

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, January 28, 2022

Voting Members:

Director Shirley Fowler, Chair	Regional District of North Okanagan
Grower Amarjit Lalli, Vice Chair	Grower Representative – Zone 2
Director George Bush	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Grower Dave Dobernigg	Grower Representative – Zone 3
Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic
Director James Baker	Regional District of Central Okanagan
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
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Regrets:

Dr. Susanna Acheampong	BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
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Staff:

Melissa Tesche	OKSIR General Manager
Carol Bellingham	RDCO Financial Manager
Michelle Cook	OKSIR Project Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Loren Scott	Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

The General Manager called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 9:02am.

The General Manager began the meeting by sharing that the BCFGGA has notified OKSIR that new nominations for Grower Representatives for Zones 2 & 3 will be forthcoming. The General Manager and Board of Directors took a few moments to thank Director Lalli and Director Dobernigg for their valuable contributions and dedication to the program—each of them having served on the board for well over a decade.

The General Manager then called for election of the SIR Board Chair and Vice Chair for 2022.

a. Election of Chair

The OKSIR General Manager called for nominations for the position of Chair of the OKSIR Board for 2022. Director Fowler was nominated. There being no further nominations, Director Fowler was acclaimed Chair for the OKSIR Board for 2022.

b. Election of Vice Chair

The OKSIR General Manager called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the OKSIR Board for 2022. Director Bush was nominated. There being no further nominations, Director Bush was acclaimed Vice-Chair for the OKSIR Board for 2022.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was amended to include the SIR Board appointment Letter from RDCO as agenda item 5.1d.

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

"THAT the January 28, 2022, meeting agenda be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

3.1 Regular Board Meeting – November 26, 2021 – for adoption

An amendment was made to the minutes to include the attendance of Pinder Dhaliwal at the Board Meeting on November 26, 2021. Staff apologized for the oversight.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

"THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of November 26, 2021, be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

3.2 Business Arising from Minutes

4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION

5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION

5.1 Appointments for the OKSIR Board

- a. Okanagan Similkameen RD-Letter dated December 10, 2021 appointing Director George Bush, with Director Karla Kozakevich as alternate
- b. Columbia Shuswap RD-Letter dated December 21, 2021 appointing Director Tim Lavery, with Director Kevin Flynn as alternate
- c. North Okanagan RD-Letter dated January 7, 2022 appointing Director Shirley Fowler, with Director Victor Cumming as alternate
- d. Central Okanagan RD-Letter dated January 13, 2022 appointing Director Brad Sieben and Director James Baker, with Charlie Hodge and Gail Given as alternates

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Dobernick

"THAT the appointment letters from the four partnering regional districts be received."

CARRIED

5.2 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated January 26, 2022 re: Program Update

- a. Sterile Insect Release Program Evaluation and Funding Model, Cascadia Partners
- b. Letter from Greg Evans in support of BCDAS Extension Project

The General Manager reviewed the Program Update in detail.

At no cost to the Program, and in collaboration with M3, the program has secured the use of an x-ray machine and will spend the spring testing the technology. If the x-ray proves to be feasible for operational use, this technology would be an excellent back up for the irradiator, and multiple x-ray machines could possibly replace the current irradiator entirely.

The General Manager shared with the Board that the tax roll process is underway. Although the tax roll is not complete, it is already clear there has been a continued decrease in apple acreage. The full extent of removals will not be entirely understood until the rebates are factored in later this spring—historically, this period between the completion of tax roll in February and the rebate deadline in April has been the period where most removals are completed.

OKSIR's Entomologist, Mr. Evan Esch, represented the Program at the annual Orchard Pest and Disease Management Conference (OPDMC) in Portland, Oregon this winter. Mr. Esch presented results from last season's lure comparison study and general field results of the program. Mr. Esch reported that although attendance at the conference was lower than hoped due to the omicron wave, the silver-lining was that there was more time for deep discussion of results and the field recommendations that might come from them.

The General Manager provided the Board with an update on the tax apportionment process. The staff at Ministry of Municipal Affairs had recently shared the confidential first draft of the new legislation. There were some changes required, but the final draft is anticipated to be completed before the next OKSIR Board meeting.

Approximately \$140K in grant funding has been secured by growers in the Kootenays to support the development of a weather network and then incorporate the new network into BCDAS. The General Manager noted that although OKSIR is under no obligation to support the project given the Kootenays are not part of the service area, the addition of Kootenay stations would mean more users sharing the annual subscription costs, which would bring down the annual cost to OKSIR.

The economic valuation of the SIR Program, as requested by senior government, is now underway. The Program has hired Cascadia Partners (Vancouver) to complete phase 1 of the assessment, and the Ministry of Agriculture will engage the same firm to complete phase 2 of the assessment. The Board inquired as to whether the report will be made public to growers. The General Manager confirmed that the final report will be made public and will be shared with the Board. The Board requested that a communication strategy be created to ensure that the results and updates from the study are communicated to Regional Districts and the general public.

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Baker

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

CARRIED

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Staff Service Awards

Four SIR staff members have reached service milestones over the 2021 season. The General Manager expressed her appreciation for the staff, noting that dedicated staff members are the backbone of the Program. The Chair expressed her admiration for the number of long-tenured staff at the SIR Program.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Dobernigg

"THAT the Board express their appreciation to the staff recognized for service in 2021."

CARRIED

7.2 Annual Adoption of Safety Policy

The General Manager stated that staff safety remains the top priority for the Program, noting that throughout covid, during the heat dome, and through the periods of intense smoke, the Program had to significantly alter daily operations to protect staff. It is important that staff know that the worker safety comes first, and that this directive comes right from the top. The Board shared their support for this sentiment and whole-heartedly endorsed the safety policy.

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Grower Makepeace

"THAT the Board adopt OKSIR's Occupational Health and Safety Policy as presented."

CARRIED

Director Sieben exited the meeting at 10am.

7.3 Bylaw 39-SIR 2022-2026 Five Year Financial Plan-Three Readings and Adoption

a. Schedule A to Bylaw 39 (2022-2026 Financial Plan) (to be circulated)

The Financial Manager reviewed the budget in detail. It was noted that due to the heat dome in July, expenses for utilities were above average. Last season was particularly difficult for hiring seasonal workers, and as a result recruitment costs were high.

The Chair raised a question as to what criteria was used to determine what level of senior government funding should be requested over the next four years. The Financial Manager shared with the Board that the formula used in the financial plan was to subtract the predicted parcel tax amount from the value tax amount, and request that senior government cover the difference between the two figures.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Baker

"THAT the SIR 2022-2026 Five Year Financial Plan, Bylaw No. 39, 2022, be adopted."

CARRIED

7.4 Bylaw 40 - 2022 OKSIR Board Revenue Anticipation Borrowing bylaw No.40, 2022, be adopted."

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Bush

THAT the 2022 OKSIR Board Revenue Anticipation Borrowing Bylaw No. 40, 2022, be adopted."

CARRIED

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

N/A

9. OTHER BUSINESS

N/A

10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Director Bush

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 10:40"

Seconded by: Grower Makepeace

CARRIED



Chair



Corporate Officer