



Celebrating the West Bench Water System:

Past, Present and Future

The West Bench Irrigation District has supplied water to homes and orchards in the West Bench area for 58 years. However, the water system is aging, and there are challenges with the water quality and supply. While much work has been done to upgrade the system, there is much more work to do.

At the request of the West Bench Irrigation District's (WBID) Board of Trustees, the Province of British Columbia has officially dissolved WBID and transferred responsibility for the West Bench water system to the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS). This will ensure access to federal and provincial grants necessary for water system upgrades required by the Interior Health Authority (IHA) as well as ongoing operations and maintenance. In addition, a number of options for improvements are being proposed. Read on for more information.

Ensuring Standards are Met

Providing a continuous supply of safe, clean drinking water is a shared responsibility. IHA has stringent water quality standards to protect residents from water-borne diseases. The responsibility to provide clean drinking water for West Bench residents lies with water suppliers such as the RDOS. Suppliers must provide treatment to meet the "4-3-2-1-0" drinking water objectives set by IHA – this refers to levels of removal of viruses, two treatment processes, level of turbidity and the absence of *E.coli* and fecal coliforms.

The existing West Bench water system does not satisfy IHA's guidelines because it consists of a single treatment (chlorine is added as a disinfectant to the water before it is pumped to West Bench residents). As the recent boil water advisory on the West Bench illustrates, the current system is incapable of reliably supplying safe drinking water in all conditions. A key part of the next steps for the West Bench water system is continued progress on

Edward Wahl, courtesy of Penticton Museum



JOIN US FOR A BBQ
to celebrate the history of the West Bench Irrigation District, learn more about the transition to the RDOS and future options for improvements to our water system.

West Bench Elementary School
Thursday, July 28, 2011

BBQ: 6:00 - 7:00 pm

Presentation: 7:00 pm

RSVP: info@rdos.bc.ca or phone
250-490-4128 or **250-490-4120**

meeting these standards. The governments of British Columbia and Canada have committed to share part of the cost of these upgrades through grants.

Ensuring Access to Grants

There are two grants available for the West Bench water upgrade project:

- \$2.35 million from the British Columbia Community Water Improvement Program (BCCWIP) Grant for fixing the pipes, metering and the addition of secondary treatment.

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Courtesy Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

The West Bench pumphouse, as it looked when built in the 1950s (left) and today.

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- \$3.35 million from the Building Canada Grant for connection to the City of Penticton's water system, which already satisfies IHA's "4-3-2-1-0" water quality standard.

The smaller grant gives the RDOS some flexibility in the treatment technology used to achieve the "4-3-2-1-0" standard (e.g., ultraviolet treatment as used in Naramata). The larger grant specifies filtration as the treatment technology.

Protecting our Future

Given that we live in this semi-arid climate, it's important to preserve and protect our limited water supply. This is increasingly challenging as populations grow and water system infrastructure ages and becomes less efficient. To help conserve water for future generations, the system needs to be upgraded. Water-saving measures like water meters are being considered as part of the proposed options.

We Want to Hear from You

Feedback is needed from West Bench water system ratepayers about finding a solution to these local water quality and supply issues.

An open house and celebratory barbecue will be held July 28, 2011 at the West Bench Elementary School. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be served from 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm with a presentation to follow at 7:00 pm. West Bench water system ratepayers can learn more about the proposed options, view display panels, talk to RDOS representatives and celebrate the history of the WBID.

What do you think?

Your input is important and will be used to help guide decisions about the necessary upgrades to the West Bench water system. Here's how to provide your feedback, or find out more:

- Drop by the open house on July 28, starting at 6:00 pm
- Visit www.rdos.bc.ca and click on **West Bench Water**
- Email comments or questions to info@rdos.bc.ca



Courtesy Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

About the Proposed Options

Currently, three options are being considered for the West Bench. Options for Sage Mesa may be considered in future and are not included with West Bench at this time. Additional information about these options will be available at the July 28th community gathering, as well as at future opportunities to be announced this fall. Please note that costs are preliminary estimates financed over 20 years and may change depending on grants. Land acquisition costs are not included in the three options.

Option 1 – Status Quo

- This option involves repairing and upgrading existing infrastructure only, without treatment upgrades. This option basically repairs some of the existing system to maintain the current water supply and delivery system as it exists today. This can only be considered a temporary fix, as IHA standards will not be met with just chlorine disinfection.
- **Total cost of capital and operations/maintenance, including grant = \$2.93 million**

Option 2 – Penticton Bulk Water Supply to West Bench

- This option involves purchasing bulk water from the City of Penticton. The existing West Bench system would be upgraded to tie into Penticton's distribution system. Upgrades would include a new pump station to pump filtered water from Penticton to West Bench, an expanded reservoir and new water meters on all connections. The remainder of the original WBID watermains will be replaced. RDOS will own and operate the water supply, distribution and storage facilities, including the new pump station. The water supply is fully treated and meets all IHA standards.
- **Total cost of capital and operations/maintenance, including grant = \$8.43 million**

Option 3 – New Lake Supply for West Bench Residents from Okanagan Lake

- This option provides a completely new water supply for West Bench residents, including a new lake intake pipe, supply main from Okanagan Lake and pump station. Water will be chlorinated at the pump station and then UV disinfected at the reservoir. The existing reservoir will also be expanded and all existing distribution water mains replaced. Water meters will also be installed. Considerations are in the plan for a future filtration site. This option will not meet IHA standards unless filtration deferral is approved by IHA.
- **Total cost of capital and operations/maintenance, including grant = \$8.45 million**