

OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE PROGRAM BOARD

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the **OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE (SIR) PROGRAM BOARD**
held virtually via Zoom, on Friday, March 12, 2021

Voting Members:

Director Shirley Fowler, Chair	Regional District of North Okanagan
Grower Amarjit Lalli, Vice Chair	Grower Representative – Zone 2
Director James Baker	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director George Bush	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Grower Dave Dobernigg	Grower Representative – Zone 3
Director Tim Lavery	Regional District Columbia Shuswap
Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic
Director Brad Sieben	Regional District of Central Okanagan

Non-Voting Members:

Dr. Susanna Achaempong	BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Taras Pojasok	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Guests/Delegates:

Glen Lucas	BC Fruit Growers Association
Georgina Beyers	BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Adrian Arts	BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Derek Sturko	Inner Harbour Consulting Inc.
Lindsay Hainstock	BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Regrets:

Staff:

Melissa Tesche	OKSIR General Manager
Richard Wagner	RDCO Financial Analyst
Michelle Cook	OKSIR Project Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Paul Thiessen	OKSIR Operations Manager
Shelby Austen	Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 9:03am.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Bush

"THAT the March 12, 2021 meeting agenda be adopted."

CARRIED

3. MINUTES**3.1 Regular Board Meeting – January 29, 2021 – for adoption****Moved by: Director Bush****Seconded by: Director Baker***"THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of January 29, 2021 be adopted."*

CARRIED

3.2 Business Arising from Minutes

N/A

4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION**4.1 Ms. Georgina Beyers, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, and the Industry Stabilization Team**

Re: Industry Stabilization Initiative

The Chair asked the General Manager to introduce the guest speakers. The General Manager noted that Ms. Beyers would be joining the presentation part way through, and reintroduced the Board to Adrian Arts, BCMAFF's Regional Agrologist for the Okanagan. Mr. Arts thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and introduced Lindsay Hainstock and Derek Sturko. Ms. Hainstock was a long time member of BCTF's field service, now working with the Business Risk Management Branch of BCMAFF, and she has been temporarily brought over from the department as an advisor for this project. Derek Sturko was a long-time BC public servant, including 5 years as the Deputy Minister of Agriculture. Now the lead at Inner-Harbour Consulting, Mr. Sturko was brought on to coordinate and facilitate the project. Mr. Sturko is familiar with the tree fruit industry, having worked with BCTF on governance issues over the last year. Mr. Arts, Ms. Hainstock, and Mr. Sturko presented their collaborative project to the Board.

The team noted that the ministry is keenly aware of the challenging circumstance facing apple producers and is concerned about the future of the apple industry, recognizing that the industry has been in decline for several years, has experienced significant financial difficulty, and needs a comprehensive plan and leadership to address the challenges.

Mr. Sturko noted that many such plans had been developed over the years, but not implemented. He explained for the Board that BCMAFF's goal is to not just produce a stabilization plan, but also to ensure follow through with the implementation of the plan. He highlighted the high degree of participation from Ministry, with an internal project launch/orientation that included over 80 Ministry staff.

The project will consist of three phases; project planning/context gathering (Feb-Mar 31), industry engagement (April-June), and decision making/implementation (June onward). The project will need to be collaborative, requiring buy-in from producers, industry stakeholders, and multiple levels of government.

Mr. Arts then introduced Georgina Beyers, Director of the Industry Development Unit. Ms. Beyers gave a brief introduction and thanked the Board for their time, and then opened the floor to questions from the Board. The Board asked questions on the topics of apple 'dumping' by Washington producers, water security and the Columbia Basin treaty, and the goals and effectiveness of the replant program.

The Chair thanked the team for the presentation, complimenting the team on their comprehensive approach, and stating that she was encouraged by the team's highlighting of the need for implementation so that this doesn't become another plan that sits on a shelf somewhere. The Board thanked the Ministry team once again for their presentation and invited them back to present their strategy once it is developed.

5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION

5.1 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated March 9, 2021 re: Program Update

The General Manager gave the staff report in detail.

The General Manager informed the Board that the service technician from California has arrived to service the irradiator. She thanked the Board for their support as staff prepared for the visit, working to address the uncertainty of the quarantine restrictions. The technician was able to meet the requirements for a quarantine exemption and is currently in Osoyoos to ensure the irradiator is up and running for the season.

Seasonal staff are now starting for the 2021 season. Staffing issues have not eased in the Okanagan-Similkameen, potentially exacerbated by the continuation of covid-19 relief benefits.

The IAEA is facilitating a meeting with representation from almost every SIT program in the world, with the goal of providing SIT specific considerations to two x-ray companies. The US Government has provided grants to the companies to develop prototype x-ray machines for use in SIT programs.

The General Manager noted that seasonal supervisors have been hired back on for the 2021 season. The UAV program launch is also underway. The UAV training officer, supplied by M3 Consulting, is currently quarantining in Kelowna prior to the field training that will be taking place at the end of the month. The General Manager congratulated three SIR staff members for completing their written advanced flight exams. The staff will have to pass a practical exam at the completion of the project before they are certified with Nav Canada to perform the release flights.

The General Manager gave the Board a brief update on the tax apportionment process. Currently, communication is happening with staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. We are awaiting letters of certified resolution from each regional district.

The General Manager recapped her presentation to the Almond Board in California. She noted that California's Agriculture Minister was on the call and that there is a lot of enthusiasm in the almond industry and the government to push forward with an SIT program. The orange navelworm project is interested in potentially partnering with OKSIR to field test the use of X-rays for SIT.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Baker

"THAT the staff report from the General Manager be received."

CARRIED

5.2 Memo from Shelby Austen, Administrative Assistant, dated Feb 23, 2021, re: 2021 Preliminary Tax Roll Values

Ms. Austen presented the 2021 Preliminary Tax Roll Values in detail.

The Board asked whether it was only older standard plantings and less marketable varieties that are being removed. Glen Lucas informed the Board that the BCFGa will be studying this question this spring in parallel with the efforts of the BCMAFF inquiries. The General Manager noted that the program has seen removal of high density plantings and modern varieties.

The Board raised a question regarding final tax roll values. Ms. Austen informed the Board that these values will be presented at the July Regular Board Meeting, and Ms. Tesche noted that acreage removals were still being reported.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Lavery

"THAT the 2021 Preliminary Tax Roll Memo be received."

CARRIED

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Interim Financials to February 28, 2021

Mr. Wagner presented the interim financial statements in detail.

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Bush

"THAT the interim financial statements be received."

CARRIED

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

N/A

9. OTHER BUSINESS

N/A

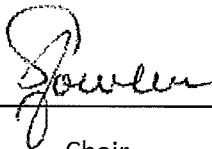
10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Sieben

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 10:57."

CARRIED



Chair



Corporate Officer