



2010 – 2011 Report from the Chair

Welcome to the 17th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Water Supply Association of B.C. It is great to be back once again in beautiful Salmon Arm.

The Water Supply Association is entering its 88th year as an association. We are committed to representing the interests of B.C. water suppliers and their customers. Your attendance at this meeting is a testament to our relevance and success in meeting the needs of our members and we greatly appreciated your support.

The Association is made up of about 100 members, including improvement districts, municipalities and regional districts. We also count among our ranks consultants, suppliers and a range of government and non-government agencies, organizations and associations that we network with on a regular basis. We have four new members this year and I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Town of Golden and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, along with new associate members Cleartech Technologies and Western Water Associates.

These are challenging times for our industry. Whether you are large or small, an improvement district, municipality or regional district, tough economic conditions, regulatory challenges and the need to cost effectively improve and deliver high quality water to our customers are just a few of the issues water suppliers are facing. The Water Supply Association of BC strives to be a leading advocate on behalf of our members to insure your interests are met across the broad spectrum of challenges you face in the day to day operation of your utilities.

The Board of Directors met several times over the course of the year, as did the sub-committees responsible for dealing with the set of core objectives identified in our strategic plan. Considerable progress has been made on the initiatives targeted in our last strategic planning session in 2009 and we will be meeting later this year to review and update our strategic plan for the next eighteen to twenty-four months. The strategic planning approach to identifying core Association objectives has proven to be very effective in focusing the Association's efforts on the issues that matter the most to our members.

Briefly, the key objectives we have focused on can be broken down into five main categories:

1. Water Resource Management/Source Water Protection,
2. Regulatory Agency Issues,
3. Communications and Research,
4. Administration, and
5. Training and Education.



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The task list under each of these objectives is ambitious and, although we might not meet all of our goals, the Directors are focused and committed to doing the best they can. A summary of the progress made on specific topics during the past year includes:

1. Water Resource Management/Source Water Protection:

Source Protection Buffer Zones: Now that the crown lease sales around reservoirs has been put to bed our efforts to address source protection issues has moved to advocating for formal buffer zones around sensitive drinking water sources.

Those attending our spring workshop last April in Kelowna will have seen the presentation by Heather Larratt indicating strong evidence that buffer zones around upland reservoirs and creeks and main stem lake intakes can significantly reduce contamination of our drinking water supplies.

This issue has been raised directly with Forests, Land and Natural Resource Operations Minister Steve Thomson and we are now supporting work by Dr. John Wagner who is looking at ways to coordinate the local, provincial and federal players involved to facilitate this key source protection initiative.

The Mission Creek watershed will serve as a pilot for the work by Dr. Wagner and the Black Mountain Irrigation District will be playing a lead role in the study.

2. Regulatory Issues:

Water Act Modernization (WAM): The Minister of Environment, Terry Lake, has recently announced the province will be releasing a draft of the updated *Water Act* for review and comment in 2012. The Association requested the release of draft legislation in our initial discussions with the province on the issue in 2009. We found a similar process that was followed with the *Drinking Water Protection Act* in 1999 was very effective in improving the legislation and we expect similar results for the updated *Water Act*.

3. Communications and Research:

Web Site Update: The new WSABC web site was launched last summer and it includes a number of features we hope will be useful to our members.

First and foremost the web site will help us communicate. It provides all kinds of information about the Association, membership, industry reports, events and links to members and other agencies. It provides current news on our industry in BC and lets you provide comments on these issues. We encourage members to follow and comment on the subjects that matter and affect water professionals throughout the province.

The site has a Job Board where members can advertise job opportunities and there is a survey function we can use to get feedback from members on a range of topics. Please, take a few minutes to view the site - we welcome comments and contributions from our members.



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4. Administration:

The Administration sub-committee, led by Cheryl Halla, has worked on a number of important issues over the past year. This work includes preparing the annual budget for adoption by the Directors, planning and holding the Spring Workshop and AGM and providing a broad array of member services.

5. Training and Education:

EOCP: This sub-committee has been very active during the past year. Directors have met with EOCP representatives on a number of issues. It is our objective to make operator training more affordable and accessible to our members and we are optimistic the new EOCP Training Registry will help make that happen.

We have had tremendous cooperation from our MSC members in providing accredited operator training and thanks go out to that group for the invaluable assistance they have given to helping our operators get the CEUs they need to keep up their accreditation.

This year's Spring Workshop was held on March 24 and 25 at the Sunset Ranch Golf Club in Kelowna. We had over one hundred in attendance to hear an interesting list of presentations. The Tom and Rose Carter Scholarship was presented to Ian Dudley and the Ted Allingham Memorial Scholarship was presented to Joanna Norton. Both are well qualified and deserving candidates who have tremendous potential to contribute to the water supply industry in the future.

The Water Supply Association also continued our pivotal role in affecting provincial policy on a number of fronts over the past year. As previously referenced, the Association is dedicated to advancing important source water protection initiatives and we are committed to a thorough review and critique of the draft Water Act legislation when it is released for review next year.

Looking to the future there remain notable issues on the horizon that will affect our industry. The Ministry of Health has indicated they remain committed to establishing province-wide water treatment standards. Water treatment requirements have a significant financial impact on our members and the Association will be a strong advocate of responsible and cost effective water treatment requirements.

Consistent with the water treatment issue is that of senior government funding for water quality improvements. With mandatory water quality improvements comes the responsibility for the Province to provide funding assistance to water suppliers, regardless of whether the water supplier is a regional district, municipality or improvement district.

In closing I would like to say that the Water Supply Association of BC plays a pivotal role in the complex challenges our industry faces. The Directors provide considerable time and effort in carrying out their duties and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize them now.



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From the Black Mountain Irrigation District, Vice-Chair Bob Hrasko; from the District of Lake Country, Jack Allingham; from the Regional District of North Okanagan, Al Cotsworth; from the Glenmore-Ellison Improvement District, Nancy Howlett; from the Kaleden Irrigation District, Kevin Huey; from the City of Armstrong, Pat Hickerson; from the Westbank Irrigation District, Brian Jamieson; from the District of Lake Country, Michael Mercer and from the Town of Oliver, Andre Miller.

I would also like to recognize two former Chairs of the Association, Bruce Wilson and Stu Mould both of whom volunteer a considerable amount of time assisting the Board of Directors.

Finally, on behalf of all the Directors and members of the Association, I would like to recognize our Secretary/Treasurer, Cheryl Hala. Cheryl works tirelessly for the Association and has done so for many years. For many of you, Cheryl is the Association. Much of the credit for our many successes goes to Cheryl, particularly the organization of such special events as this Annual General Meeting.

In closing I would like to thank our colleges in government, industry and the public who assist us with and value the Association's professional representation of the water supply industry and to you, our membership, for your continued support.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby Pike', is positioned above the printed name.

Toby Pike
WSABC Chair