

OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE PROGRAM BOARD

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the **OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE (SIR) PROGRAM BOARD**
held in the RDCO Woodhaven Boardroom, Kelowna BC, on Friday, July 22, 2022

Voting Members:

Director Shirley Fowler, Chair	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director George Bush, Vice Chair	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Director James Baker	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Tim Lavery	Regional District Columbia Shuswap
Director Brad Sieben	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Grower Tarsem Goraya	Grower Representative – Zone 2

Non-Voting Members:

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

Guests/Delegates:

Glen Lucas	BC Fruit Growers Association
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Regrets:

Grower Joginder Dhand	Grower Representative – Zone 3
Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic

Staff:

Melissa Tesche	OKSIR General Manager
Lori White	RDCO Financial Manager
Paul Thiessen	OKSIR Operations Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Michelle Cook	OKSIR Project Manager
Shelby Austen	OKSIR Administrator & Project Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 10:06am.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT the July 22, 2022, meeting agenda be adopted as presented.”

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

3.1 Regular Board Meeting – May 13, 2022 – for adoption

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of May 13, 2022, be adopted as presented.”

CARRIED**3.2 Business Arising from Minutes****4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION**

- 4.1** Evan Esch, Entomologist, re: Mid-season Update
a. 2022 Mid-season Codling Moth Update, July 15, 2022 (page 7).

Mr. Esch explained that weather has a large impact on the field program and that the area had experienced a very cool and wet spring. The spring weather delayed wild moth development and flight by about two weeks compared to last year. The heavy rain has also resulted in a decrease in sterile captures. This variable timing from year to year highlights the importance of using weather-driven models, like the codling moth model on BCDAS, rather than relying on calendar days for treatment decisions.

Mr. Esch informed the Board that there has been a slight decline in wild captures since 2019 and overall trends are encouraging. He noted that the facility fully replaced the genetics in the colony last year and that insect quality is top-notch so far this season.

Mr. Esch presented two contrasting case studies to the Board to demonstrate how important on-orchard management efforts are to the process. In one case, a long-struggling organic grower that used to have 10% of their fruit infested recently increased their management practices in collaboration with SIR and have not found any infested fruit so far this season. In the second case, a new owner had taken over a previously clean orchard in Salmon Arm and within two seasons under the new owner, a new and severe codling moth problem has developed. Mr. Esch outlined the communication and education he has taken on with a new grower in the area to clean up their heavily infested orchard using supplemental tactics when needed.

5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION

- 5.1 Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council No. 269, dated May 22, 2022, re: amendment to Section 1 of the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Service Regulation, B.C. Reg. 17/90 (page 18).**

The Chair read the letter in detail and congratulated the board on their hard work that led to receiving the order in council.

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Sieben

"THAT OIC No. 269, dated May 22, 2022, be received."

CARRIED

- 5.2 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated July 15, 2022 re: Program Update**

The General Manager gave the staff report in detail.

The season is well underway, and the facility is fully staffed. Unfortunately, staffing remains difficult in the field program. This is the first year that all weekend production has been used for sales, allowing the field program to operate from Monday-Friday. Sales and shipments to Washington are running smoothly so far.

The General Manager thanked the Board for their work and determination throughout the review and renegotiation of the value tax apportionment formula. She noted that achieving true agreement between the Regional District partners was an achievement in and of itself, and then to have that agreement made official through legislation change at the provincial level, is a major achievement.

The Ministry of Agriculture has put out a press release announcing their multi-year support for BCDAS. The funds will cover three years of subscription, costs related to agrologist support for the recommendations in the system, as well as the expense to set up a weather network in the Kootenays to expand the reach of BCDAS.

The General Manager detailed her experience following an invitation to breakfast with the NDP caucus. She was able to speak directly to the Minister of Agriculture on the current successes and challenges of the program and was able to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs for his work on the changes to legislation.

The General Manager then provided an update on the tree fruit stabilization efforts that are still underway. She is currently a member of three of the subcommittees, including the SIR subcommittee, leadership subcommittee, and the extension subcommittee. She noted the extension subcommittee had recently deployed a survey on grower engagement, the results of which could be used to improve SIR's own grower outreach efforts.

The Board raised a question regarding letters of support from other organizations concerning industry stabilization. The General Manager informed the Board that she will contact the appropriate parties.

Moved by: Director Lavery

Seconded by: Director Baker

"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 25, 2022, re: 2022 OKSIR Parcel Tax Values - Final (page 22)

Ms. Austen presented the final parcel tax values in detail.

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Grower Goraya

"THAT the Parcel Tax Memo be received.

CARRIED

7.2 Interim Financials to February 28, 2022

The General Manager introduced Lori White, who will be taking over the position of Finance Manager for the Regional District of Central Okanagan.

Ms. White presented the financials in detail.

Moved by: Director Lavery

Seconded by: Director Bush

"THAT the interim financial statements be received."

CARRIED

7.3 Memo from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, re: Purchase of Replacement Chiller Unit for 2023 Install

The General Manager discussed the memo in detail. The chiller maintains the constant temperature within the facility – about 2 degrees Celsius. The current equipment was original to the building in 1990 and is overdue for replacement. The General Manager noted the chiller had been especially challenged during last year’s heat dome and that loss of the chiller mid-season would almost certainly mean a total colony-loss. She advised the board authorize the purchase of a replacement chiller now, in advance of word on return of senior government support, given the lead-time required for the installation and the continued inflationary pressure on the replacement cost. She noted that, in the event of a program sunset, the chiller would hold its value well for resale.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Baker

"That the OKSIR Board authorize the purchase of a chiller unit for 2023 installation at the facility."

CARRIED

7.4 Business Case and Letter to the Minister of Agriculture

The General Manager reviewed the letter in detail.

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Director Sieben

"THAT the OKSIR Board send the business case with a letter to the Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, requesting short term financial support for OKSIR."

CARRIED

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

N/A

9. OTHER BUSINESS

10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Director Sieben

Seconded by: Director Baker

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 10:52pm"

CARRIED


Chair


Corporate Officer