



Agenda No:	5.1/52
Mtg. Date:	Sept 12/13

## Governance & Services Committee

**TO:** Governance & Services Committee  
**FROM:** Ron Fralick, Planning Manager  
**DATE:** September 3, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** Presentations from OBWB and UBCO on collaborative environmental planning projects.

Prepared by: *Margaret Bakelaar, Environmental – Land Use Planner*

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### Purpose:

To provide the Governance and Services Committee with presentations on two current collaborative environmental planning projects namely:

- OBWB collaboration and Okanagan Wetland Strategy - Anna Warwick-Sears and Nelson Jatel (OBWB)
  - Habitat Connectivity in the Okanagan Region - Dr. Lael Parrott (UBCO).
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### Background:

The RDCO Strategic Plan Mission Statement states; the RDCO will provide effective and efficient services that meet the needs of our citizens, in a manner that nurtures growth, opportunities, and prosperity, while maintaining and enhancing the unique Central Okanagan lifestyle and environment. The RDCO environmental planning program provides services to ensure the Board and staff have information required to make informed decisions on how the natural environment can be protected in conjunction with future growth and development of the region.

In its environmental planning program, the Regional District reflects a commitment to protect and enhance the natural environment through land use planning, development regulations and public education. This commitment encapsulates issues related to the Central Okanagan as a whole as well as the development of policies and regulation of land uses within the unincorporated electoral areas. Environmental planning work includes the administration of RDCO policy and regulation such as Development Permits, ongoing maintenance of the environmental planning data developed over the past 12 years, and a number of regionally significant projects.

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## Presentation # 1 - OBWB collaboration and Okanagan Wetland Strategy

Community Services Planning Section is working in collaboration with the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) on a number of initiatives related to water conservation and quality, including input on the Regional Growth Strategy. Through the OBWB grant program, the RDCO and partners have been involved in a number of projects including: sensitive habitat inventory mapping; best management practices illustrations; hydrogeological assessments and modeling of aquifer systems in the central Okanagan; stream restoration and education activities on Joe Rich Creek; the "silvopasture"<sup>i</sup> project in Vernon and Oyama Creek watersheds; Okanagan Lake foreshore inventory mapping; and wetland inventory, collaboration and prioritization. Anna Warwick Sears and Nelson Jatel will be providing a presentation on OBWB collaboration with RDCO and information on the most current collaborative project – the development of an Okanagan Wetland Strategy.

## Presentation # 2 - Habitat Connectivity in the Okanagan Region

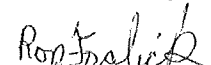
Another collaborative environmental planning project that has been partially funded through RDCO is the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. The information and mapping on habitat connectivity that has been developed in conjunction with the project, together with the land use information from the Regional Growth Strategy update, has led to a partnership with UBCO to further refine habitat connectivity across the RDCO area. The objective of this project is to assist in identifying a terrestrial network of patches and corridors whose conservation or restoration may contribute to maintaining habitat connectivity for a broad range of species in the Okanagan Basin. Restoring habitat connectivity once it has been lost is considerably more costly and much less effective than conserving existing native habitat. Dr. Lael Parot will be providing a presentation on identifying priority areas for conserving habitat connectivity in the Okanagan Region.

### Conclusion:

Working with other organizations with similar interests and objectives has led to development of partnerships which addresses environmental issues and concerns that cross jurisdictional boundaries. This coordination of projects and partnerships has led to cost savings to member municipalities and tax payers. It provides a consistency of approach for cross jurisdictional issues and coordinates provincial and federal input into regional issues. The joint projects provide a source of amalgamated environmental mapping information and coordinates funding applications for regional issues. As noted in the RDCO Strategic Plan, certain issues are best addressed collectively at the regional level and as seen through the presentations from OBWB and UBCO, wetland conservation and habitat connectivity are two such issues.

This is for your information.

Submitted by:

  
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<sup>i</sup> Nomination for the Premier's Innovation and Excellence Awards, for the Interior/North Region.

Approved for Board's Consideration

  
 Brian Reardon, CAO