

**Minutes  
of the  
Annual Public Meeting of the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control  
Oroville, Washington  
October 28, 2014**

List of Acronyms

FLNRO	Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
IJC	International Joint Commission
IOLBC	International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control
OTID	Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District
WADOE	Washington State Department of Ecology

IOLBC members:

Canadian Section: Bruno Tassone (chair), Brian Symonds, Glen Davidson

U.S. Section: Cynthia Barton (chair), Kris Kauffman, Col. John Buck

Cynthia Barton (U.S. Section chair) opened the meeting at 7 PM to welcome attendees and introduce IOLBC members.

Cynthia Barton and Brian Symonds gave an overview of the IJC, IOLBC, compliance with the IJC Orders for Osoyoos Lake, hydrologic conditions and lake levels in 2014, review of drought criteria, and new developments. Selected notes from the presentation:

- The most important control on Osoyoos Lake levels and flows in the Okanagan/Okanagan River system is regulation of Okanagan Lake, which is upstream of Osoyoos Lake and controls about 75% of flow through the watershed.
- Snowpack was above average at Mission Creek Snow pillow (an important indicator for spring hydrologic conditions in the upper Okanagan River basin). Snow had melted by late June.
- Snowpack was mostly close to average at Blackwall Peak snow pillow (an indicator for spring hydrologic conditions in the Similkameen River). Snow had melted by late June.
- Water in British Columbia is managed for variety of purposes, including water supply, flood control, recreation, etc.
- Once flows in the Similkameen River at Nighthawk reach ~10,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), backwater conditions develop in the Okanagan River. Similkameen River flows exceeded 10,000 cfs during the latter half of May and during two brief periods in June.
- Drought conditions were not declared in 2014 (as per drought criteria specified in Condition 8 of the IJC Supplementary Order of Approval for Osoyoos Lake, dated January 29, 2013).
- The gates at Zosel Dam were fully open starting May 7, 2014.
- There were three brief periods during which Osoyoos Lake levels deviated from the rule curve: April 6-8 (minor deviation due to changing inflows to Osoyoos

- Lake), May 16-June 5 (large deviation due to spring freshet), and June 9-10 (minor deviation due to rapidly changing inflows into Osoyoos Lake).
- Several updates were made to the IOLBC website (<http://ijc.org/en/iolbc/Home>)
  - The IOLBC submitted a proposal to the IJC to create an educational documentary about the Okanagan/Okanagan River system. The proposal received conditional approval.
  - The IOLBC is looking at different models for achieving additional public and First Nation/Tribal participation.
  - The IJC is considering expanding membership of the IOLBC by adding local Canadian and U.S. representatives.

### Questions and Comments from the Public

#### Question by Anna Warwick-Sears, Okanagan Basin Water Board:

What is the status of the study of the Okanagan River channel?

#### Response by Brian Symonds:

The purpose of the study was to determine the channel carrying capacity for different sections of the Okanagan River. The information was used to determine where the constraining points of the river are. The study was also used to determine how much water would be in the river if Okanagan Lake Dam were to disappear (a hypothetical situation, as the dam will not be removed). The purpose of the study was to provide information about the river channel, not to inform dam operations. For example, the study shows that the river channel at Oliver is capable of transmitting flows of several hundred cubic meters per second, even though that is not likely to happen.

#### Question by Anna Warwick-Sears, Okanagan Basin Water Board:

What is the drought plan for the City of Osoyoos?

Response by Brian Symonds: During drought conditions, the range of the rule curve is broader in the summer. Provided there is enough water, Zosel Dam will be operated so that more water is stored in Osoyoos Lake (higher lake levels). When a drought is expected, Canada and the U.S. will need to cooperatively manage available water. On both sides of the border, water laws are based on the principle of “first in time, first in right.”

Response by Kris Kauffman: There was a drought in 1977 and the old Zosel Dam was used to impound water for irrigation use downstream. As part of the Zosel Dam permit, Washington State issued a reservoir permit that provides for storage of 20,000 acre-ft in Osoyoos Lake. The relative area of the lake within each nation determines the prorated share of water storage between the two countries. This is how the countries manage the resource together in case of water shortage.

Question by Stu Wells, Mayor of Osoyoos:

In the future we will have a third player – fish. The great success of the Okanagan Nation Alliance in British Columbia will have an impact. We should be looking at the fish and what it means for water, especially in times of drought. About 60% of Columbia River salmon come out of Osoyoos Lake. He wants fish to be a component of water management, because there have been record successes and this may continue in the future.

Response by Brian Symonds:

In February, British Columbia realized it needed to move some water down the system. The province tried to maintain flows below 1,000 cubic feet per second at the Okanagan River at Oliver, so there would be no scour of redds. Once fry emerged, the province greatly increased flows, starting in May and until early June. By mid-August, the province released a large pulse of water to help the sockeye salmon run and avoid an oxygen/temperature “squeeze” in Osoyoos Lake. Bottom line – discharges and the needs of fish were well-choreographed.

Comment by John Arterburn, The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation:

Downstream, there were additional considerations. We had a record return of sockeye this year. There were lots of discussions related to this between John Arterburn, Al Josephy (WADOE, which operates Zosel Dam), Jay O’Brien (OTID, the contractor running day-to-day Zosel Dam operations), and the Okanagan Nation Alliance. The rationale behind the rule curve included the needs of fish (environmental concerns). John complimented that the rule curve worked the way it should.

Question by John Arterburn, The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation:

Could we release a bit more water earlier in the year, when we had our first deviation from the rule curve this year? (Note: there was a minor deviation below the rule curve April 6-8, 2014, due to changing conditions.)

Response by Brian Symonds:

Al Josephy (WADOE) discussed this deviation from the rule curve with the IOLBC today and explained that WADOE will try to maintain Osoyoos Lake levels by at least 0.3 ft above the minimum of the rule curve.

Osoyoos Lake is a challenging lake for fish because of a temperature-oxygen “squeeze” in late summer. To minimize the squeeze, the British Columbia Ministry of FLNRO released pulses of water in August. The ministry is also trying to manage flows so that the spawning range of sockeye is expanded. There have been successes with increased sockeye spawning and rearing upstream from Skaha Lake.

Question by Ford Waterstrat, Lake Osoyoos Association:

Last year the Lake Osoyoos Association received a grant from WADOE to address milfoil, which is very dense in some areas. Milfoil is getting so bad in the U.S. portion of Osoyoos Lake that people cannot use boats. Herbicides are allowed to be used in the U.S. but not in Canada, where mechanical removal is used. There is an herbicide buffer zone in the U.S. near the border that is creating problems (i.e., there's a zone on the U.S. side of Osoyoos Lake where herbicide application is not allowed and Milfoil weed growth is thick). How can a release from the buffer zone be obtained to help manage the milfoil?

Response by Glen Davidson:

This could be an issue of referral to Canada regarding permitted use of herbicides. Note that the IJC Order does not address water quality in Osoyoos Lake, nor control of milfoil, and thus the issue is beyond the scope of the IOLBC.

Comment by Kris Kauffman:

The Boundary Waters Treaty states that no country shall pollute the water of the other. Washington State prefers herbicides for milfoil control. Milfoil is endemic in the Columbia River system and we have to try to manage it.

*The following members of the public attended the meeting and signed in. Contact information is on file with the IOLBC.*

Ford Waterstrat (Lake Osoyoos Association)

Sue McKortoff (Town of Osoyoos)

Rhonda Dasher (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation)

John Arterburn (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation)

Mark Pendergraft (Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen)

Gwen Monteith (Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society)

Lee Chapman (Lake Osoyoos Association)

Jay O'Brien (Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District)

Anna Warwick-Sears (Okanagan Basin Water Board)

Carol Youngberg (Town of Osoyoos)

Al Josephy (Washington State Dept. of Ecology)

John Moran

John Musgrave

Consuelo Musgrave