

International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

September 21, 2011

Osoyoos, BC

United States

Chair Dr. Cynthia Barton
Members Col. Bruce Estok
 Kris Kauffman
Secretary Robert Kimbrough
Guests Commissioners: Lyall Knott, Rich Moy

Canada

Kirk Johnstone (host)
Glen Davidson
Brian Symonds
Daniel Millar

Dr. Mark Colosimo (IJC), Tom McAuley (IJC), Amy Reese (USACE), Al Josephy (Washington Department of Ecology), Gwyn Graham (Environment Canada), Joel Fenolio (USACE), Mike Laitta (IJC)



This meeting was preceded by a 2½ day Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum in the Town of Osoyoos. The forum included a large contingent of local residents from both sides of the border along with agency scientists, Osoyoos Board members and IJC Commissioners and staff.

1. Welcome and introductions

Canadian Co-Chair and meeting host Kirk Johnstone welcomed members and guests and led a round of introductions. Board Member Kris Kauffman was unable to attend the meeting as his wife had a heart attack last Friday September 16th and subsequently passed away on September 26th.

Mr. Johnstone thanked the organizers of the preceding Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum. Cindi Barton also noted, with thanks, the quality of the contractors' presentations of the Board studies at the forum.

With respect to the current and future Order, members witnessed high expectations by residents and local organizations. It was also evident that the authority, mandate, and method of operation of the Board and Commission were not generally understood.

2. Review of the agenda

After a short review, the agenda was approved by members. Mr. Johnstone went over the action items from last year's meeting, noting in particular that the gate repairs on Zosel Dam had been completed. (See 4.2 below). All other action items were either completed or well in hand.

3. Business from previous meeting(s)

3.1 Osoyoos Board FAQs on web site

Daniel Millar advised that the FAQs requested by the Board last year were completed, approved and placed on line early in 2011.

http://www.ijc.org/conseil_board/osoyoos/en/osoyoos_FAQ.htm.

3.2 Milfoil control

Milfoil control was a major discussion point at the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum. At issue was the method for removing milfoil—from lake drawdowns to hand pulling to defoliating chemicals. Interest by Okanogan County in using defoliant on the US side of the lake has led to a few letters to the Board over the past year.

The existing Orders allow a drawdown of the lake to address milfoil. The Board is aware that individuals could request this drawdown at any time. Many interests would need to be consulted before taking such action, and the Board might require that a responsible authority undertake an appropriate review before considering such a request. This issue (i.e. the negative effects of drawdown) needs to be flagged with respect to the next Order. Considerations are the limited drawdown available due to the upstream floor elevation of the dam at 906 feet, and the fact that the channel below the dam would go dry.

Commissioner Lyall Knott indicated that the issue of invasive species is being raised at numerous other IJC Boards and there may be an opportunity to connect to a broader IJC study on this subject.

3.3 Status/timeline of Plan of Studies

Robert Kimbrough reported that all eight studies are completed and on line. Presentations on all eight were given by the study authors at the forum.

Action: Dan Millar will contact the study 2&3 author, Urban Systems Ltd., to correct the few errors in the document mentioned by the author.

4. New Business

4.1 Compliance with the IJC Orders in 2011

Mr. Millar reviewed the 2011 Osoyoos Lake hydrograph. The year was a non-drought year with unusually high spring runoff. As a result of high inflows in the Okanogan and Similkameen Rivers, the lake levels exceeded the rule curve significantly from May 12 to August 11. The lake level peaked at 914.57 feet on June 13. The outlet gates in Zosel Dam were pulled completely out of the water during the period that lake levels exceed the rule curve. Upstream dam operators carefully manipulated inflows to Osoyoos Lake to lessen the June peak.

Al Josephy advised that the Similkameen may actually start to impede flow in the Okanogan River at about 6,500 cfs (lower than the customarily thought 10,000 cfs).

Action: Robert Kimbrough will check with USGS to determine if their instrumentation detected reversed flow in the Okanogan during the high water.

During the high water period, the Board received no indication of complaint by lakeside residents regarding the operation of Zosel Dam. Knowledgeable observers and residents were appreciative of efforts to ameliorate high water.

Action: In future, the Board Secretary will present the hydrograph at this meeting with a time period equivalent to the US water year, i.e., October to September. In this way, the Board will have a hydrograph that presents data back to the previous year's meeting.

4.2 Status of works and maintenance at Zosel Dam

Al Josephy presented a few photos depicting Zosel Dam maintenance. Mr. Josephy reminded members that the #3 gate had bound in a full open position early in the year. This mechanical failure was corrected by replacing upper bearings and installing new vinyl bellows on the gate screws. (See photo to the right.) He also advised that the protective log boom immediately upstream of the dam had been damaged during the high water. The boom will be replaced by a modern plastic-float boom, with anticipated work completion in October 2011.



4.3 Application for Order renewal

Al Josephy reported that, prior to submitting an application for a new Order for Zosel Dam, Washington State is interested in discussing the matter with the British Columbia Government this fall. Then the State will prepare a comprehensive application early in 2012, perhaps submitting it as early as mid-January. Note that US (governor) elections will be held in November.

4.4 Board reporting to Commission on Osoyoos studies

Tom McAuley advised Board members that the Commission sees the Board as its principle advisor. As such, the Commissioners are looking to the Board for a synthesis of the eight Osoyoos Lake studies as part of a recommendation to the Commission on a new Order. Ideally, the recommendation will include not only the technical aspects of dam operation, but also an appropriate governance mechanism (e.g., an International Watershed Initiative) for the Board and/or lake operations. It is understood that the physical aspects of Zosel Dam will not change. In that respect, the Board should report on best operations, tradeoffs, etc. However, social and ecological aspects of the lake and basin will need subsequent discussion between the Board and Commission. In due course, the Commission staff will send a letter to the Board seeking the Board's report and recommendations. If needed, additional resources are available for the Board to support work related to a synthesis of the studies.

Board members made several comments on the prospective report and the new Order as follows.

New Orders could include emergency procedures as needed for adaptive management.

If an International Watershed Initiative (IWI) were to be established in the Okanagan Watershed, it would be important to identify the relation between the IWI and Zosel Dam operation. The Board could make recommendations on an IWI, but many questions would remain unanswered. If requested, the Commission will host a webinar on the IWI for Board members.

The Board asked the IJC Engineering Advisors to provide information on the subject of individuals or groups seeking compensation for stipulations contained in new Orders of Approval.

The Commissioners should give serious consideration to the manner in which they seek the views of First Nations about the new Order. Some aspects of the river and lake, such as the spirituality of water, are uniquely important to First Nations. The best approach may be to ask the First Nations, themselves, how they want to provide input.

There is question about the relation between the fisheries flow requirements downstream of the dam (listed in the 1990 Zosel Dam Operating Procedures Plan) and the new Similkameen-Okanogan cross channel weir. Mr. Josephy advised that data for the weir will not be available this year.

The Board members agreed to meet again in the near future, aiming for a teleconference in November and a face-to-face meeting mid-December. The purpose of the first meeting will be to identify any inconsistencies and data gaps in the eight studies, and the second meeting will focus on the report to IJC.

Action: The Board Secretaries will book appropriate dates for the two meetings.

4.5 IJC timeline for Order renewal (hearings, etc.)

Tom McAuley and Mark Colosimo proposed a timeline that the Commission hopes to follow leading to a new Order.

- Fall 2011 to spring 2012 – The Osoyoos Board will provide input to the Commission on the Osoyoos Lake studies with recommendations on conditions and criteria for renewed Orders of Approval.
- April 15, 2012 – The Board will provide a draft report to the Commission that will include: an analysis of the studies performed and public comments received; a proposal for renewal of Osoyoos Lake Orders; and a review of current Board structure and responsibilities, recommending whether changes would be beneficial.
- April 2012 – The IJC will brief governments on the progress of Osoyoos Lake Order renewal at the IJC semi-annual meeting with governments.
- May 1, 2012 – The Commission will provide comments to the Board on the Board's draft report.
- May 31, 2012 – The Board will provide a final report to the Commission recommending conditions and criteria for the renewed Order.
- Summer 2012 – The Commission will conduct public hearings on the Board's proposal for the renewal of Osoyoos Lake Orders.
- September 2012 – The Osoyoos Lake Board of Control meeting will update the public on status of Orders renewal.
- October 2012 – At the semi-annual meeting with governments the Commission will brief governments on the progress of Osoyoos Lake Orders of Approval renewal.
- November 2012 or December 2012 – The Commission will issue a new or renewed Order for Zosel Dam.

5. Adjourn

Commissioner Lyall Knott, on behalf of Board and Commission, thanked Daniel Millar for his dedicated service to the Board as Canadian Secretary. Mr. Millar announced his impending retirement in December.

Kirk Johnstone thanked participants and adjourned the meeting.