

INTERNATIONAL OSOYOOS LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL
Conference Call
Tuesday June 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM PDT

BOARD MEMBERS

Cindi Barton	Chair, U.S. Section
Dave Hutchinson	Chair, Canadian Section
John Arterburn	Board Member, U.S. Section
Col. Mark Geraldi (15 mins only)	Board Member, U.S. Section
Kris Kauffman	Board Member, U.S. Section
Arnie Marchand	Board Member, U.S. Section
Ted White	Board Member, Canadian Section
Sue McKortoff	Board Member, Canadian Section
Brian Symonds	Board Member, Canadian Section
Anna Warwick Sears	Board Member, Canadian Section

BOARD STAFF and BOARD MEMBER ASSISTANTS

Andy Gendaszek	Secretary, U.S. Section
Martin Suchy	Secretary, Canadian Section
Kevin Shaffer	Technical Assistant to Colonel Mark Geraldi

IJC REPRESENTATIVES and GUESTS

Wayne Jenkinson (Absent)	Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section
Mark Colosimo (Absent)	Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section
Paul Allen (Absent)	Communications, Canadian Section
Caron DeMars (Absent)	Senior Advisor, U.S. Section
Adam Greely	Senior Advisor, U.S. Section
Bruno Tassone (first 15 minutes)	Former IOLBC Canadian Co-Chair
Gwyn Graham (first 15 minutes)	Former IOLBC Canadian Section Secretary

1. Colonel Geraldi Departure and Resignation

The conference call was started with a few words and well wishes from Col. Geraldi, former Canadian Co-Chair Bruno Tassone and other Board Members and guests regarding Col. Geraldi pending resignation from the Board and upcoming re-deployment with USACE.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The official meeting began at 10:15 and was led by Cindi Barton (US Co-Chair). The meeting agenda was accepted with no changes required.

3. Approval of March Conference Call Minutes - Cindi

The Board reviewed the March 11, 2020 conference call minutes. Anna Warwick Sears moved to approve the call minutes, seconded by Sue McKortoff. The March conference call minutes were approved with no changes.

4. Hydrologic Conditions and Climate

Weather and Hydrology

March temperatures were below normal in the Okanagan region, resulting in above normal snow accumulation. April was dry in southern BC with normal to above-normal temperature anomalies, while May temperatures were generally above-normal.

Okanagan Lake level were at their lowest on April 18 (1120.12 ft.), and rose rapidly throughout May. In the final week of May, a moderate high-pressure ridge formed over the Interior and increased the rate of snowmelt. It was immediately followed by a heavy rain event (May 30 and 31) for various parts of the Interior. This event led to high discharge in the Similkameen and larger than expected Okanagan Lake Net inflows. May inflows into Okanagan Lake were 189% of normal (~350,000 ac-ft. or 430 Mm³). Okanagan Lake Net Inflow was 570,000 ac-ft. on June 16, with no new forecasted values anticipated from the BC River Forecast Center. This amount was higher than early April and May forecasts.

Lake levels surpassed the full pool level of 1123.62 ft. on May 30. As of June the lake was at 1,124.41 ft., and was expected to rise further due to forecasted rain. Outflow at Okanagan Lake Dam at Penticton peaked at 2,529 cfs on June 6, and was 2,419 cfs on June 16, which is close to the maximum of what can be released, and any small increases would have negligible effects on the lake.

Okanagan River discharge at Oliver starting increasing rapidly in mid-April, and was 3,053 cfs on June 16, which is a peak seasonal flow. Some peaks in early June were attributed to releases from Vaseaux and Skaha Lakes, or rain on snow events.

The Similkameen River discharge peaked 3 times throughout May, approximately 2 weeks earlier than normal, with seasonal peak of 19,200 cfs on June 1. The Northwest River Forecast Center forecasts discharge to continue decreasing down to approximately 7000 cfs in late June, then decreasing further throughout the summer. Similkameen cumulative flow volume (April 1 to present) was 1,313,000 ac-ft. on June 16. The Northwest River Forecast Center Similkameen water supply forecast (April 1 to July 31) was up to 1,623,000 ac-ft.

Okanagan River discharge at Oroville was 2,930 cfs on June 16, down from a peak of 3,195 cfs on June 4. With decreased Similkameen flows, the backwater effect at the confluence of the Similkameen and Okanagan River had subsided, allowing Osoyoos Lake outflows to increase. Because Similkameen discharge peaked three times, there were 3 significant backwater events limiting Osoyoos Lake outflows.

Osoyoos Lake level surpassed the IJC Condition 7 "Normal" rule curve of 912.0 ft. on May 14, but because Zosel Dam gates were fully open, the Applicant was in compliance of the Order of Approval. Osoyoos Lake levels peaked at 913.64 ft. on June 2, and was subsequently variable, with a level of 912.6s7 ft. on June 16. As per the IJC Order of Approval capacity demonstration, Zosel Dam was able to push through at least 2,500 cfs at 913 ft. lake elevation, on June 6/7, but not on May 22-23.

Snowpack

On June 1, the mid-elevation Mission Creek snow pillow station (1780 m) in the Okanagan Basin was close to historic highs, with 564 mm SWE (336% of Normal). It remained close to historical daily maximum levels throughout early June. The higher elevation Blackwell Peak (1940 m) snow pillow station in the Similkameen Basin had June 1 snow water equivalent (SWE) of 106% of normal with 427 mm of SWE. Higher elevation snowpack has experienced limited melt with several storms in May contributing to short increases in snow accumulation.

Since May 15, the Okanagan Basin Snow Water Index has increased substantially to 193% of normal for June 1. This indicates a delayed snowmelt. The Similkameen Basin snowpack increased slightly from 103% of normal on May 15 to 106% of normal on June 1.

Outlook

The short-term weather forecast at the Penticton Airport for the upcoming 2 weeks called for increasing temperature from ~15 to ~20 C, followed by daytime temperatures of 23-28 C for the second week, with minimal precipitation forecasted.

A seasonal flood risk remained with Streamflow Advisory and Flood Watch. The Okanagan Basin was vulnerable to heavy rain events as lake levels remain high, and significant high elevation snow remains. The region is at risk of flooding if heavy rainfall occurs. If cooler than normal seasonal temperatures continue throughout June, the freshet period could continue into mid-July.

In May 2020, sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies were near-to-below average across the east-central and eastern equatorial Pacific. All of the Niño indices decreased during the month. The long-term seasonal outlook indicate a ~60% chance of ENSO-neutral during Northern Hemisphere summer 2020, with roughly equal chances (~40-50%) of La Niña or ENSO-neutral during the autumn and winter 2020-21. During La Nina event, coastal waters off BC tend to be cool.

Seasonal weather forecasts from ECCC indicate an increased likelihood of warmer than normal June-July-August temperatures for the west side of B.C. Probability of 50-60% above, 30-40% near-normal, 10-20% below-normal. For the same period, precipitation probability is 10-20% above-normal, 30-40% near-normal, 30-40% below-normal

5. Fall 2020 Board Meeting Update

The date of the Annual Board and Public meetings was changed to Thursday October 8 to accommodate schedules of Board members and IJC Commissioners. Traditionally, the IOLBC Board and Public meetings are held on Tuesday and the IKLBC meetings are held on Thursday. This year, the Kootenay meetings will be held on Tuesday and IKLBC members that are also members of the IOLBC will be traveling to Osoyoos on Wednesday October 7. The Osoyoos Lake field trip will occur on either the morning of Thursday October 8 or the morning of Friday October 9. There is a possibility that due to COVID-19 travel restrictions that the Board meeting will be partially or fully virtual in 2020. In addition, it is improbable that the Annual Meeting can be held at the Border Crossing Facility; therefore, the U.S. Secretary will investigate booking a block of rooms and a conference room facility capable of hosting the meeting.

6. Engaging Tribes and First Nations

The Board discussed approaches for engaging Tribes and First Nations within the Okanagan/Okanagan Basin. Board members will contact leadership at Tribes and First Nations to determine the appropriate contacts at Tribes and First Nations that the board will engage.

7. IWI Similkameen Model Update

Selection of the contractor for the Similkameen Hydrologic Model was finalized in March. A sub-committee of the IOLBC met with the contractors developing the Similkameen Hydrologic model in April to discuss modeling approach, datasets needed for model development, water-use, drought analysis, and project timelines. The contractor has begun model development and will provide an update to the Board during the Annual Board meeting in October, with the final model and report delivered to the IOLBC in early 2021.

The contractor provided a map of the Similkameen Basin sub-basins based on former and current gauging stations for Board review prior to further model development.

8. Phase II Model Integration and Climate Change Update

In April, the Board submitted a proposal to the IWI program to merge the Similkameen hydrologic model with the Okanagan hydrologic and hydraulic model funded by OBWB. The IWI reviewed and was supportive of this proposal and requested that the Board respond to several questions from its review. The modeling subcommittee will respond to these questions and develop a scope of work for the project.

9. Fall 2021 Science Forum – Next Steps

The IJC-IWI was supportive of partially funding (\$20k total, \$15k for event coordination and \$5k reporting) the Osoyoos Lake 2021 Science forum and requested responses to several questions prior to allocation of funding. These questions included how the Forum's steering committee will adapt to the possibility of delaying the Forum past fall 2021. The Board discussed the preference retaining an in-person forum and will work with conference management to delay the in-person component, if necessary.

The IWI also suggested the Board consider hosting one day of the forum on a Saturday to better engage the community, and using virtual technologies such as webcasting and recording sessions whether COVID-19 travel restrictions remain in place or not. The review committee also wants to ensure indigenous engagement as a priority for the forum.

Next steps will be to prepare a Scope of Work for the coordinator contract and seeking participation interest for the steering committee. Secretaries will be reaching out to the coordinator of the 2015 Science Forum.

10. Action Items

In Progress.

1. Guidelines for U.S. Department of State (DOS) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) participation as observers for quarterly conference calls and meetings. Board Secretaries waiting for official guidance document for IJC, which is being delayed due to lack of Commissionaires. Continue with interim guidance. Updated guidance document being prepared.
2. Board Secretaries will add Osoyoos Lake inundation maps to IOLBC webpage. Inundation maps are in the process of being created. Will need to link to those maps once they are completed.
3. Board Secretaries to add update on Board website to indicate installation of new High-Water Monuments. Waiting for the US Veterans Memorial Park in order to update the website. Town of Oroville is ready to do whatever they need to do to assist with this.
4. Improve knowledge of the Osoyoos lake water balance (both US and Canadian side)
5. Develop a sub-committee/steering committee for 2021 Osoyoos Lake Science Forum
6. Tracking USGS Enloe Dam sediment quality project

Completed (since last quarterly call)

1. Update the website with the meeting minutes that were approved at the December 2019 call
2. Tidy up the website (i.e. archive old news releases on water level page)
3. IWI 2020-2025 Work Plan proposal process needs feedback.
4. Start looking for funding committee for 2021 Osoyoos Lake Science Forum
5. IWI Similkameen Hydrologic Model Kick off meeting with NHC
6. Arnie Marchand details need to update on the IOLBC website (Request sent to IJC webmaster).
7. Investigate setting up automatic email notifications to Board Members when USGS discharge/level thresholds are exceeded.
8. Board Secretaries will send out a doodle poll to the board members to determine a time for the quarterly calls that will work for all of the board members.
9. Provide comments on the IOLBC annual report to the Board Secretaries by March 25. Board Secretaries will submit the report to the IJC by April 10.
10. Multiple news releases regarding Spring freshet posted to the IOLBC website.
11. Letters sent to Applicant in April and May regarding non-declaration of drought in 2020.

New Items

1. Develop workplan to engage Tribes and First Nations within the Okanagan/Okanogan and Similkameen Basins.
2. Carolina contract for 2021 science forum
3. SOW / RFP for Phase II needed
4. Provide Similkameen sub-basin input to NHC
5. David Campbell river forecast center add to model Board working group
6. Arnie distribution list expansion
7. IOLBC workplan update?

11. Round Table

Next meeting Wed Sept 2, 1:00 to 3:00 pm