

MINUTES

International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (IOLBC) of the International Joint Commission (IJC) Annual Board Meeting

Walnut Beach Resort – Vista Room
Osoyoos, B.C.

Tuesday, 10 September 2013
2:00 – 4:30 PM

Membership

	United States	Canada
Chair		Bruno Tassone (host)
Members	Col. Bruce Estok Kris Kauffman (by phone)	Glen Davidson Brian Symonds
Secretary	Marijke van Heeswijk	Gwyn Graham
Guests	Rich Moy (IJC Commissioner, U.S. Section), Dr. Mark Colosimo (IJC Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section), Ted Yuzyk (IJC Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section), Amy Reese (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), Al Josephy (Washington State Department of Ecology; WADOE)Dr. Barton (Chair IOLBC, U.S. Section) (<i>Kris Kauffman acted as U.S. Section Chair</i>)	
Regrets:		

1 Welcome and introductions

Bruno Tassone welcomed and led introductions of the Board members and guests.

2 Review of the agenda

Accepted

3 Business from previous meeting(s)

Outstanding from 2012 annual Board Meeting: Issue re. Studies 2 & 3 Corrections (from Plan of Study).

Action Item 1 - Board Secretaries to follow up with Kirk Johnstone on status of report corrections and contact Jim Mattison (Urban Systems) if necessary. Issue: *Need response from author of Studies 2 and 3 (Jim Mattison w/ Urban Systems) regarding corrections to these studies (note: author alluded to potential need for "minor correction" during presentation at Osoyoos Lake Science Forum, Sept.24, 2011).*

3.1 Implementation of 2013 Supplementary Order of Approval

Few issues have been reported - Letters received during year: e.g., letter from Mr. Tyl re. Osoyoos Lake high water and cc of a letter from Mr. Tyl re. water quality issues. The Board responded in writing to Mr. Tyl's concerns re. high water. Email was also received from others on topics related to improved communication of the new IJC rule curve and water level status and trends, with constructive input from the Okanagan Basin Water Board and Town of Osoyoos.

Communication of lake levels (part of implementation of the 2013 Supplementary Order) is receiving positive feedback from stakeholders.

3.2 IJC Osoyoos Board website (update)

The IJC has new template for board websites; the Board updated contents and photos. The Board added historical photos in the gallery section, added annotations to the maps, and added Google map with geography. The board also added a page on Osoyoos Lake water levels; this serves as a pilot to communicate better with the public.

The Board agreed on a wording change from “Lake level forecast” to “Lake Levels: Status and Trends”. The Board suggests including links to official forecasting agencies, e.g., BC River Forecast Centre and U.S. National Weather Service, Northwest River Forecast Center.

The website needs to clarify who inquiries should go to. Check if the background on the forecast page works properly. On the publications page, make it easier to find information, for example by combining annual reports and including all previous Orders. In the photo gallery, try to increase the size of the old pictures. On the map, add direction of flow and increase the font size for the Zosel Dam label.

Action Item 2 - Board Secretaries will create a website outline for review by the Board. Once the Board agrees with the outline, the Secretaries will work with the IJC to implement website changes.

3.3 *Zosel Dam Operating Procedures/Operations Manual (status update)*

The Zosel Dam operating manual has been in use since 1990. Small changes have been made in the past year, so a new version is now in draft form. There may be changes in dam safety staff at WADOE soon.

The 2013 Supplementary Order gives a normal summer operating range on the lake from 911.5 to 912 ft. Public concern will be about the operating level within that range. WA State plans to operate as close to 911.5 ft as possible during non-drought years. The operations manual will identify the operational range rather than a specific target level. The practice will be to operate a little on the high side of 911.5 ft, because the State is allowed to and because most people are happy with this (few low water/high water complaints).

The safety manual may be published on-line at the Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) website of WADOE and could be linked to the Board’s website. The operating manual is not published on-line. It is important to ensure that any information published outside of the 2013 Supplementary Order does not contradict the Order.

Action Item 3 - Board Secretaries: Add emergency contact information for dam operations to the Board website. This information is currently available on WADOE’s Zosel Dam webpage – Al Josephy is the emergency contact.

The Board will instruct the dam operator to try to keep water levels close to 911.5 ft, but the dam operator is allowed to let water levels go up to 912 ft, based on circumstances.

The Zosel Dam operator has 25 years of experience, strong community relations, and good communication with Canadian counterparts; it will continue to operate as in the past. The 2013 Supplementary Order improves the dam operator’s ability to stay in compliance, by adding flexibility. The operator believes that the public understands how dynamic the system is.

There are multiple interests related to lake levels (water levels for recreation, temperature for fish, water use etc.). In public discussions, it is important to reinforce that the IJC rule curve considers a full range of interests and issues. It is important to ensure continued good communication among U.S. and Canadian dam operators (e.g. Zosel Dam and Okanagan system dams).

IJC Board workplans usually go by calendar year, but many are multi-year (2 or 5 years). It is suggested that the IOLBC prepares a 2-year workplan that starts and ends in spring. The Board agrees that a 2-year workplan (biannual workplan) running from January through December would work well.

Action Item 4: Board Secretaries will add a draft communication plan to the workplan and define how required Board decisions are made and communicated with the public, e.g., whether or not droughts are declared. The communication plan will include such details as where to publish information, how to communicate with the Zosel Dam operator, etc.

Discharge predictions for the Similkameen River at Nighthawk are made in the U.S. by the National Weather Service (see <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=otx&gage=nitw1>).

The IJC expects all Boards to review their membership and membership criteria. Once a Board workplan is submitted to IJC, it becomes a public document. Other boards report on completed/advanced portions of their workplans.

Action Item 5: Board Members will submit comments on the draft workplan to the Secretaries

Action Item 6: Board Secretaries will revise the draft workplan (e.g., include list of expected outcomes, a Communications Plan, monitoring requirements for 25-year Order renewal, etc.) and send a revised workplan to the Board for review.

4.1.1 Consolidation of IJC Osoyoos Lake Orders of Approval

The IJC accepted all of the Board's suggested edits to the draft consolidation of the IJC Osoyoos Lake Orders of Approval, except for one item (paragraph 9 in "Explanatory Notes" – the wording needs to be consistent with previous Orders). The IJC will decide on the consolidated orders; currently it is not a legal document. Secretaries of IJC can sign it. Once it is signed, the IJC will also approve it for posting on the website. The IJC is asking the IOLBC if it agrees with the revised draft.

Board Decision: The Board agreed by consensus that it accepts and agrees with the consolidated Orders document, as revised by the IJC.

4.1.2 Ramping rate criteria

The Board considers communication with property owners regarding the timing of water level changes a key issue.

The Zosel Dam operator explained that the only public comments received were about ramping rates in the fall (Sept. 15-Nov. 1). Specifically, the concerns were about boats being stranded during water level drops. The operator would like to design and maintain a ramping rate.

The Board would like to see clearly stated goals re. ramping rates (without getting prescriptive) and then communicate these goals to the public; ramping sometimes happens with little notice over a short time (e.g., 2 days), depending on conditions.

The Board needs to understand better what the ramping limitations are from the operator's perspective. The operator can develop its own guidance, and the Board would engage in communication with the public in cases when operations need to deviate from the guidance.

Action Item 7: WA State Dept. of Ecology (Zosel Dam Operator) will develop guidance regarding ramping rates that can be posted on-line.

Action Item 8: Board Members will submit suggestions to Secretaries on approaches for communicating ramping rates to stakeholders.

Action Item 9: Board Secretaries will incorporate suggestions from Action Item 8 into the communications plan.

4.1.3 Board criteria for Condition 11 determinations

The Board was satisfied with its previous response to the IJC on this matter (this response accompanied the Board revisions to the IJC draft Consolidated Orders).

4.1.4 Communication Strategy

As mandated by the 2013 Supplementary Order and by Board directive: WA State has to publish updates on Zosel Dam operations on its website (the State has been doing this since the 2013 Supplementary Order came into effect).

The Board has added lake level status and trends information on the Board website. In addition, it linked the Board website to websites of the Town of Osoyoos and USGS that show lake level information.

The Board needs to discuss how to coordinate Washington State and Board website updates to fulfill requirements of the 2013 Supplementary Order (terms of the Order require the Applicant to provide updates – the Board will provide website links but not fulfill the requirements for the Applicant).

Washington State posts its press releases on-line. The Board Secretaries need to see Zosel Dam press releases by Washington State right away (or in advance), so they can update the Board website and send the updated information to major stakeholders. The Board would share Washington State press releases with the public.

Action Item 10: Board Secretaries will investigate mechanisms for automatically notifying the public of press releases and other significant announcements (RMS, threshold notification like in USGS websites, mail list, etc.)

4.1.5 Monitoring requirements for 25-year Order renewal consideration

Action Item 11: Kris Kauffman will send a draft document re. monitoring requirements to the Board for review. The Board suggests adding this item to the workplan (added to Action Item 6) since it is specified in the 2013 Supplementary Order (long-range workplan item).

4.2 Expansion of Board Membership (discussion of possible criteria, etc.)

The Board discussed the nature/extent of local involvement on the Board and how Board processes would function. Traditionally, the Board makes decisions by consensus. The Board could have subcommittees, new board members, e.g., representing local communities, tribes/first nations, other groups.

Commissioner Moy gave the IJC perspective that greater inclusion of local stakeholders in the Board can result in a more dynamic Board and also build trust and understanding of government. The Board members agreed that many stakeholders are interested in being involved in decision-making. IJC staff highlighted the importance of maintaining balanced Canadian and U.S. representation.

The Okanagan Water Board was discussed as an example of a Board structure with an affiliated Water Stewardship Council.

Action Item 12: Board co-chairs will arrange a future Board conference call to discuss the issue of expanded Board membership.

4.2 IJC Strategic Initiative (project ideas for Osoyoos Lake?)

The Board discussed possible strategic issues as well as more local issues (e.g. Invasive species issue and/or IJC hydrologic data harmonization vs. Similkameen backwater mitigation). The Board needs more information and discussion. Finalization of the biannual workplan should help clarify opportunities.

Action Item 13: Board will organize conference call for further discussion of IJC Strategic Initiative ideas, submit those ideas to the Secretaries for prioritization, and then decide which ones to send to the IJC.

5 Compliance monitoring

5.1 *Hydrologic conditions in 2013*

Brian Symonds provided an overview of his public presentation, to be presented that evening (see minutes of public meeting for details).

5.2 *Compliance with Orders*

Brian Symonds provided a summary of the 2013 Osoyoos Lake hydrograph through early September, showing that the Applicant has been in compliance with the 2013 Supplementary Order and that no drought declaration was required.

6 *Preparation for public meeting & review of public meeting agenda*

Canadian Board Secretary to set up and review presentation with Canadian co-chair ahead of public meeting.

7 *Meeting adjourned by Bruno Tassone.*

Note: Board members attended a field visit to Zosel Dam in the morning of September 11th, 2013, to tour the structure and receive information on operations and maintenance. Al Josephy (Washington State Dept. of Ecology) led the tour with the assistance of Tom Scott (Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation DistrictID).