

**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, October 7, 2022

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**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 Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic

**Non-Voting Members:**

Dr. Susanna Acheampong	BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food
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 Tarsem Goraya	Grower Representative – Zone 2

**Staff:**

Melissa Tesche	OKSIR General Manager
Lori White	RDCO Financial Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Michelle Cook	OKSIR Operations Manager
Shelby Austen	OKSIR Office Manager

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 9:10 am.

**2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**2.1 Adoption of Agenda**

**Moved by: Director Bush**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

*“THAT the October 7, 2022, meeting agenda be adopted as presented.”*

**CARRIED**

**3. MINUTES**

**3.1 Regular Board Meeting – July 22, 2022 – for adoption**

**Moved by: Director Lavery**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

*“THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of July 22, 2022, be adopted as presented.”*

**CARRIED**

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

- 4.1** Evan Esch, Entomologist, RE: 2022 Season – Summary of Results  
a. 2022 Preliminary Season Results, October 3, 2022

Mr. Esch reminded the Board that SIR uses various measures to determine codling moth infestation levels and program results. He explained that seasonal supervisors are still entering damage data so his report is preliminary.

Mr. Esch first explained the historical context and SIR spray threshold to the Board, noting that global average number of wild codling moths caught in traps is well below the spray threshold. He informed the Board that 2022 saw a 6% increase in total wild captures from 2021, but the season's results are still some of the lowest values in the last decade (with 2021 being the lowest). He noted that this increase was driven by the most highly infested 10% of orchards catching more wilds, rather than infestations spreading to other areas throughout the valley.

Mr. Esch noted for the Board that the worst 10% of orchards account for 75% of all wilds caught in the program area. Until all damage data has been collected, Mr. Esch cannot definitively comment on the results of the supplementary control tactics such as sprays and mating disruption used in these problem orchards. Once the damage data are in, plans will be developed to work with these infested orchards to reduce moth populations, and unwilling or uncooperative growers/owners will be considered for compliance.

Mr. Esch informed the Board that the number of orchards considered free of codling moth has also increased from last year.

The Board raised a question regarding the composition of the infested 10% of orchards. Mr. Esch informed the Board that most unmanaged orchards have been removed or are under control. The current challenge lies mostly with new growers or those struggling with organic practices.

**Moved by: Director Sieben**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

*"THAT the 2022 Season – Summary of Results as presented by Mr. Esch be received."*

**CARRIED**

**5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION**

- 5.1 Letter from Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture and Food, dated September 1, 2022, to Chair Shirley Fowler, RE: OKSIR Request for Bridge Funding**

The Chair read the letter in detail and noted her appreciation to the Minister for her consideration.

**Moved by: Director Sieben**

**Seconded by: Director Bush**

*"THAT the letter from Minister Popham be received."*

**CARRIED**

- 5.2 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated October 3, 2022, RE: Program Update**

The General Manager gave the staff report in detail.

The General Manager began by announcing several key staffing changes at the program. After seven years with SIR, Paul Thiessen, Operations Manager, has retired. SIR's Project Manager, Michelle Cook, will be taking over this role, and there are no plans to backfill the Project Manager position. In addition, SIR's Administrator & Project Coordinator, Shelby Austen, will be taking on more responsibilities and moving into the new role of Office Manager. SIR will not be hiring any additional office support staff.

Winter cleaning and maintenance has begun at the facility with the last remaining seasonal staff members finishing their season. The purchase of the replacement chiller has been completed and is on track for installation.

Field staff have wrapped up their seasons, but seasonal supervisors will still be active for the next few weeks as they finish entering 2022 data and close the field offices for the winter. Ms. Tesche announced that SIR's Penticton Supervisor has left SIR for a new position with the provincial government. The instability of the apple sector has been noticed by staff and the General Manager is currently looking at options to increase key staff retention.

The General Manager updated the Board on the Tree Fruit Stabilization Plan. Several subcommittees have formed to work on implementation of the recommendations in the plan and she has roles on 3 of them: Leadership, Extension, and SIR. The full Stabilization Committee continues to meet every second Thursday.

The program entomologist, Mr. Evan Esch, just returned from an IAEA conference on the mass rearing of lepidoptera in Vienna, Austria. His travel and participation in the meeting was paid for by the IAEA. The conference had representation from nearly every SIT program in the world. Mr. Esch was proud to share some of the new improvements from our facility, including new collection devices designed by the team at the facility, led by the Facility Manager, Mr. Scott Arthur.

Sales of sterile moths to Washington have wrapped up for the year. SIR has developed a great working relationship with M3 Consulting and refined the process of sales to the USA. The General Manager noted that actual sales values exceed those budgeted as the exchange rate is working in SIR's favour. She noted that Australia's pilot program, based on our program, has also now begun. The first shipments to Australia have been successful and sales for their pilot program will add additional unbudgeted revenue over the winter months.

The General Manager explained that they are still awaiting an answer from the Minister regarding bridge funding and are actively investigating funding models.

**Moved by: Director Bush**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

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

**CARRIED**

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**7.1 Memo from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated September 29, 2022, re: 2023 Tax Increases**

The General Manager detailed the proposed tax increase for 2023, noting that it was in line with the five-year financial plan as developed in 2021. Board Directors noted that they do not anticipate pushback from the regional districts as the increases are necessary to account for inflation.

**Moved by: Director Lavery**

**Seconded by: Director Sieben**

*"That OKSIR increase the total amount requisitioned from the value tax in 2023 by 4%, for a total requisition*

of \$1,850,325.”

CARRIED

**7.2 Interim Financials to August 31, 2022**

Ms. White presented the financials in detail.

**Moved by: Director Bush**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

*“THAT the interim financial statements be received.”*

CARRIED

**8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA**

The Board adjourned to an in-camera meeting at 10:29 am.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

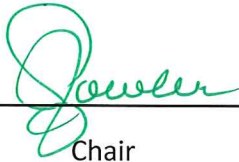
**10. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by: Director Sieben**

**Seconded by: Grower Makepeace**

*“THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 11:07 am”*

CARRIED

  
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Chair

  
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Corporate Officer