

MINUTES

International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control Public Meeting

The Oroville Depot
1210 Ironwood Street
Oroville, Washington

Tuesday September 12, 2006
7:30 PM

Attendance

	United States	Canada
Chairs	Dr. Cynthia Barton (absent)	Kirk Johnstone
Members	Col. Michael McCormick Kris Kauffman (absent)	Glen Davidson Brian Symonds
Secretaries	Robert Kimbrough	Daniel Millar
Guests	Commissioners: Irene Brooks, Jack Blaney Tom McAuley (Canadian Section, IJC), Dr. Mark Colosimo (US Section IJC), Larry Merkle (USACE), Marian Valentine (USACE), Ken Slattery (WA Dept of Ecology), Ray Newkirk (WA Dept of Ecology) Walter Wiebe (Osoyoos), Ivo Tyl (Osoyoos), Lionel Dallas (Osoyoos), Sherry Linn (Osoyoos), Eike Scheffler (Osoyoos), Frances and Bojo Gobin (Oroville), John Biele (Oroville), Web Hallauer (Oroville), Gwen Monteith (Osoyoos), Mike Cantwell (Oroville), John Gaulex (Osoyoos), Raleigh Chinn (Oroville), Tom Scott (Oroville), Stu Wells (Osoyoos), Mike and Marg de Salaberry (Osoyoos), Phyllis Shenyer (Oroville), Ted Thorndike (Oroville)	

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions Kirk Johnstone
Mr. Johnstone welcomed guests then introduced Board members, Commissioners, and staff.
2. Review of the agenda Kirk Johnstone
3. Overview of the IJC and the Osoyoos Lake Orders Robert Kimbrough
Mr. Kimbrough gave a short presentation describing the International Joint Commission, the Osoyoos Lake Board of Control, and the Osoyoos Orders.
4. 2006 Hydrologic conditions Brian Symonds
Mr. Symonds reviewed the past year's hydrologic conditions in the Okanagan and Similkameen basins. Notes from his presentation are attached.
5. Washington Department of Ecology management of Osoyoos Lake levels in 2006 Ray Newkirk
Mr. Newkirk reviewed the past year's flows in the Okanagan River, water levels in Osoyoos Lake, and operation of Zosel Dam gates during periods of high flow in May and June 2006.

6. Update on Orders renewal in 2013 Kirk Johnstone

Mr. Johnstone provided an update on the Orders renewal process concentrating primarily on a summary of the key topics of concern identified in the recently released report entitled "Plan of Study for the Renewal of the International Joint Commission's Osoyoos Lake Orders".

7. Questions and comments from the public

[paraphrased]

Ivo Tyl questioned if the 1982 and 1985 Orders of Approval allow the Applicant to retain a range of lake levels essentially established in the Commission's 1946 Order of Approval. (The following excerpt from the 1985 Supplementary Orders of Approval was found by Board staff after the meeting; "WHEREAS the Commission's 1982 Order of Approval, retained essentially the regime for the level of Osoyoos Lake established in the Commission's 1946 Order of Approval")

Eike Scheffler commented that there should have been a drought in the Similkameen River in 2006 and that the Similkameen should be included in the Orders of Approval because it flows across the international boundary similar to the Okanagan River.

A member of the public requested that the Board use a microphone for future meetings because it was hard to hear everything said.

Ivo Tyl commented that it was nice to see that several of the pertinent issues were listed in the Plan of Study and that a science forum was being considered to address some issues prior to the expiration of the current Orders in 2013.

Mr. Tyl commented that 911.0 feet is a critical level for Osoyoos Lake and levels above 911.0 feet can be dangerous. He cited that a child had drowned when the lake was high.

Mr. Tyl commented that in 1991 the Osoyoos Indian Band received compensation for land lost to increased levels in Osoyoos Lake but other land owners around the lake did not. Mr. Tyl then presented the Board with a petition seeking compensation for property impacts caused by high water on the lake.

Eike Scheffler displayed two aerial photos of the Okanagan River inflow to Osoyoos Lake taken in May 2006 which showed a turbid plume of water entering the lake. He commented that the quality of water flowing into the lake should fall under the purview of the IJC. He also stated that the dam acts as a plug in the river which contributes to degradation of water quality.

Raleigh Chinn commented that poor lake water quality may be affected by a large percentage of homes in Osoyoos that are not hooked up to a sewer system. Eike Scheffler agreed that lack of sewer systems is a problem.

Web Hallauer told a story of how the Tonasket Creek gravel bar had become so large at one point that it dammed the river causing the Zosel Lumber Company mill pond to go dry. Web talked about how migrating salmon found at the base of Grand Coulee Dam when it was being constructed in 1939-41 were transported to Osoyoos Lake, only to migrate back down the Okanogan River, and then up the Columbia River to the base of Grand Coulee Dam! As a solution, a fence was constructed in Osoyoos Lake to prevent the fish from migrating back to Grand Coulee Dam. Web indicated the outlet channel was changed dramatically when it and the Tonasket bar were dredged in 1950.

8. Adjourn 9:05 PM

A Report to the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control

Review of Hydrologic Conditions
in the Okanagan and Similkameen Watersheds
for the Period October 2005 to September 2006

Brian Symonds, P. Eng.
Ministry of Environment
September 12, 2005

Streamflows and lake levels in the Okanagan and Similkameen watersheds were at or slightly below normal in October 2005. However, by year end well below normal precipitation during November and December resulted in below normal streamflows and lake inflows throughout. Another consequence of the dry early winter conditions was low early season snow accumulations, particularly in the Similkameen.

January 2006 brought well above normal precipitation to the region, providing a significant boost to both snowpacks and streamflows. As of February 1st snowpacks in the Okanagan were slightly above normal. Snowpacks in the Similkameen remained below normal despite showing significant improvement compared to the previous month.

February and March were relatively normal in terms of both streamflows and snow accumulation. On April 1st snowpacks in the Okanagan were approximately 110% of normal and spring and summer water supplies and streamflows in the basin were forecast to be normal to above normal. By contrast, over winter precipitation in the Similkameen was low as represented by the November to March precipitation at Princeton which was less than two-thirds normal. This dry trend was reflected in conditions throughout the basin which had overall snow water index of only 86% of normal.

April saw twice the normal rate of snowmelt at a number of the lower elevation stations. Despite the high low elevation melt the mid to high elevation snowpacks in the Okanagan remained well developed and at the end of the month were reported to be the best conditions for that date since 2002. In the Similkameen the early low elevation melt combined with a continuation of the pattern of below normal precipitation led to significant decline in the snow water index which as of May 1 was 72% of normal.

Snowmelt in May began slowly however the last half of the month experienced accelerated melt rates across much of southern British Columbia. Streamflows during this period were above seasonal norms as reflected in the well above normal May inflows to Okanagan Lake. Only pockets of high elevation snow remained in both watersheds by early June. By mid June Okanagan Lake was at full supply. At the same time many of the smaller and mid-sized streams in both the Okanagan and Similkameen basins were receding to well below normal levels for that time of year. A notable exception was Mission Creek in Kelowna, the largest tributary to Okanagan Lake, which experienced damaging flood flows in mid June due to a heavy convective rain storm centered over the upper watershed. The Similkameen River, which experienced its peak flow in mid-May, was below normal through most of June. The summer was generally drier and warmer

than normal leading to continued declines in streamflows across southern British Columbia.

Late summer streamflows in the Okanagan remain below normal, but somewhat above record lows for this time of year. Although the level of Okanagan Lake has been declining somewhat more quickly than average the lake is only slightly below normal for mid-September. By contrast conditions in the Similkameen basin are very dry, with most streams experiencing very low flows. Tulameen River at Princeton is currently at a record low for this date, while Similkameen River at both Hedley and Nighthawk is below a 20-year low flow.