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A newsletter from the
Black Mountain Irrigation District
No. 35

BMID WATER NEWS

Scotty Creek System Separation:

The separation of BMID's irrigation and domestic water systems in the Scotty Creek service area, which is our highest priority water quality project, will be complete in 2009.

Historically, every summer the rural areas along Lakha Road, Old Vernon Road and Scotty Creek Road occasionally receive water from Scotty Creek. Scotty Creek water will soon be used solely for irrigation. As a result of the separation, more water from this source will be used for irrigation, thus reducing the volume of water required from the Mission Creek.

Bennett Contracting from Kelowna performed well for BMID and BMID was appreciative of the Ministry of Transportation, the approval authority, for their cost effective decisions during construction.

Highway 33 Upgrading

The Provincial Ministry of Transportation contract for the four-laning of Highway 33 from Muir Road to Gallaghers Road has been awarded to Peters Brothers.

We would remind all motorists travelling through the construction zone to pay attention to signage and posted speed limits. There are many dangers through the construction zone for the workers, the motorists, and especially the school kids.

The work where BMID is involved includes upgrading of water mains below the new driving lanes, reinstatement of mains at all crossing locations, and irrigation for landscaping in the boulevards. BMID has been coordinating the works with the Ministry of Transportation for several months.

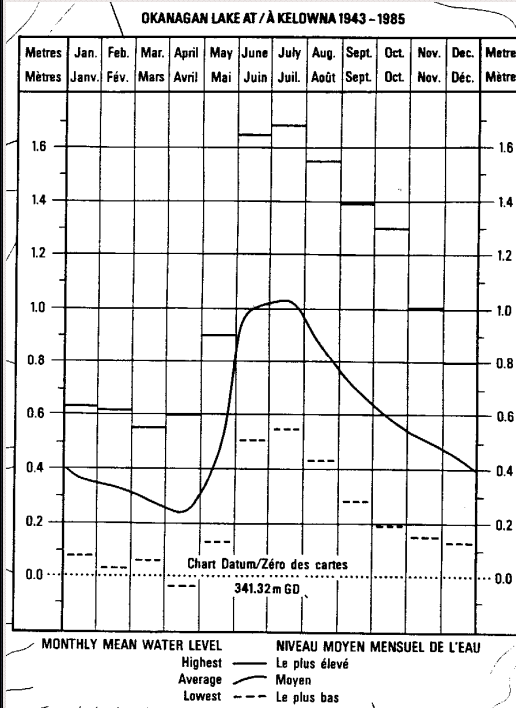
Of concern are the large diameter transmission mains that have huge conveyance capacity. BMID will have full time monitoring on the job to minimize the potential for breaks on the large diameter mains. The work includes the installation of two 42 inch diameter transmission mains for the Black Mountain Reservoir project. The Highway 33 work is to be completed by October, 2010.

The Ministry will also be working on a third climbing lane for Walkers Hill immediately to the east of the 4-laning project.

"If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water. *Loran Eisely, The Im-mense Journey, 1957*

REGIONAL DROUGHT UPDATE

The regional drought condition in the Okanagan has not improved in recent months. The level of Okanagan Lake, which is our primary hydrometric indicator, is still well below seasonal average levels. On November 29, 2009, the lake level was at 341.51 metres which is 0.31 metres below the average at this time of year. This is a shortfall of 107,000,000 cubic metres of water in the region or 8 times what BMID uses in an average year. If average precipitation and runoff are experienced over the winter, by mid April, the lake may drop as low as 341.25 metres.



BMID Year-End Reservoir Levels

BMID was careful with releases from our reservoir in the Mission and Scotty Creek watersheds. We are obligated to maintain flows of 43,000 cubic metres a day in Mission Creek and flows are usually much higher than this number. At the end of the year, BMID ended up with our upper reservoirs at 51% full, which should allow us to fill our reservoirs in the spring of 2010. The remaining water will be available to contribute to fill Okanagan Lake. This is the recommended practice by MOE as holding water at the highest elevation in the watershed is where temperatures are cooler, and evaporation is the lowest. BMID is participating in the development of coordinated drought plans for all utilities in the valley with the OBWB.

PROVINCIAL FUNDING

BMID Trustees and staff, in conjunction with Rutland Waterworks, SEKID and GEID have carried out an extensive lobby effort to the Province to be allowed to apply for Provincial funding for water quality improvements. The arguments made were 3-fold:

1. Due to Ministry Policy, the four districts have 55,000 persons that are not eligible to receive Provincial Grant funding for water system improvements;
2. The Provincial Regulations, delegated to the IHA, direct the water utilities to improve the water quality that is provided;
3. Land use is fixed by the Province (ALR) which directly affects the population density and the financial capacity of a utility.

The four utilities have not received funding from the Province for water projects since the ARDA program pressurized the irrigation systems some 40 years ago.

These points were presented to the local MLAs, then to the Minister of Community & Rural Development, the Honourable Bill Bennett who has closely considered our arguments. The information was presented to the *Provincial Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government* on October 16, 2009 in Kelowna. The committee, made up of 10 Liberal and NDP MLAs, subsequently made an unconditional recommendation that the large improvement districts be treated equally to Regional Districts and Municipalities. The utilities are awaiting the Minister's decision on changing their funding policy.

FACT: *Collectively, the 5 Kelowna water utilities are the 2nd largest supply area in the Province behind the Greater Vancouver Water District. Annual water usage here is about 57,000 ML which is slightly more than the third place Capital Regional District which supplies water to the Victoria municipalities.*

VALLEY WATER NEWS

Black Mtn. Reservoir Project Update

Sandblasting and pipe coating continues at the BMID yard along Belgo Road. BMID has less than three months work remaining on the 42" pipe, 60" steel pipe, bends and fittings.

During the winter of 2009-10, BMID will be completing the pipe coating. Environmental studies, drainage planning, landscaping design, and a Visual Impact Assessments for the reservoir project have been underway for several months. The works are required by the City as part of the Development Permit process.

Preliminary designs for the diversion chamber and UV disinfection buildings will be carried out over the winter months. BMID is planning to have all approvals in place for the off-site works and to install some of the transmission main in 2010 .

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

The OWSC has been busy implementing the recommendations made within their Sustainable Water Strategy. There are six areas of focus for coordinated valley water planning. These include Drought and Water Supply, Water Economics, Source Protection, Groundwater Management, Information Management, and Outreach and Communications. Committees have been meeting to move these issues forward.

The OBWB is presently working on a project to streamline reporting of water usage throughout the Okanagan. This pilot study will develop a web-based reporting tool for the utilities to report their monthly usage and hydrometric conditions on-line. The utilities would be able to obtain and trend regional information and historical water use data which should result in better overall water management. BMID is in favour of the project and has contributed information and ideas to the development of this tool. If successful, the Province will consider using this reporting tool and technique Province-wide.

Ministry of Environment (MOE)

The Province is in the early stages of reviewing and updating the Provincial Water Act. The "Water Act" has been updated and amended many times since it was first enacted in 1909. The current update will include review of licensing and appropriation of water rights. BMID will be reviewing the process and providing comments through the OWSC and through the Water Supply Association of BC (WSABC).

"Wetlands have a poor public image.... Yet they are among the earth's greatest natural assets... mankind's waterlogged wealth." *Edward Maltby, Waterlogged Wealth, 1986*

PROVINCE ANNOUNCES LICENSING OF OFF-ROAD VEHICLES (ORVs)

In November, the Province announced rules for ORV registration and licensing, helmet use, youth safety and environmental protection that are to be implemented within the next two years.

One-time registration for all ORVs will be required. New standards for mufflers are included to minimize noise and spark arrestors are required to reduce forest fire risk. Displayed license plates will make it easier for conservation officers, law enforcement and park rangers to identify and charge those who are damaging sensitive habitat areas. Irresponsible vehicle operators can be reported at the toll free number:

1-(877) 952-RAPP (7277)

BMID is pleased with the announcement and believes that it will not inconvenience responsible operators.

Lambly Creek Watershed Conflict

Over the last four years, there has been notable soil erosion in the Lambly Creek watershed due to ORVs. Ripped soil cover can exponentially increase erosion. (Photo: Bald Range Ck. damage due to runoff and ORVs).



In the Lambly Creek watershed, the setback for ORV trails from the creeks is far less than the riparian buffer required by the MOE and the Ministry of Forests for logging. Until the ORV club follows the same rules as other agencies, they will not be considered credible or responsible by the local government and other stakeholders. If the ORV invests their own funds in developing the trails, like the Kelowna Snowmobile Club, they would also be considered more credible.

Being allowed to operate within a watershed is a privilege and not a right. Water suppliers in the region are lobbying the Province that **all** new activities in a watershed must be given the responsibility to prove they have no adverse impact on the natural resources. This should not be an added expense to existing stakeholders.



BMID LOGGING ACTIVITIES

BMID owns lands around Ideal Lake (Belgo Reservoir). The tree cover on the lands consists of a substantial amount of pine that has been decimated by the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB). The forest areas are located adjacent to the Forestry Campsite and directly north of the reservoir. BMID has retained Leblanc Logging out of Lumby to carry out the salvage harvesting of approximately 4,000 cubic metres of pine timber. BMID is trying to get the works done prior to major early winter snowfalls in the area as timber prices may not remain at their current levels in the spring of 2010.

BMID should be able to cover all costs for this work as stumpage payment to the Province is not required on private land.

BMID WATER USAGE & RATES

2009 Water Usage

BMID's projected water use for 2009 is 13,350 megalitres (ML) which is slightly below the annual average usage of 13,600 ML. Public concern related to drought was a factor that affected water usage.

Meter reading reports for each grower will be forthcoming over the winter months prior to the 2010 growing season. The allotted water use per property is a 675mm depth (27 inches) to be used over the Grade A designated lands.

For 2010, the Trustees have asked staff to review the status of system leakage that occurs on private property. Owners with on-going leakage will be tagged with warnings to repair the system within a reasonable time. If not repaired within the allotted time, the water will be turned off until on-site repairs are made.

2010 Water Rates

For 2010, the proposed monthly water rate for a single family residence is \$31.75. The proposed average water rate increase is 2.4% to cover inflation and our existing users share of costs to fund water quality upgrades.

OBSERVE, RECORD & REPORT
questionable watershed activities to
BMID at 765-5169