

OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE PROGRAM BOARD

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the **OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE (SIR) PROGRAM BOARD**
held at the RDCO Woodhaven Boardroom January 31, 2025

Voting Members:

Director George Bush	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (virtual)
Director Kevin Kraft	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Shirley Fowler	Regional District of North Okanagan (virtual)
Grower Tarsem Goraya	Grower Representative – Zone 2
Director Tim Lavery	Regional District Columbia Shuswap (virtual)
Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic
Director Rick Webber	Regional District of Central Okanagan

Non-Voting Members:

Guests/Delegates:

Taras Pojasok	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (virtual)
Dr. Susanna Acheampong	BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food (virtual)

Regrets:

Grower Joginder Dhand	Grower Representative – Zone 3
Linday King	BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Melissa Tesche	BCFGA

Staff:

Michelle Cook	OKSIR General Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Lori White	RDCO Financial Manager
Andrew Farmer	RDCO Financial Analyst
Shelby Austen	CCLSP

1. CALL TO ORDER

Director Webber called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 10:35 am.

a. Election of Chair

Director Rick Webber led the election process, during which Director Tim Lavery nominated Shirley Fowler as OKSIR Board Chair. She was elected by acclamation. Chair Fowler has served as Chair of the SIR Board for the better part of the last ten years.

The Board thanked Chair Fowler for her continued commitment to the organization. When asked, Ms. Cook described that Chair Fowler had technically been Acting Chair in 2025 following Mohini Singh's departure in the middle of 2025, when Director Fowler moved from Vice Chair to Acting Chair.

b. Election of Vice Chair

Director Lavery nominated Director George Bush as Vice Chair. Director Bush accepted the nomination and was elected by acclamation.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**2.1 Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted after discussion between Ms. Cook and Director Lavery as to the addition of item 7.5, the Tree Fruit Climate Resiliency Program.

Moved by: Grower Makepeace

Seconded by: Director Kraft

"THAT the January 31, 2025, meeting agenda be adopted after the addition of item 7.5."

CARRIED

3. MINUTES**3.1 Regular Board Meeting – November 22, 2024 – For Adoption**

Moved by: Grower Makepeace

Seconded by: Vice Chair Bush

"THAT the OKSIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes from November 22, 2024, meeting be adopted as presented."

CARRIED

3.2 Business Arising from Minutes**4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION****5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION****5.1 Appointments to the OKSIR Board**

Appointment letters received by the regional districts were presented to the Board as follows:

- a. The Columbia Shuswap Regional District appointed Director Time Lavery to the Board with Director Kevin Flynn as the alternate.
- b. The Regional District of North Okanagan appointed Director Shirley Fowler with Director Victor Cumming as the alternate.
- c. The Regional District of Central Okanagan appointed Directors Kevin Kraft and Rick Webber with Directors Patrick Van Minsel and Stephen Johnston as alternates.
- d. The appointments from the Regional District of South Okanagan haven't yet been confirmed.

All Regional District members were welcomed and re-welcome to the OKSIR Board. The Board anticipates welcoming new grower representatives at the upcoming April meeting.

Moved by: Grower Goraya

Seconded by: Director Lavery

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

CARRIED**5.2 Audit Planning Communication to the OKSIR Board of Directors for the Year Ending December 31, 2025 and the Public Sector Accounting Standards Update 2024**

Ms. Cook and Ms. White explained that the planning communication outlines the auditors' plan for OKSIR's annual financial audit. Ms. Cook confirmed to Director Webber that the audit results will be presented at the June 6, 2025 OKSIR board meeting.

Moved by: Grower Makepeace**Seconded by: Director Kraft**

"THAT the Audit planning communication from BDO be received."

CARRIED**5.3 Staff Report from Michelle Cook, General Manager, dated January 27th, 2025, re: Program Update**

Ms. Cook updated the Board on facility renovations, seasonal hiring, and tax requisitions. She also provided updates on the Apple Marketing Commission initiative, SIR's participation in the Pest and Disease Management Conference, and marketing efforts by US distributor M3, including a new social media campaign.

The Board discussed the upcoming BCFGA Annual Meeting, potential changes to Board membership, and opportunities to enhance public awareness of SIR through university capstone projects. Mr. Esch reported on SIR's marketing efforts at the Northwest Horticultural Show.

Ms. Cook noted that moth production is ramping up for 2025, with a significant portion intended for sale. She cautioned that a potential 25% US tariff on moth sales could severely impact revenue, though no tariff has been announced yet.

Moved by: Grower Goraya**Seconded by: Director Kraft**

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

CARRIED**5.4 Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project Strategic Plan, 2023-2026**

Shelby Austen presented the CCLSP strategic plan, outlining five strategic goals and 20 performance indicators. Grower Makepeace highlighted the shared challenges among apple, grape, and cherry growers, emphasizing the need for collaboration in addressing agricultural issues. In response to Director Webber's question, Ms. Austen clarified that CCLSP works with five industry partners representing tree fruits and grapes, aiming to enhance collaboration, leadership, and project management across the associations.

Moved by: Director Lavery**Seconded by: Chair Fowler**

"THAT the CCLSP Strategic Plan from Kellie Garcia be received."

CARRIED**5.5 BioTEPP Final Shipment email, sent January 27, 2025**

The Board discussed the closure of BioTEPP's Quebec facility and its exit from Canada. Ms. Cook explained that BioTEPP purchased egg sheets from SIR for bio-pesticide production, which was then sold to BC apple growers. After BioTEPP's sale to Andermatt Group in July 2024, they committed to purchases until April 2025. With this email, BioTEPP advised that SIR's final shipment will be on February 4th. SIR is working to recover the lost revenue. Chair

Fowler noted past acquisition discussions with BioTEPP that did not proceed due to industry uncertainty. Ms. Cook estimated a \$45,000 loss in 2025 egg sheet sales.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Makepeace

"THAT the BioTEPP Final Shipment email from Pierre Laborde, Directeur general, be received."

CARRIED

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Meeting Schedule for 2025 – Updated

Ms. Cook presented the updated meeting schedule to the Board with the rescheduling of the 31 May 2025 meeting to 6 June, 2025 to accommodate conflicting municipal meetings also scheduled at that time.

Moved by: Grower Makepeace

Seconded by: Director Webber

"That the updated meeting schedule for 2025 be adopted as presented."

CARRIED

7.2 Staff Service Awards

Chair Fowler and the Board thanked SIR staff for their service, highlighting Penticton Field Supervisor Bruce Garska's 30-year milestone. As the first to reach this, the Board is considering recognition ideas. Ms. Cook clarified to Director Webber that service awards are presented at an end-of-season staff gathering.

Moved by: Chair Fowler

Seconded by: Director Bush

"That the Board express their appreciation to the staff recognized for service awards in 2025."

CARRIED

7.3 Annual Adoption of Safety Policy

Ms. Cook emphasized the importance of safety in SIR's operations. She noted SIR's adherence to WorkSafe regulations and reported a low rate of incidents in 2024, with no major incidents. SIR maintains an open incident reporting policy, documenting everything from bee stings to dust exposure.

Moved by: Director Kraft

Seconded by: Grower Goraya

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

CARRIED

7.4 Interim Financials to December 31, 2024

Mr. Farmer presented the interim financial statement to the Board. He emphasized that SIR was over-budget for revenue and underbudget for expenses. The over-all surplus for 2024 is estimated to be \$200,000 after the completion of year-end accruals. The official figures will be presented by BDO after the 2024 financial audit. Ms. Cook explained to the Board that starting in 2025, \$250,000 is to be set aside annually from 2025-2028 for a major capital replacement at the facility.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Kraft

"That the interim financial statements be received."

CARRIED

7.5 Tree Fruit Climate Resiliency Program

Director Lavery briefed the Board on the Tree Fruit Climate Resiliency Program, which aims to enhance the sector's preparedness for extreme weather. Applications opened yesterday (Jan 30, 2025) and will remain open until funds are allocated. The Board requested SIR staff to gather and share more details with them, but agreed that no formal recommendation was needed on the topic.

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

9. OTHER BUSINESS

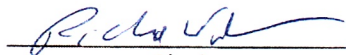
10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Chair Fowler

Seconded by: Grower Makepeace

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 11:45 am"

CARRIED


Chair


Corporate Officer