

Minutes for 2022 Annual Board Meeting

International Kootenay Lake Board of Control

Wednesday, 5 October 2022
10:00 AM – 3:30 PM (PST)

Kootenai River Inn & Casino
Juniper Boardroom
7169 Plaza Street
Bonners Ferry, Idaho 83805

Participants

	Canada	United States
Chair	David Hutchinson	Colonel Alexander Bullock
Members	Ted White	Roy Bartholomay
Secretariat	Martin Suchy	Sonja Michelsen
IJC Commissioners	Merrell-Ann Phare - virtual	Rob Sisson
IJC Advisors and Staff	Rob Caldwell Paul Allen	John Allis Adam Greeley Mark Colosimo
Guests	Shannon Price (Fortis BC) Gillian Kong (BC Hydro) – virtual Evan Friesenhan (ECCC) Felicia Minnotti (Global Affairs Canada) - virtual	

Agenda

1. Welcome, Introductions

The meeting started on time, with both in-person and virtual attendance. COL Bullock provided some opening remarks as well as introductions of the board members and IJC Commissioners, Robert Sisson and Merrel Ann Phare.

2. Review Agenda

The draft agenda was reviewed and accepted.

3. Approve June Minutes

Slight grammatic edits were provided. COL Bullock approved the minutes; Dave Hutchinson seconded them.

4. Hydrologic Conditions

4.1 Hydrologic Conditions 2022 – Order Compliance

Sonja Michelsen (US Section Secretary) reviewed the Applicants IJC rule curve compliance and provided a 2021-2022 hydrology year-in-review. The past year saw high flow and lake levels but avoided major flooding impacts.

There was a brief exceedance of the Rule Curve in early December 2021 due to heavy precipitation. At the time outflows were limited by Grohman Narrows, so this was not considered a violation. The Lake level followed the guide curve during the remaining winter and early spring.

In the early spring conditions were mostly cool. There was a brief increase in flows in early April, so Kootenay Lake did not reach the minimum lake elevation on April 1. The order sets the minimum elevation at April 1 to 1739.32ft, but the lake was about 0.4 ft higher on that date due to higher inflows. The Grohman Narrows were determining outflow, so this was not determined to be a violation. The lake reached the required minimum elevation on April 12, and the minimum late elevation during the spring period was 1738.60 on April 24. Spring Rise was declared on April 27. The Grohman Narrows determined releases so the lake was held below the IJC curve during the freshet.

The cool April and May combined with above-average snow pack led to higher flows in the Kootenay/Kootenai watershed in June. Snowpack ranged from 101 – 130% of average in the winter and early spring. The cool spring delayed snow melt and on June 1 the snowpack was near 170% of normal in the Canadian portion of the basin. In 2022, inflow to Kootenay Lake was high in mid-June, peaking at 98,000cfs on June 12. The peak lake level reached was 1751.62ft on June 15. This was just below the elevation with possible flood impacts, 1752 ft.

4.2 Applicant – Corra Linn Dam Operations

Shannon Price (Applicant, Fortis BC) presented on Corra Linn Dam operations over the last year, focusing on topics not covered by the Order Compliance update and the BC Hydro update.

In January 2022 there was a telemetry issue with the forebay gage at Corra Linn. The sensor froze. Fortis put together a report for the IKLBC, which as of the meeting date had not been finalized. Requested that the report be finalized and shared with IJC advisors and staff.

Ms. Price updated on several planned or routine projects. For the spillway gate replacement project all of the spillway gates have been replaced, aside from gates 1 and 2. The project is expected to be substantially completed by Q1 of 2023, with minor updates extending beyond Q1. The minor updates should not change the operability of the spillway. Preventative maintenance is completed at Queens Bay and Nelson gages. This was completed in summer 2022 and will occur again in November 2022. Fortis paid Idaho farmers 28k USD in July 2022.

4.3 BC Hydro Kootenay Lake and Duncan Dam Operations

Gillian Kong (BC Hydro) reviewed the Kootenay Basin weather and hydrologic conditions for the current water year.

Key weather for the current water year included atmospheric events in Nov/Dec 2021 that resulted in near record precipitation and heavy snow in the Columbia and Kootenay basins. Snowpack was above average at most snow gage sites in the Canadian portion of the Kootenay basin, beginning in November. There was a historic arctic outbreak in Dec/Jan 2021-2022 which led to all-time peak hourly loads. Cool weather in April/May 2022 delayed the freshet and led to very low flows. The high snowpack and precipitation led to high peak flows and a compressed freshet in June 2022.

Ms. Kong reviewed Duncan Reservoir operations. The Canadian Columbia Water Supply was some of the highest runoff volumes for February – September in the last 50 years. Duncan saw 104% of average volume. As is typical, the reservoir was drafted to near-empty and refilled to near-full in the summer. The maximum reservoir elevation was 1,891 feet in early August, 1 foot from full-pool. Of note, discharges were reduced to minimum flow from June 11 to July 12 to initiate reservoir refill and reduce flood risk at Meadow Creek and around Kootenay Lake. BC Hydro directs water management at Corra Linn Dam and the Kootenay Canal, under an operating agreement with Fortis BC.

4.4 USACE Libby Dam Operations

Sonja Michelsen (US Section Secretary) reviewed Libby Dam operations. Construction of Libby Dam was allowed per the Columbia River Treaty and is operated for multiple purposes that include hydropower generation, flood control, recreation, and ecosystem needs. The reservoir was drafted per the water supply forecasts over the winter and early spring. The reservoir draft was consistent with the water supply forecasts that were above average throughout the drawdown period.

The minimum elevation of Lake Kooconusa was 2363.5ft feet on March 1, 2022. Maximum inflow was about 81.8 kcfs, the 5th highest daily inflow in the record. The maximum outflow was 25 kcfs as part of the sturgeon augmentation flows released from May 16 through June 13. A maximum reservoir elevation was reached on August 5 at 2454.3 feet.

5. Guest Presentation

Grohman Narrows Visualization Tool

Representatives from Sytec presented the Kootenay Lake Visualization tool. This tool is close to being finalized and will be available to the public when completed. Based on board, IJC advisor, and Commission discussion the inclusion of a preamble or splash page to summarize the tool and provide some context on why the specific years were selected was suggested.

Sytec will investigate how/if to track use (ie analytics).

Mr. Hutchinson suggested incorporating some of the communication methods into the typical IKLBC plots, specifically the max outflow curve.

6. Round Table

No round table issues were raised by those in attendance. Following the Round Table, FortisBC and BCHydro guests departed the meeting.

7. Business Items

7.1 Public Correspondences

There were no correspondences this year. The contact form was double checked to confirm correct contact information. The board discussed ways to increase involvement. See the workplan discussion.

7.2 Automated Hydrology Report Update

Martin Suchy (CAN Section Secretary) presented the new automated hydrologic report. It scrapes applicable data from numerous sources and compiles a single document. The full report will be sent out monthly and a shorter summarized update will be sent out weekly. Currently the report is only used for situational awareness with the IKLBC and IJC.

7.3 Order Review / Climate Change Assessment Discussion

The IKLBC sent a letter to the IJC to recommend a review of the 1938 Order, preceded by a climate change assessment. The IJC had not responded via letter, but the board received verbal confirmation from the Commissioners for the release of the Information Paper, a climate vulnerability study, and a review of the Order. The IJC would prefer that the study is completed within the next 12-18 month, particularly that the climate change study proposal is submitted and funded before the Canadian Commissioner term ends in May. The IKLBC agreed to work to quickly to finalize and submit the draft proposal for a scope of work to be developed for the climate change analysis.

7.4 Board Expansion Discussion

The IKLBC sent a letter to the IJC recommending that the board expands by 1-2 members per section. The IJC had not responded via letter, but the board received verbal confirmation from Commissioners that the IJC supports board expansion of 2 additional members per section.

The Commissioners strongly support boards that more fully represent the local community with specific focus on indigenous/tribal engagement. They recommended that the IKLBC get advice

from the Tribes on preferred level of representation (advisory, voting member, non-voting member, etc), and the board concurred. The Board will reach out to the Tribes in the region in winter of 2022 – 2023.

7.5 Review of Workplan (current and future)

The Board reviewed the most recent workplan from May 2022. Several priorities through 2023 remain including the Fortis BC spillway project and the Kootenay Lake Visualization Tool. The IKLBC will update the workplan priorities around the recommendation for the Order Review and investigating board expansion to reflect the discussion at the October 2022 meetings. Finally, an additional priority was identified: to develop a communication plan to improve outreach, education, and engagement. Considerations for this plan include how to determine who to reach out to, how to communicate, opportunities for modernization, explicitly state time, scope, when, why, who of outreach.

8. Round Table

No round table issues were raised by those in attendance.

9. Preparation for Public Meeting

COL Bullock reviewed the agenda and presentation planned for the evening public meeting. A practice virtual webinar was also launched to test the platform in advance of the hybrid meeting.

10. Adjourn

COL Bullock adjourned the meeting on schedule.