



South East Kelowna Irrigation District

WATER SUPPLY

2009 Water Supply Down Sharply

In March of this year Ministry of Environment officials forecast water supplies in the Okanagan to be well below normal. It now looks like 2009 will go down in the record books as one of the lowest supply years that SEKID has experienced in our 89 year history.

McCulloch reservoir only reached 67% of capacity this spring and the Board of Trustees was compelled to implement Stage 2 water restrictions (see following story) on all domestic and agricultural water users.

We have seen a number of relatively dry years in the past decade or so and, fortunately, SEKID has the tools in place to identify changing water supply trends. This was the sixth full year the District has collected water supply data from hydrometric stations in our watershed. These stations gather information about the amount of water available in our watershed and provide the information we need to update our long term dependable supply figure. The long term dependable supply is the volume of water our watershed will reliably provide annually.

Board of Trustees

The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to invite the landowners to call us with your comments and concerns regarding the District's operations and policies. We are:

Bill Caswell	717-8871
Ken Harvie	860-6881
Lorne Lacroix	763-0510
Dave Stirling	861-6172
Frits Verkerk	764-1987

Or, call or stop by our office and talk to the staff at 3235 Gulley Road, ph. 861-4200, fax 861-4213.



**Season's Greetings from all of
us at the South East Kelowna
Irrigation District!**

Holiday Office Hours:

Closed 12:00 PM, Thursday
December 24, 2009 until 8:30 AM
Monday
January 4, 2010

The dependable supply figure we currently use is 12,206 acre feet and is taken from a Provincial hydrological report dating back to 1980. The data from 2009 shows our watershed only provided 5,851 acre feet this year, or about 48% of the 1980 figure. The 2009 water supply was very low and this is an event we would only expect to happen once in every one hundred years. The water supply data SEKID has collected over the past six years is now

being examined and we will be updating our supply estimates based on current information. Given the number of dry years we have had over the past decade it is expected our dependable supply figure will be reduced.

WATER CONSERVATION

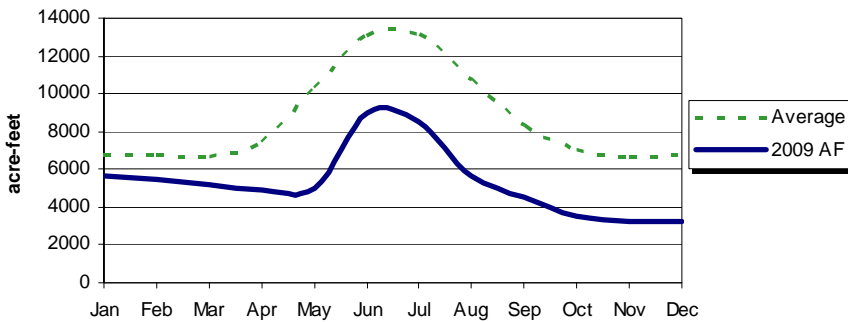
Stage 2 Water Restrictions Successful

The Board of Trustees announced the implementation of Stage 2 water restrictions on June 5th this year and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone in the District for the tremendous cooperation we received in saving water from both domestic and agricultural users.

In addition to the savings realized from Stage 2 restrictions, the District supplemented our surface water supplies using groundwater from two wells located on East Kelowna Road.

About 530 acre feet of water was pumped from these two wells over the summer and, when combined with production from the O'Reilly Road well serving the Hall Road area, groundwater provided almost 9% of our total water consumption for 2009.

Figure 1 - McCulloch Reservoir Supply



McCulloch Reservoir now sits at about 24% of capacity, much lower than average, but without the significant reduction in demand over the summer, the results would have been much worse (see Figure 1).

We will certainly need above average precipitation over the winter months to replenish our reserves for next year. Early indications are promising for a good snow pack this winter and we certainly hope that trend continues.

WATER CONSERVATION

Metered Irrigation Services

Under Stage 2 restrictions all metered irrigation services were cut back 20% from the usual allotment of 2.25 acre feet per acre to 1.8 acre feet per acre. This is equivalent to a reduction of 27 inches of rain to just 21.6 inches.

The usual allotment is sufficient for irrigating crops during a very high demand, drought year. The reduced allotment would be enough water in a normal year, but, as we all know, 2009 turned out to be a very dry year and it was challenging for growers to manage their water use to meet

their crop requirements and stay under their allotment.

As shown in Figure 2, over 85% of growers did manage to stay under their allotment. Those growers who did not were charged a metered rate penalty for excess water use. The Board also retains the discretion to turn off any irrigation connection in excess of the allotment and water use was monitored carefully throughout the summer. Growers exceeding their allotment were shut off, fined and had to meet with the Board to discuss how much water they needed to make it through the remainder of the irrigation season. Limited watering was permitted on a case by case basis to insure no crops were lost. Those who violated these agreements were shut off for the remainder of the season.

The metered rate penalty is based on an inclined block rate, which means the rate for water use increases incrementally with water use over the allotment (for more information go to the sekid.ca web site then go to Conservation /Agricultural Metering Program).

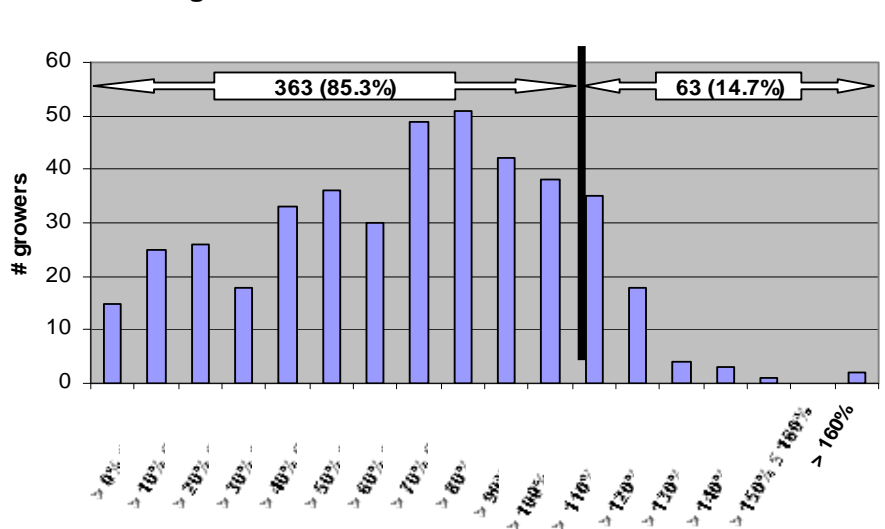
Fortunately for SEKID, the advances in irrigation scheduling and water management that many District growers have implemented enabled the District to meet the drought challenge head on. This story was repeated up and down the Okanagan Valley as water supplier's met high summer demand with minimal water supplies. Okanagan Lake, the source for many water suppliers in the valley, at its peak in July was 36 cm below full pool - a volume that Ministry of Environment officials estimate will take several years to restore.

WATER CONSERVATION

Domestic Conservation

While agriculture accounts for the bulk of summer water use in the District, residential outdoor water use

Figure 2 - 2009 Percent of Allotment Used



plays a significant role in overall summer use. Stage 2 restrictions for domestic users focused on reducing outdoor water use.

The sprinkling of lawns and gardens was reduced from three days a week to two days a week, sprinkling hours were strictly enforced and a number of non-essential water uses were prohibited completely. The washing of sidewalks, driveways, buildings, parking lots, tennis courts, roof gutters and dust control were all prohibited. Exceptions to the restrictions included the hand watering of vegetable gardens and potted plants, as well as the hand washing of cars.

Commercial activities involving water were also severely restricted. The District stopped issuing fire hydrant permits and shut down the yard hydrant for commercial dust control and road construction. Private contractors were not permitted to use water for activities such as resurfacing driveways and power washing.

The restrictions on domestic water use were a hardship for many residents in the District and we extend our appreciation to everyone for the overwhelming support and cooperation we received in managing our limited water resources.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Water Quality Improvement Plan Update

Considerable resources have been devoted to moving ahead with our Water Quality Improvement Plan over the past six months. (For

2010 Domestic Toll Increase

Effective January 1, 2010 toll rates for domestic and commercial connections will increase significantly. The rate for domestic connections will increase to \$33.25 per month, while the metered rate for commercial users will increase to \$2.18 per 1,000 US gallons with a minimum monthly rate of \$33.25.

Two primary factors contribute to the rate increase next year. Toll rates are an important source of operating revenue and a portion of the rate increase will cover these costs. The most significant impact on rates, however, is the funding required to build reserves for the implementation of the water quality improvement plan. The needed improvements are very costly and the District has been lobbying extensively for senior government grant funding to help offset these costs (see story this page). In the meantime the District will continue to increase our reserves to minimize the need to dramatically increase rates in the future when the Water Quality Improvement Plan proceeds.

Domestic services are billed quarterly and the new rate will amount to a billing of \$99.75 for each three month period. Domestic accounts pre-paid for the year prior to 4:00 PM February 26, 2010 are entitled to a \$14.25 discount. The annual toll amounts to \$399.00. When the discount is applied to the annual toll, the total payable is reduced to \$384.75, a savings of \$14.25.

Residents of the Hall Road area who pay a special charge are also eligible for a discount. Residents of the Hall Road area who pay both the annual toll and annual Special Charge on or before 4:00 PM February 26, 2010 are entitled to a discount of \$20.25, reducing the annual payment to \$498.75.

The District also intends to raise additional funds for water quality improvements through the sale of District owned land.

For more information about tolls please see the table below or the "Billing" page on the web at www.sekid.ca, or, feel free to contact the district office for details.

Domestic Toll and Special Charge Discount for 2010

(For annual charges paid on or before 4:00 PM February 26, 2010)

	<u>Annual Toll</u>	<u>Special Charge</u>	<u>Sub-total</u>	<u>Discount</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Savings</u>
Non-Hall Road	\$399.00	0	\$399.00	-\$14.25	\$384.75	\$14.25
Hall Road Area	\$399.00	\$120.00	\$519.00	-\$20.25	\$498.75	\$20.25

detailed information on the WQIP, refer to the District web site or follow this link:
<http://sekid.ca/pdf/reports/Summary%20Report.pdf>).

Residents who have been following this issue will recall a significant challenge SEKID faces in moving ahead with the project is financing.

In addition to the sale of District assets and increase in Domestic Tolls (see story Page 3), the Board of Trustees is determined to access senior government funding to help finance these improvements.

The two avenues being pursued are 1) direct access through the Provincial Government and 2) access to provincial funding through support from the City of Kelowna.

Updates of these initiatives are summarized below.

City of Kelowna

The City of Kelowna has provided conditional support to assist the District get funding. This support is subject to District participation in a governance study.

The Board has agreed to participate in this study subject to three conditions:

- 1) the Province and City agree funding would be available to the District with City support;
- 2) SEKID would be an equal participant in developing the terms of reference for the study, and;
- 3) it is agreed that the study is not binding on the elected representatives of either the City or SEKID.

To date we have been unable to get an answer from the Province to the first question. As this is critical to the next steps in the

process, little effort has been spent on defining terms of reference for a governance study at this time.

Province

There has been considerable activity at the provincial level on this issue and much of the credit for this goes to the Okanagan Members of the Legislative Assembly, particularly our local MLAs Steve Thomson, Norm Letnick and Ben Stewart. These three have put considerable time and effort into understanding the water servicing issues facing the City of Kelowna and the role the four improvement districts (SEKID, BMID, GEID and Rutland) play in servicing the residents and agricultural community within the City.

It is fortunate for SEKID that Steve Thomson was named Minister of Agriculture in June. Mr. Thomson's background and knowledge in the agricultural community, along with his accessibility to his constituents, has provided SEKID with many opportunities over the past few months to present our case for provincial funding.

Working in conjunction with Kelowna's other three improvement districts these opportunities have included several meetings in both Kelowna and Victoria with Ministers, MLAs

and staff responsible for local government funding and regulation.

In August we had the opportunity to provide a comprehensive briefing on our water quality improvement plans and tour of our facilities to the entire Okanagan Caucus. In addition to our three local MLAs, also in attendance were the Parliamentary Secretary for Water Supply and Allocation, John Slater; the Speaker of the House, Bill Barisoff and the Minister of Community and Rural Development, Bill Bennett.

In October the four improvement districts had the opportunity to present to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in Kelowna. The Committee's report was released November 13th and Agricultural recommendation # 32 of that reports recommends improvement districts of a certain minimum size be eligible for provincial funding programs in the same way as municipal governments.

While this recommendation is not binding on the government it certainly leaves room for optimism.

Thanks to the more than 125 SEKID residents who wrote to the committee in support of our access to government funding. Copies of the presentation and report are available on the SEKID web page under News & Reports.

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