

INTERNATIONAL OSOYOOS LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL
Conference Call
Monday September 12, 2022 at 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM PST
MS Teams

ACRONYMS

IJC	International Joint Commission
IOLBC	International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control
NHC	Northwest Hydraulic Consultants
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OLWSF	Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

BOARD MEMBERS

Dave Hutchinson	Chair, Canadian Section
Cindi Barton	Chair, U.S. Section
Ted White	Board Member, Canadian Section
Sue McKortoff (absent)	Board Member, Canadian Section
Brian Symonds (absent)	Board Member, Canadian Section
Anna Warwick Sears	Board Member, Canadian Section
John Arterburn	Board Member, U.S. Section
Col. Xander Bullock	Board Member, U.S. Section
Kris Kauffman	Board Member, U.S. Section
Arnie Marchand	Board Member, U.S. Section

BOARD STAFF and BOARD MEMBER ASSISTANTS

Andy Gendaszek	Secretary, U.S. Section
Martin Suchy	Secretary, Canadian Section
Sonja Michelsen (absent)	Technical Assistant to Colonel Xander Bullock

IJC REPRESENTATIVES

Lance Yohe	Commissioner, U.S. Section
Paul Allen (absent)	Communications, Canadian Section
Jeff Kart (absent)	Communications, Canadian Section
Rob Caldwell	Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section
Adam Greely	Senior Advisor, U.S. Section
John Allis	Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section

1. Approval of the Agenda

The meeting was led by Dave Hutchinson who reviewed the agenda. The Board approved the agenda with no changes.

2. Approval of March Conference Call Minutes

The Board reviewed the June 22, 2022, conference call minutes and approved with the correction of minor typographical errors. Col. Bullock moved to approve the minutes and Dave Hutchinson seconded the approval.

3. Hydrologic Conditions

Martin Suchy (Canadian Section Secretary) provided an overview of the summer hydrologic and climatic conditions for the Okanagan and Similkameen Basins. Precipitation in the Okanagan Valley during the previous three months was above normal historical conditions, but this was driven by above normal precipitation until the first week of July. The remaining two months were well below normal. Temperatures were near normal in Kelowna in early-June, but below normal in Osoyoos in early-June. Following this cooler period, temperatures were well above normal in Osoyoos and Kelowna for the remaining three-month period. Snow-water equivalent (SWE) reported by snow pillow stations in both the Similkameen (Blackwall Peak) and the Okanagan Basins (Mission Creek) exceeded historical average SWE for June because of delayed melting of snowpack within interior British Columbia and eastern Washington. Snowpacks in basins melted completely by early-July.

Criteria for declaring a drought for the Similkameen (Condition 8ai) and Okanagan Basins (Conditions 8bi and 8bii) were not forecasted in early April or early May and ultimately were not met by July 31. Final reported values for April to July flow volume of the Similkameen River was 1,487,000 acre-feet, while net inflow to Okanagan Lake was 495,000 acre-feet, and maximum Okanagan Lake level peaked to 1,124.10 feet on June 27. The BC Drought Notification Levels for the Similkameen and Okanagan Basins were rated at Level 1 (Adverse Impact Rare) and Level 2 (Adverse Impact Unlikely), respectively on Sept 12.

Weekly net inflows to Okanagan Lake were well above average from June 10 to July 22, but then below average since. Due to the delayed snowmelt, peak inflows in mid to late June were approximately 3 weeks later this year. Okanagan Lake level peak was approximately 0.5 ft above the target level but has since returned to a level consistent with the mean (period of record 1943-2021). Outflows from Okanagan Lake at Penticton peaked close to the historical maximum in July and are currently below the historical mean. Discharge of the Similkameen River is currently below 500 cfs and is not forecast to change in the immediate future, according to the Northwest River Forecast Center.

The level of Osoyoos Lake returned below 912.0 ft in late-July following 2 months of levels exceeding the IJC Rule Curve (Applicant was still in compliance of the Order as all Dam gates were open for maximum conveyance of flow). The lake level continues to decrease following the historical mean. Okanagan River discharge at Oroville is currently 402 cfs and remains below the historical mean (POR 1942-2021). Peak flow was delayed by approximately one month from early-June to early-July due to the persistent snow pack this year.

Canadian and U.S. probabilistic forecasts for the upcoming 3-month period of October-November and December indicate near normal temperatures and above normal precipitation by U.S. models. Canadian results indicate near normal precipitation for southern BC and northern Washington State.

4. Phase II Hydrologic Model Integration

Martin Suchy updated the Board on the Phase II hydrologic model integration project. The IJC and Board secretaries continue to work with the contractor to develop the scope of work and budget. There are questions concerning the availability of the channel hydraulic model downstream of Zosel dam, which is needed for this phase of work. Other questions remain regarding available Global Circulation Model (GCM) downscaled data and the various warming scenarios (RCPs) other than RCP8.5 (worst case).

5. Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum Updates

Board Member Anna Warwick Sears provided an update. The Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum (OLWSF) will be held from October 27 to 29, 2022. Anna Warwick Sears has been meeting with facilitators and the event coordinator to finalize the event, with the program being 95% ready. Bob Sandford will be reporting out on the forum at the end of the conference. The field trip will be Thursday. Registration is open using EventBrite, but a link needs to be added to the Board website along with the announcement.

6. IWI Ice Jam Proposal

IJC staff worked with Board Secretaries to get out a competitive bid for the Ice Jam Proposal prior to the end of Fiscal Year 2022; however, a contract will need to occur in Fiscal Year 2023.

7. Preparation for Upcoming Meetings: Ottawa Semi-Annual, Fall Board and Public Meetings

The draft agendas for the Annual Board and Public Meetings to be held in conjunction with the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum were discussed with the Board. Aside from the special presentations by the BC Snow Monitoring Program and US Water Supply Forecasting and Snowpack monitoring program, Board members also requested updates and presentations on the completed Bathymetric project, along with the NextGen USGS monitoring tools and an update on the 2022 Salmon runs in the Okanogan/Okanagan system from John Arterburn (Board member and fisheries biologist for the Colville Tribe). Canadian section chair Dave Hutchinson asked if representatives of the Colville Tribe or Okanogan Nation Alliance (ONA) have been invited to the Board meeting, and possibly make a presentation. The Canadian section secretary indicated that Richard Bussanich of the ONA was invited and indicated a representative of the ONA would be present. It was noted that currently, all peoples entering Canada (either Canadian Citizens or foreigners, must complete the ArriveCAN app, where proof of vaccinations can be uploaded. It was also noted that a representative of the Washington Department of Ecology (Applicant) should be present at the meeting.

8. IJC Teams Account

Martin Suchy (Canadian Section Secretary) gave a brief update on the status of the IJC Microsoft Teams (SharePoint) account. All Board members would now have access to the account and all Board related document will now be stored and accessible on the SharePoint drive. This means sharing of documents over email will no longer be needed. Those Board members that cannot access the SharePoint cloud storage due to firewall limitations will continue to be sent documents by email.

9. Round Table

John Arterburn (Board member and fisheries biologist for the Colville Tribe) provided some preliminary numbers for Salmon returns in the Okanogan/Okanagan basin. The pre-season forecast called for above-average sockeye runs of approximately 200k fish, while 700k were estimated at Bonneville, 500k at the Wells and 400k at Minot, and early returns are entering Osoyoos Lake. New access to habitat in Okanagan Lake will help future runs. The Chinook run looks to be normal, with fish still in the Columbia River.

No other roundtable items were introduced. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.