

**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, July 23, 2021

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**Voting Members:**

Director Shirley Fowler, Chair  
Grower Amarjit Lalli, Vice Chair  
Director James Baker  
Director George Bush  
Grower Dave Dobernigg  
Director Tim Lavery

Regional District of North Okanagan  
Grower Representative – Zone 2  
Regional District of Central Okanagan  
Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen  
Grower Representative – Zone 3  
Regional District Columbia Shuswap

**Non-Voting Members:**

Taras Pojasok  
Dr. Susanna Achaempong

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

**Guests/Delegates:**

Glen Lucas  
Derek Sturko  
Allen Nielson  
Adrian Arts

BC Fruit Growers Association  
Inner Harbour Consulting Inc.  
Neilson Strategies  
BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

**Regrets:**

Director Brad Sieben  
Grower Walter Makepeace

Regional District of Central Okanagan  
Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic

**Staff:**

Melissa Tesche  
Richard Wagner  
Michelle Cook  
Evan Esch  
Paul Thiessen  
Shelby Austen

OKSIR General Manager  
RDCO Financial Analyst  
OKSIR Project Manager  
OKSIR Entomologist  
OKSIR Operations Manager  
Recording Secretary

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**2.1 Adoption of Agenda**

**Moved by: Director Bush**

**Seconded by: Director Lavery**

*“THAT the July 23, 2021 meeting agenda be adopted.”*

**CARRIED**

**3. MINUTES**

**3.1 Regular Board Meeting – May 14, 2021 – for adoption**

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Baker

*“THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of May 14, 2021 be adopted.”*

**CARRIED**

**3.2 Business Arising from Minutes**

**4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION**

**4.1 Derek Sturko, Inner Harbour Consulting, re: Industry Stabilization Initiative Update**

**a. Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan, Leadership in the Industry, June 3 2021**

**b. Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan, Follow-Up Discussion: Leadership in the Industry, June 29, 2021**

The Chair introduced Derek Sturko of Inner Harbour Consulting and Adrian Arts (BCMAFF) to the Board and thanked them both for attending another meeting. Mr. Sturko thanked the Board for the opportunity and briefly recapped the current Industry Stabilization Initiative, stating that they are currently in phase 3 of the project – decision making and implementation. Mr. Sturko summarized the feedback that was given during the engagement sessions in the second phase of the initiative.

The Chair thanked Mr. Sturko and Mr. Arts for their presentation and for allowing SIR to be a part of the on-going process.

**4.2 Evan Esch, Entomologist, re: Mid-season Update**

**a. 2021 Mid-season Codling Moth Update, June 21, 2021**

The Chair introduced the General Manager to present on behalf of the SIR Entomologist, Evan Esch.

The General Manager informed the Board that wild codling moth captures are down to a 5-year low, and the program is experiencing excellent results to this point in the season, though some hotspots still require additional attention. She noted that wild captures in traps are an imperfect tool and should be interpreted with caution, but because the sterile recaptures for the season remained on par with those from last year, the decrease in wild captures was likely to represent actual decline in codling moth population. If both wild captures and sterile recaptures were down from last year, she explained, the declines would be more likely associated with environmental factors than true population declines.

The General Manager opened the floor to questions. The Board commented on the recent temperature extremes, noting that overnight temperatures remained at 33°C, which the general manager noted is probably too high for moth flight. The General Manager noted that the extreme heat likely caused some mortality in both wild and sterile moths.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION**

**5.1 Letter from Lana Popham, Minister, and Tom Ethier, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries, re: Appreciation of Participation in Engagement Sessions for Industry Stabilization Plan**

The Chair presented the letter to the Board.

**Moved by: Director Bush**

**Seconded by: Grower Dobernigg**

*"THAT the letter from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries be received."*

**CARRIED**

**5.2 Letter from Patrick Thompson, Director, Governance Services, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, dated June 8, 2021, re: Working on Order in Council**

The Chair presented the letter to the Board.

**Moved by: Director Lavery**

**Seconded by: Grower Lalli**

*"THAT the letter from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs be received."*

**CARRIED**

**5.3 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated July 21, 2021, re: Program Update**

The General Manager gave the staff report in detail.

The General Manager began by commending the facility staff on all their hard work over an increasingly hard year. The facility was deeply affected by the heat dome and the equipment is not meant to sustain such extreme temperatures. The Facility Manager was able to manually adjust the conditions at the facility to overcome these issues. Due to recent forest fire activity, the facility also experienced a power outage. Despite recent setbacks, staff were able to overcome these challenges and continue producing excellent quality products without interruptions to moth production or quality.

The General Manager explained that field staff have adjusted their working hours for earlier start times in order to combat the high temperatures and poor air quality. The amount of hard work and dedication from SIR staff was commended by the Board.

The Board was updated on the recent project with BC Climate Action Initiative regarding an analysis of the current weather network available for growers in the Okanagan. Funding has been granted for the project, and the report should be completed in the fall.

The General Manager informed the Board that they have received a request for a possible "fee for service" trapping program from the CFIA. The CFIA are currently looking at the requirements for local growers to ship their products to markets in the European Union. The CFIA now has two moth species that currently require tracking and they have approached SIR for assistance. This project would be at the cost of the growers who would like to ship their fruit to

this market. OKSIR staff have requested more information regarding the number of growers interested, time required, trapping procedures, and materials required.

The General gave the Board a brief update on recent sales. Sales to Washington have continued without interruption and they are experiencing excellent feedback from their clients. Biotepp have ceased their orders of egg sheets, which will result in a decline in sales revenue for the season.

The General Manager noted that her presentation to the City of West Kelowna was well received.

The Board raised a question about the redundancy in critical systems at the facility as part of capital planning and expenditures in regards to preparing for future extreme weather events. The General Manager informed the Board that the cooling system is due for a replacement and that staff are carefully considering the options.

**Moved by: Grower Lalli**

**Seconded by: Director Bush**

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

**CARRIED**

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**7.1 Memo from Shelby Austen, Administrative Assistant, dated May 20, 2021, re: 2021 OKSIR Parcel Tax Values - Final**

Ms. Austen presented the 2021 Final Parcel Tax Values in detail. She noted a further decline in acreage, with over \$36K of rebate cheques issued this year.

The Board asked if acreage would be increasing in northern areas due to climate change. The grower representatives noted that any increases observed have been in cherries, not apples as there is no financial incentive to planting apples right now.

**Moved by: Director Bush**

**Seconded by: Director Lavery**

*"THAT the Parcel Tax Memo be received."*

**CARRIED**

**7.2 Interim Financials to June 30, 2021**

Mr. Wagner presented the interim financial statements in detail.

**Moved by: Director Baker**

**Seconded by: Grower Lalli**

*"THAT the interim financials be received."*

**CARRIED**

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

N/A

9. OTHER BUSINESS

N/A


10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Baker

*"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 9:55 am."*

CARRIED

  
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Powell  
Chair

  
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Corporate Officer