

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Corporate Services Committee

FROM: J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 6, 2025

RE: **South Okanagan Conservation Fund – Technical Advisory Committee
Appointments**

Administrative Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Directors renew the following as volunteer member of the South Okanagan Conservation Fund Technical Advisory Committee for a two year term ending January 2027.

- Benjamin Butz (B.Sc., M.E.T., R.P.Bio.)

AND the following as a volunteer member of the South Okanagan Conservation Fund Technical Advisory Committee for a one year term ending January 2026.

- Rick McKelvey (M.Sc.)

THAT a letter of appreciation be sent to Tara White, R.P.Bio. on behalf of the Board, thanking her for her dedication and support while serving on this committee.

Purpose:

To appoint volunteer members to the South Okanagan Conservation Fund Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to provide expertise in the review and recommendation to the Board of Directors regarding the selection of projects or recipients of the South Okanagan Conservation Funds.

Reference:

South Okanagan Conservation Fund Terms of Reference – (August 19, 2023).

Business Plan Objective:

Goal 3.3 To develop an environmentally sustainable.

Background:

In December 2016, the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, with public assent, adopted Bylaw No. 2690 to establish an Environmental Conservation Service for the Electoral Areas “A”, “C”, “D”, “E”, “F”, the City of Penticton, District of Summerland, and the Town of Oliver.

The funds requisitioned are in support of undertaking and administering activities, projects, and works that include, but are not limited to, water, environment, wildlife, land and habitat

conservation efforts to protect natural areas within the participating areas of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

At the June 1, 2017 Board meeting, the Board of Directors approved a Terms of Reference for a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which is attached to this report for reference.

The purpose of the TAC is to:

- (a) Ensure that all proposals to the Fund receive an expert technical review based on a fair assessment of merit and project effectiveness;
- (b) Provide a high level of accountability in the review process; and
- (c) Provide recommendation on technically appropriate proposals to the Board of Directors

TAC members may serve a term of up to three years (renewable upon reappointment), with some members serving one- or two-year terms initially to ensure membership continuity.

Analysis:

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the TAC will be comprised of five to seven volunteer members with expertise in each theme area of hydrology, ecology, conservation biology, ecosystems (sensitive terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, management, enhancement and restoration), restoration and enhancement of habitat, fish and wildlife conservation including species at risk.

In response to an expression of interest by Mr. Rick McKelvey, the candidate for membership was evaluated by Christy Malden, Corporate Officer, and Lauren Meads, SOCF Administrator. Applicants are considered for recommendation based on the following criteria: expertise and qualifications in the management, restoration or enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems, species at risk, natural resource management and qualifications in Environmental Studies, Science, Ecology, or other applicable qualification.

The applications submitted to the SOCF are extremely complex in nature and these three applicants have a level of in-depth environmental knowledge and experience. To that end, administration is recommending that these two individuals be appointed for the maximum three year period. A brief biography for each new candidates is also noted in Appendix 'A' of this document, for the Board's reference.

If appointed, these two candidates would join the current 6 members on the Committee.

- Ms. Leanne McDonald (B.Sc., R.P.Bio, P.Ag.)
- Mr. Timothy Grey, (B.Sc., M.E.T., R.P.Bio.)
- Mr. Mike Dunn, (R.P.Bio.)
- Ms. Jamie Leathem, (M.Sc.)
- Mr. Richard (Dixon) Terbasket, (Wild Life Tec 4, Okanagan Nation Alliance)
- Ms. Kristen Mancuso, (Ph.D, R.P. Bio.)

Administration would also like to extend a thank you to the following member who is resigning from the Committee.

- Ms. Tara White (R.P. Bio)

Alternatives:

1. THAT the Board of Directors appoint as volunteer members of the South Okanagan Conservation Fund Technical Advisory Committee, candidates as contained within this report.
2. THAT the Board of Directors defer appointment of the Committee members for future consideration.
3. THAT the Board of Directors decline to appoint additional members to the Technical Advisory Committee.

Respectfully submitted:

C. Malden, Corporate Officer

Appendix 'A'

Benjamin Butz has been working in the field of environmental consulting since 2018. Both his interest and experience are focused on baseline ecological data collection, with a particular focus on vegetation and ecosystem site series identification. He is familiar with the provincial Biogeographic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) system, which he has applied in the field using both Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) and Predictive Ecosystem Mapping (PEM). Both TEM and PEM adhere to standards from the B.C. Resources Information Standards Committee (RISC). He also has experience working with wildlife, including wildlife salvages, habitat assessments for species-at-risk, and nesting bird surveys. Benjamin has performed work in multiple national parks across BC and Alberta.

Rick McKelvey retired from the Canadian Wildlife Service in Delta, BC, after more than 30 years managing migratory birds, and latterly implementing the *Species at Risk Act*. He left CWS as the Manager of the Pacific Wildlife Research Centre. He moved to Penticton in 2005, where he was Manager of the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program for a short time, after which he worked as a consultant. He has been fully retired since 2009, and is still active in the biology field in the local area, working to have the Penticton oxbows recognized as the important wetlands they are. His outdoor interests include hiking and cycling in the summer and skiing and snowshoeing in the winter, wildlife photography and bird watching anytime.