



2014 - 2015 Report from the Chair

Welcome to the 21th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Water Supply Association of B.C.

The Water Supply Association is entering its 92nd 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 appreciate 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.

The Board of Directors met 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. 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.

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:

We continue to face many challenges in this area. While we have, in general, found the provincial agencies involved in crown land use management much more receptive about source water protection issues, this has not translated to better results in the field.

The breakdown in formal provincial inter-agency communications around protecting our water sources at the provincial level remains. This leaves no formal process for provincial ministries and health authorities to protect our source water through the Drinking Water Protection Act and other relevant legislation. This is



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clearly an important issue the directors will continue to pressure Victoria on in the coming year.

2. Regulatory Issues:

The most significant regulatory issue provincially in the last two years has been the passing of Bill 18, the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) in May of 2014. It is anticipated the Act will be brought into force in early 2016, replacing the century old *Water Act*.

The new provincial water rates come into effect in 2016. The ministry has indicated the new rates are intended to cover the administration and operating costs of implementing the WSA.

Groundwater licensing will also come into force under the *Act* in 2016. Well owners will have three years from the time the WSA is brought into force to apply for a license for their wells. To encourage early application for groundwater licenses, the province is waiving the application fee for the first year following the *Act* coming into force.

Other policy issues that will affect our members under the new *Act* include groundwater protection and new dam safety regulations.

3. Communications and Research:

Web Site Update: The WSABC web site and Facebook page is a key component of our communication strategy with our members. It provides all kinds of information about the Association, membership, industry reports, events and links to members and other agencies.

We regularly update the news section with stories on our industry in BC and we encourage members to follow and comment on the subjects that matter and affect water professionals throughout the province. Like us on Facebook to ensure you will receive notification of the latest water industry news postings.

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.

In the coming year this committee will be looking at potential constitutional amendments to the eligibility requirements for the Board of Directors. Of course, any proposed changes to the constitution must be ratified by membership.

5. Training and Education:

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.



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Our operator training sessions held at our AGM and Spring Workshop continue to be a popular and affordable way for operators to maintain good standing with the Environmental Operators Certification Program (EOCP).

This year's Spring Workshop was held on April 9th and 10th at the Okanagan Golf Club in Kelowna. We had over one hundred in attendance to hear an interesting list of presentations. The \$1,500 WSABC Scholarship was presented to Mathew McNally, a well-qualified and deserving candidate with tremendous potential to contribute to the water supply industry in the future.

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.

From the from the District of Lake Country, Michael Mercer and Patti Meger; from the Town of Princeton, Vice-Chair Kevin Huey; from the Town of Oliver, Andre Miller; from the Town of Golden, Chris Cochran; from the District of West Kelowna, Allan Patterson; from the Glenmore Ellison Improvement District, Darwyn Kootney; and, from Greater Vernon Water Services, Zee Marcolin. I would also like to extend my thanks to outgoing director, Bob Hrasko. Bob has been a strong advocate on a number of important issues to our membership and will be missed.

I would also like to make special mention of our director from the City of Armstrong, Pat Hickerson. As many of you know, Pat passed away from cancer earlier this year. Our sincere condolences go out to his family and many friends.

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. 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,

Toby Pike
WSABC Chair