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A newsletter from the
Black Mountain
Irrigation District
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VALLEY WATER NEWS

BMID Board

Board members for BMID for 2009-10 are: Gord Ivans (Chair), Alfred Kempf, Allan Kirschner, Heinz Koetz and Laurence Petch. The Board is very stable and has served the community well with a wealth of experience on water management, agriculture, construction, forestry and business.

Okanagan Basin Water Board

The new OBWB has now had several meetings and is moving forwards in several areas. Recent agenda items included discussions and policy considerations for the leased lots on Reservoir lakes, milfoil (aquatic weed) control works on the valley lakes, and the 2009 small grants program. Approval was given to OBWB staff to work with the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council to develop an electronic newsletter three times per year to highlight feature stories on water in the basin.

In April 2009, BMID received a \$12,000 grant from the OBWB to install cattle fencing along a portion of Mission Creek. The fencing should reduce microbiological contamination from cattle. BMID is looking to leverage these funds with monies from other stakeholders in the watershed in this initiative. Website link at www.obwb.ca

Water Supply Association of BC

The WSABC has been working for three years to lobby for improvements to the IHA Turbidity Notification program. The Province and IHA finally issued a revised program which should result in less media alert type advisories, more education and a general improvement in the safety to the public as now the public will not be overwhelmed with media announcements on low risk events.

One of the largest issues facing the WSABC now appears to be the lack of attention by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MOTCA) to protecting source water. This relates to the new trail system developed in the Lambly Creek watershed. Recently constructed trails are within the riparian areas of the creek with some trails running parallel less than a metre from the stream edge. (continued Pg. 2)

"Water and words are easy to pour but impossible to recover" Anonymous

IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT GOVERNANCE

Kelowna has a unique situation where there are five water utilities serving a population of 115,000 persons and 13,000 acres of agriculture. The boundaries of two of the utilities, BMID and GEID, extend out into the Regional District. The watersheds extend further out yet into the Provincially controlled Crown Land. There are three large upper elevation watersheds supplying Kelowna: Mission Creek (BMID), Hydraulic Creek (SEKID) and Kelowna Creek (GEID). The City Water Utility relies on Okanagan Lake, and Rutland Waterworks District (RWD) relies on groundwater wells. Only RWD fully meets the IHA requirements for water quality. The Letters Patent for each water utility, put in place by the Lieutenant Governor of BC, set out the taxation and services to be delivered for each utility. BMID Letters Patent were issued on November 3, 1920. The Improvement Districts (IDs) are dedicated utility providers that fall under the same provincial *Local Government Act* by which municipalities and Regional Districts must abide.

Presently there has been a notable amount of media coverage on the issue of water governance. Any decision of whether BMID maintains its present status or is amalgamated into the City is the decision of the Provincial Government and BMID ratepayers and not one of the local municipality or Regional District. There are pressures by certain politicians to have a centralized system of water governance for all aspects of water delivery.

Over the last 90 years, BMID has evolved from an agricultural base to one where much of the revenue is now generated from domestic tolls. Establishing and maintaining the balance and respect between the rural and urban communities is one of our greatest challenges. Greater Vernon is currently facing a conflict on water between its rural and urban politicians. A respect of the history, understanding of water user group needs, concern for costs, and foresight of future water supply direction all help to maintain a model that works for all users and the greater well-being of the community.

The current model for water service and water governance by Improvement Districts is very efficient and effective. The Water Boards and Staff focus solely on water issues which takes substantial time and effort to understand. It is very challenging for a Municipal Councilor to have the time needed to thoroughly understand the wide range of issues facing water suppliers in BC. The need for political attention is high for many water issues. The lobbying efforts of the Water Supply Association (WSABC), who represents many of the large water utilities in the BC Southern Interior, have confirmed that political attention is needed. Local stewardship, local action, with regional guidance and coordination are keys to healthy and productive management of our water resources in this valley.

ALAN PANSEGRAU RETIRES AFTER 40 YEARS

On June 1, 1969, most of the BMID staff were either in grade school or were just learning to walk. That day, BMID hired Alan Pansegrau. On May 1, 2009, Alan



retired from BMID after 40 years of dedicated service to our ratepayers. A work term of such length is rare and the fit between BMID and Alan was a good one. Alan farmed along Cornish Road/Old Vernon Road area and worked at BMID. He operated backhoe for much of the work duration, was a hard worker, extremely dependable, and was always there in the event of an emergency. Alan's knowledge of the physical location of the buried services in the BMID service area was extremely valuable. Prior to BMID, Alan worked through the ARDA program to pressurize the BMID distribution system. In 1969, he joined BMID and saw many changes including the construction of Hadden Reservoir (1972), the break of the supply conduit (1973), the *Giardia* outbreak (1988), the construction of Stevens Reservoir (1993) and the Water Treatment Plant (1999). We thank Alan for dedication and commitment to BMID and our ratepayers, and wish him well in his retirement.

This is a practice that would never be allowed now for the forest industry, or for new development anywhere in the valley.

The trails also cross creeks with increased sediment disturbance, resulting in increased turbidity. There is proven sedimentation and nutrient increases to the raw water supply which has a detrimental impact on raw water quality.



BMID has concerns related to the mud-boggers who were not allowed to access the lower Postill area that was used in previous years on the May long weekend. The concern is that they will find other areas to damage such as the BMID watershed. BMID will be monitoring their watersheds more closely this year and will be reporting license plate numbers to the conservation officers. www.wsabc.com

Kelowna Joint Water Committee

The KJWC is going through a politically challenging time with City Council. The simple question asked of Council of "Would they support funding requests to the Province on behalf of the Districts?" was side-tracked into a Council initiative for a City-wide Master Water Plan and a follow-up Governance Study. This was planned without input from the utilities.

There are over \$500,000 worth of recent water studies on file for the 5 utilities. There are two high-level water plans that confirm quality and quality direction for the City water supply. The City is leveraging the ID support-for-funding request to force a Water Master Plan and Water Governance Study on the Water Districts.

In the last BMID newsletter, the Associated Engineering KJWC Water Quality Improvement Plan Review results were summarized. The expert report states that the current water quality projects that are underway do not compromise future treatment or supply direction for Kelowna.

The current actions by Council are viewed by BMID to be counter-productive. They will cause delays in adding the treatment barriers required by our regulator (IHA) to the protect the local water supply systems. BMID has yet to respond to City Council as to whether or not we will participate.



Waiver to BC Environmental Assessment Process - BMID

entered the BCEA process for our Black Mountain Reservoir project and conducted an open house on February 12, 2009 and feedback was mostly positive. The costs to carry out a complete BC Environmental Assessment however, were escalating substantially from the original \$250,000 budget for recommended work assignments of questionable value. On March 11, 2009, the BMID Administrator and Board Chair met with the head of the BC Environmental Assessment Office, Mr. Robin Junger. BMID requested to be removed from the process on the basis that the intent of the Provincial legislation was beyond what was required for the project in general and for this specific reservoir site. Within two weeks, the Province agreed and granted BMID a waiver as the project should not have major environmental impacts on riparian areas and approvals would be regulated in significant ways through the Provincial Ministries and City of Kelowna.

Black Mountain Reservoir— Pipe Preparation & Highway 33 Crossing:

Work continues to progress on sandblasting/pipe coating. All work is going on indoors and approximately 5,000 metres of the 8,500 metres of pipe is now coated. BMID is preparing the two 42 inch diameter pipes for crossing under Highway 33. This crossing is to be installed concurrently with the Highway 33 widening works that are scheduled for this fall.

Old Vernon Road Water main:

BMID is nearing completion of the design of 3.5 kilometers of small diameter domestic water main in the Scotty Creek agricultural area. These small domestic mains, budgeted at \$400,000, will eliminate the use of Scotty Creek as a domestic water source. Fortunately for BMID customers, the costs for water main installation have dropped substantially from a year ago and the value for work and services is substantially greater than it was during the recent construction boom.

Metering:

BMID is completing the installation of meters on the larger parcels of land. There are approximately 20 meters remaining to be installed for combined irrigation and domestic services. These meters must be buried deeper than the seasonal agriculture meters. BMID is also completing the industrial and commercial meter reading conversions so that all of the meters can be remotely read. Later this year, once BMID gets the administrative procedures streamlined, we will report the meter read information to the domestic customers with meters.

NEW BMID VACUUM TRUCK

BMID has recently purchased a new vacuum truck for the purposes of excavating holes, controlling water in excavations and multiple other purposes. Uses include emergency excavations for service and water main repairs, excavation where there is known to be a large confluence of buried utilities, movement of water treatment plant sludge from our thickening basin to the sludge drying areas and distribution system renewal works. The truck was ordered in the fall of 2007 and arrived last week after 18 months and many delays. The truck provides for increased safety for our staff with less probability to snag buried gas mains. There is also now lower



probability to hit very expensive buried fibre-optic lines. The truck funds are covered from our Equipment Renewal Reserve fund and will not change or increase water rates.

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

"Between earth and earth's atmosphere, the amount of water remains constant; there is never a drop more, never a drop less. This is a story of circular infinity, of a planet birthing itself." - Linda Hogan (1990)