195 thousand ac-ft threshold outlined by condition 8i in the Order. The lake level reached 1,123.1 ft on June 1. Drought criteria 8ii will also not be met this year. However, the target set out by the Okanagan Regulation System is also not going to be met as levels have begun to drop. The peak occurred close to two months earlier than normal. The outflow of Okanagan Lake, at Okanagan Lake Dam and measured at the WSC hydrometric station (Okanagan River at Penticton) has undergone a series of reducing of outflow to preserve lake levels.

Inflows into Osoyoos Lake, measured at hydrometric station (Okanagan Lake near Oliver), are currently 1,200 cfs (34 cms). Information provided by Shaun Reimer is that this value is to be further reduced to 800cfs (22.7 cms) starting today, June 12. The Osoyoos Lake level peaked in early May and is expected to stay in compliance with the rule curve. Okanagan river at Oroville flows have mirrored the Osoyoos Lake inflows and lake level patterns. Today's temperature in Osoyoos is 38°C (100.4°F). With the high temperatures the decrease in flow trends is expected to continue due to withdrawals and evaporation losses.

The flows in the Similkameen River are near historical minimums. The volumetric flow at USGS Station Similkameen River near Nighthawk is projected to reach 783,000 ac-ft for the April-July period, meeting drought criteria 8a. A letter has been sent to the applicant (Washington Department of Ecology) indicating Condition 8 Drought Criteria will not be met, and there has been no response received requesting a Condition 10 variance.

El Niño conditions are developing in the equatorial Eastern Pacific and a hot, dry summer is predicted (ECCC, NOAA) for most of Canada and the US, including the Okanagan/Okanogan basin.

Kris Kauffman indicated that he had connected with the new Washington Department of Ecology point of contact for Zosel Dam and Washington State dam safety lead, Gary Myers. He was informed that there may be new funding to address maintenance issues with Zosel Dam. Mr. Kauffman and Ms. Barton have talked about writing to the State regarding the Board's expectation of the Applicant in terms of communications on the dam project activity. Cameron Marshall indicated he will be following up with Cindi and Andy Gendaszek about this letter. Mr. Kauffman emphasized the importance of fostering the relationship with the point of contact. This year is expected to be a relatively simple for dam operations.

4. Ice Jam Project

Cameron Marshall had early discussions with IJC advisors John and Adam regarding the Ice Jam proposal. A proposal addendum, designating responsibility of the proposal work to USGS, was drafted in December 2022. This change was recently accepted by the IJC. Nick Sutfin, a surface water specialist, has been identified by the Washington Water Science Center (WAWSC) to take over the project from Cameron Marshall. They will be meeting later this week. The administrative paperwork is in progress for the funds transfer from the IJC US Section. This transition may delay the project by a month. The intent is to produce an open file report. The idea of a presentation publication before a formal report was proposed.

5. Phase 2 Hydrologic Model Integration

Martin Suchy informed the Board that there are further delays due to a change in contracting requirements at the IJC. The IJC Procurement office has determined that the initial sole-source contract path between the IJC and NHC can not continue as planned. The proposed sole-source contract is not appropriate for this project and must be done through a competitive process, requiring a minimum of 3 bids from consulting firms. The current Statement of Work (SOW) will be used as the bidding packet. Mr. Hutchinson enquired about the potential that the board will have input on the technical specifications that play into contract selection. It is assumed that this will be the case.

The Board was disappointed with this decision as NHC has already put significant time and effort into helping to craft the current SOW. Martin brought up the possibility of having a small sole-source contract with NHC to prepare the Request for Proposal Terms of Reference, considering their knowledge on the project. Anna proposed a meeting with Rob and Martin to discuss how to mitigate potential reputational damage.

The change in contracting is estimated to push this project behind approximately 6 months. Finding contacts at various firms is the next task. Martin talked about consulting with Anna to determine potential targets.

6. Pilot IWB pre-engagement discussion

Mr. Hutchinson thanked Board members for providing a contact list to the IJC. Cameron sent the list in an email to the IJC on May 26. The IJC plans to set up meetings for later this summer. They are 2-3 weeks away from providing more specific and concrete information on these future meetings. Lauren Terbasket was identified as an important resource and first point of contact in the process of indigenous engagement.

Dave advised Board members to hold off on discussions on the Pilot Watershed Board Initiative until the IJC has provided more information.

7. Communication Plan Update

Cameron Marshall provided updates on the Communications Plan and gave an overview of the organization and contents of the current plan. New additions included adding applicants and dam operators in the key audience section. Cameron went over each of the seven objectives outlined in the plan and the strategies to meet each one.

1. Providing the Board's purpose, mandate, composition, and regular activities to key audiences.
2. Ease of access of information and data on Osoyoos Lake level and the operation of the dam.
3. Understanding factors that can influence the levels of Osoyoos Lake.
4. Information related to Osoyoos Lake that maintained by organizations other than the board.
5. Make all information available to key audiences, ensure timely responses to enquires and maintain the FAQ list.
6. Be responsive to emergent hydrological, meteorological and operations concerns of Osoyoos Lake.
7. Be transparent, post all minutes and news releases, ensuring accessibility.

Some changes have occurred since some board members have read through and signed the Plan. Revisions and suggestions were encouraged.

A priority of the board was identified as updating the FAQ list, adding any questions that are missing. Members were encouraged to send their suggestions to the secretaries within the next few weeks. The suggestions generated in the conference call included adding historical context, links, metric-imperial conversion factors, questions relating to events (i.e. floods and droughts), information on reverse flow, years with extreme events, and non-technical questions.

8. Upcoming Meeting, Presentations, Field Trips, and Appearances

The September and December quarterly calls have no placeholders yet. Emails regarding the September call should be sent out later in the week. The tentative plan is to have it the first week of September, ahead of the Annual Board Meetings.

Dates and times have been confirmed for the Annual Board and Public Meetings (October 4, 2023). The Board meeting will take place during the day from 9:30am to 3:00pm at the Senora Center. Public meeting will be held at the Senora Community Center Gymnasium, from 6:30 to 8:30pm. The online platform that will be used for the public meeting has not been confirmed, possibly keeping GoToWebinar. The field trip is planned for the morning of October 5th. The itinerary is not yet set and ideas and suggestions for stops include 9 Mile Creek, Tonasket Creek, Inkaneep Creek, Zosel Dam, Osoyoos Lake outlet, the gage at Similkameen River at Nighthawk, and the gage at Okanogan River near Oroville. Kris Kauffman cautioned visiting Zosel Dam due to the current condition of the road and general lack of upkeep.

Potential for guest presentations at the Board meetings is being explored. Two options at the moment include the Northwest River Forecast Center speaking on Water Supply Forecasts and Lauren Terbasket speaking on First Nations involvement.

The Fall appearances are the week of October 16, 2023.

9. Round table

A news release stating the end of freshet was circulated (post freshet) last week and posted on the board website.

The highwater monument on the Canadian side was damaged and ripped out. The Town of Osoyoos has contacted the sign maker and there should be a replacement in place soon. A follow up conversation between Martin and Rob will take place to figure out funding for the replacement.

Dave congratulated Col. Bullock on his new position and the meeting was adjourned 11:19 PDT.

Action Items

- A. Cameron to contact Cindi and Andy Gendaszek (former US secretary) regarding the letter to the applicant regarding the Board's expectations for communications; transfer duties to Andy Long
- B. Cameron to follow-up on the ice jam project funding and establishing meeting to transfer project to new principal investigator at the WAWSC; brief Andy Long on project details for continued follow through
- C. Martin to follow-up on the proposal Phase 2 of the Hydrologic Model Integration project for next steps
- D. Continue to update points of contact for the IWB scoping process
- E. Martin to follow-up with Rob and others to replace the damaged highwater monument in Osoyoos.
- F. Martin to contact Lauren Terbasket about guest presentation at IOLBC annual board meeting in October. First discuss with Anna.
- G. Board to contribute to and secretaries to update IOLBC FAQ list
- H. Secretaries to finalize communications plan, still needs matrix
- I. Post all approved documents (minutes and reports) to IOLBC website
- J. Martin, Andy, and Cameron to work sending out calendar invites for September and October meetings, finalizing annual Board meeting plans and field trip agenda, and establish guest speakers
 - i. Cameron to contact NOAA for PNW river forecast presentation and identify another individual to provide an update on migrating salmon in the basin
 - ii. Martin to contact Lauren Terbasket about presenting on First Nations involvement