



Highlights of meeting # 34 held on March 4th 2008 in Victoria
for complete minutes and background information go to
<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/partners/index.htm>

Climate Change Focus Session

Ben Kangasniemi, Ministry of Environment (MOE) provided a primer on climate change and the issues that face British Columbia. The northern part of the province is warming quicker than the southern area. Also the winter increase in temperature is higher than summer increases. The winter increases may be 2 to 3 times what has been seen in the past 100 years. Spring snow levels in the province are also on the decline which may impact storage reservoirs around the province. The timing of snow melt will also change with the peak coming earlier. Extreme precipitation events will likely become more frequent. The pine beetle kill will severely impact the hydrology of the Fraser River Basin. Sea level rise could also affect agriculture in some areas. In regions like the Okanagan the total water supply may be exceeded by total demand by 2050.

Anticipated negative impacts from climate change in British Columbia include summer water shortages in snowmelt rivers, severe rainstorms and erosion, greater flooding and salinity problems in the Fraser Valley, more pest and disease outbreaks due to winter warming, and heat stress affecting livestock. Anticipated positive impacts from climate change in British Columbia include increased growing degree days, longer frost free season, CO₂ fertilization, displacement of forests may increase supply of agricultural land, selling to offsets market (carbon trading), and increased demand for local food due to the cost of shipping.

Sean Darling of ILMB provided an outline of provincial initiatives on climate change. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Targets Act requires levels to be 33% below 2007 by 2020. The act will legislate mandatory caps on major BC emitters. There will also be sectoral actions to help achieve provincial targets. Other work includes hydrologic studies, a BC sea level study, \$10 million in funding over 3 years to improve the hydrometric and meteorological monitoring network and a \$90 million endowment to UVIC for climate action. The agriculture sector contributes about 4% of the GHG emissions in BC while transportation is about 40%.

Steve Thomson of the British Columbia Agriculture Council (BCAC) provided a short overview of the initiatives currently underway by the agriculture sector with respect to climate change. A climate action initiative committee is being established with funding from the Investment Agriculture Foundation for a policy coordinator to help liaise and partner with other agencies. **George Hamilton of BCAC** reported that an Agriculture Byproducts strategy is also being developed by BCMAL and will contribute to action on climate change.

Action: Follow up session on climate change mitigation to be held at the next Partnership Committee meeting in June. Adaptation initiatives will be covered at the PC session in the fall.

During the lunch period, **Ministers Pat Bell (MAL) and Barry Penner (MOE)** highlighted key initiatives of their respective Ministry that support agriculture environment initiatives.

Water Management and Groundwater Protection

Randy Cairns of MOE provided an update on the process started to update the Water Act. The objectives of the water act modernization are to enable and encourage water stewardship in British Columbia, clarify existing provisions, streamline processes and provide effective and efficient decision making, provide more flexibility to adapt to changes, and move towards an integrated, adaptive and results based management approach. Issues that pertain to agriculture include water security, drought strategies, fair and equitable conservation and regulation and integration of agriculture needs in water policy development. The next steps are to engage the agriculture industry and have representation on the policy development working groups.

Keith Stinchcombe of MOE reported on progress with regards to Phases 2& 3 of the Groundwater Protection Regulation.

Habitat and Farmland Committee Report

Nooksack Dace - John Patterson of Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) provided an update on the endangered Nooksack Dace fish species issue in the Lower Mainland area.

Building Setback Standards - MOE and DFO have verbally provided their support to the draft building setback standards. A letter from the agencies is pending. The next step is to engage the BCAC council and obtain their support.

Impact of Local Bylaws on Agricultural Development - Kathleen Zimmerman of MAL reported on a tree removal issue in Surrey and on the issue of removal of trees in the ALR in general, and the impact of local bylaw's that may impact agricultural development.

Action: A small working group under the Habitat and Farmland Committee to be established to work on a solution that takes into account both the habitat values and agriculture's needs.

Biodiversity Guide - Sylvia von Schuckmann of MOE provided an update on the status of the biodiversity guide. The guide will be printed by the end of the fiscal year.

Wildlife Committee Report - Wray MacDonnell of MAL provided an update on the wildlife committee. **Brian Baehr of BCAC** provided an update on wildlife mitigation initiatives.

Nutrient Management Committee Report - Geoff Hughes-Games of MAL provided an update on the Nutrient Management Committee activities including the Okanagan Agricultural Soil Study (soil analysis to be completed by March 31) and the Poultry Nutrient Movement Study (contractor in place). He also updated the status of the Manure Storage Capacity Survey project.

Federal Provincial Programming - Phil Bergen of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provided an update on the Federal Provincial transition programming for 2008/09. Environmental Farm Planning and the BMP programs will be continued for another year. The CBCWSEP is also expected to be extended for one more year.

Greenhouse Industry Wood Fired Boilers – David Ranson of MOE provided an update on the emission limits for wood fired boilers across the province and issues related to authorities given to Metro Vancouver to set up their own emission limits through their bylaws and permitting process. MOE has had discussions with the Greenhouse Industry on what standards are achievable. The industry is proposing that one standard be developed and enforced for the entire province.

Next Meeting – Courtenay June 19th and 20th 2008