

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, May 14, 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
Director Brad Sieben	Regional District of Central Okanagan

Non-Voting Members:

Taras Pojasok	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
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Guests/Delegates:

Glen Lucas	BC Fruit Growers Association
Markus Schrott	BDO Canada LLP

Regrets:

Dr. Susanna Achaempong	BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic

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 9:02 am.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT the May 14, 2021 meeting agenda be adopted.”

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

3.1 Regular Board Meeting – March 12, 2021 – for adoption

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2021 be adopted.”

CARRIED

3.2 Business Arising from Minutes

4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION

4.1 Markus Schrott, BBA, CPA, CA, Partner, BDO Canada LLP, Presentation of the 2020 Audit Results

- a. Audit letter dated May 14, 2021
- b. 2020 Audited Financial Statements

The Chair introduced Markus Schrott of BDO Canada LLP to the Board.

Mr. Schrott presented the 2020 audited financial statements in detail. Mr. Schrott informed the Board that revenue and expenditures were consistent with budgeted amounts, and he commended the finance staff on their work and record keeping.

The Chair thanked Mr. Schrott for his presentation.

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Lavery

“THAT the OKSIR Board accept the Audit Letter dated May 14, 2021 and accept and approve the 2020 Audited Financial Statements as presented.”

CARRIED

5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION

5.1 Letter from Shirley Fowler, OKSIR Chair, dated April 12, 2021, to the Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs, re: Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program Request for Order in Council.

The Chair summarized her letter for the Board.

The General Manager informed the Board that the letter was to place the issue in the Ministry’s queue, but based on conversation with senior Ministry staff, it would be unlikely that the file is addressed until mid-summer.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Baker

“THAT the letter from the Chair be received.”

CARRIED

5.2 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated May 10, 2021, re: Program Update

The General Manager gave the staff report in detail.

The General Manager informed the Board that operations are in full swing. The facility is currently fully staffed and is now at producing at 2021's target level. Last fall's efforts to collect wild moths from banding, which included collecting banding from growers in Creston, were successful—the collected wild moths were reared in parallel with our standard colony over the winter to check for possible disease issues, and the colonies were mixed in the spring.

The General Manager highlighted the UAV program, which is well underway. The program has received some media interest, and SIR staff were interviewed for articles and videos with local news channels, KelownaNow and InfoNews.

The Board was updated on the province's industry stabilization initiative. The first phase of the initiative has been grower/industry engagement sessions, aimed at understanding the state of the industry and drivers of the declines. The Board commented on the frustration surrounding the disconnect between growers, government, and the Agricultural Land Commission.

The General Manager gave a brief update on the administrative rebate process. Currently, rebates for three of the four regional districts have been calculated, with only processing of RDOS remaining. So far, there have been 76 removals and that value is expected to double with the incorporation of RDOS. Staff noted that many of these removals are in modern blocks, indicating a shift away from apples rather than replanting and remaining apples. The Board discussed some of the drivers of this shift, including cull charges, low returns, and labour shortages, noting the timeliness of the province's stabilization initiative.

Director Sieben left the meeting at 10:00 am.

The General Manager informed the Board that they have been seeing a lot of increased signups and use for the DAS system. SIR and BCTF had previously drafted a grant proposal for evaluating the local weather station network, but the Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund was frozen before the application could be submitted. Recently, staff from the Climate Action Initiative approached SIR to with a potential funding avenue for the project as the Creston/Kootenay areas continue to demonstrate strong interest in joining the DAS program. The addition could have the potential to offset the cost of DAS, and staff are currently investigating potential steps forward.

The General Manager noted that almost all staff who want their COVID-19 vaccine have received their first dose or are booked to do so shortly.

The Chair thanked the General Manager for the update.

Moved by: Director Lavery

Seconded by: Director Bush

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

CARRIED

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Interim Financials to April 30, 2021

Mr. Wagner gave the financial report in detail.

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Baker

"THAT the interim financial statements be received."

CARRIED

7.2 Bylaw 39 – 2021 OKSIR Board Revenue Anticipation Borrowing Amendment Bylaw No. 39, 2021 – Three Readings and Adoption

The Chair introduced Bylaw 39 – 2021 OKSIR Board Revenue Anticipation Borrowing Amendment for three readings and adoption.

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Baker

"THAT the 2021 OKSIR Board Revenue Anticipation Borrowing Amendment Bylaw No. 39, 2021, be adopted."

CARRIED

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

N/A

9. OTHER BUSINESS

N/A


10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Baker

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 10:25am."

CARRIED



Chair



Corporate Officer