

Review of Big White's current applications and Plans: March 4 2009 Notes for meeting.

Al Grant.. Boundary Environmental Alliance

Big White original application Nov 2007 was for total 398 million gallons;

87% for residential use, 13% for snowmaking

Despite the above Big White's Ballingall is subsequently on record as saying "we don't need that water right now"

"In order to make snow in future years" "20 to 30 years down the line.....with global warming..."

"We have visions of doubling in size in next 30 years"

As is evident in figures below, Big White could grow 258% without needing additional water. Having the new application as a reserve supply to "protect against global warming" goes against the MOE established practice which requires that licence holders make "beneficial use" of water licences and it also is poor optics if some users are granted permits for possible future use when other users are given no similar offer. In order to have it appear that the new licence is in fact related to development needs, Big White, although it has years left in its existing Master Plan which is good to **2039**, has recently submitted a new Draft Master Plan to Ministry of Tourism Culture and Arts (MTCA, formerly Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Arts, MTSA) in an attempt to justify the current application. It is likely that BW were encouraged to submit this new Draft Master Plan in an attempt to justify the application.

We are now being told by Water-Stewardship Branch and by Waste Management¹ to bring our concerns to MTCA who are now handling the new Master Plan. The process by MTCA does not include any Public Meetings other than a requirement that Big White, (sometime after the plan is published) will hold an "open house" re the plan. No Gov't reps normally/expectedly are in attendance at any "open house"

We are therefore being told to take our concerns to MTCA, the Ministry responsible for shovelling public assets into private hands, the Ministry that invited Big White and other resorts to "apply for all the water available," the Ministry that appoints Big Whites consultant to be their agent in dealings with RDKB and a Ministry in which staff are acting like agents of private interests.

We were advised new Draft Master Plan submitted to MTCA is as follows:

Plan proposes building from 13,800 bed²/units to 47,000 bed/units (the latter figure is awaiting further input from Big White before it can be confirmed, but preliminary figure discussed is 47,000.³

¹ Conversation with Steve Rowe indicates that (as per act) Comptroller or Regional Water Mgr authorize water licences but additionally, which may not show in the Act, the Assistant Regional Water Manager would actually sign off on the licences, in this case Conrad Pryce. Pryce recently described himself as: *Allocation Section Head, Okanagan Region, MOE.*

² A theoretical figure for possible buildout of bed/units within the existing Master Plan. The actual existing bed/unit total is 10,289.(see detail on following page)

Changes to Big White Ecological Reserve (that was tried previously & rejected but MTCA may well support it this time)

Two Golf courses

No Environmental Assessment will necessarily be triggered

This would be a **456%** increase in bed/units over the existing, 10,289 figure on RDKB docs.

As BW is rewarded with favourable purchase price on land it will resell for development based on increasing services, **BW is effectively rewarded for massively expanding its ski hill footprint.** (Pay 10% of appraised value ? and note in current application at RDKB, some surrounding lands don't have to be purchased, saves BW further cost, and yet these public lands will be effectively controlled by BW.

RDKB has advised that an accepted new Master Plan will not necessarily trigger a new or revised Official Community Plan (OCP) by RDKB unless the plan calls for development outside of the development areas outlined in the existing OCP. The existing OCP certainly needs revisiting as existing OCP guidelines have no conservation requirements & OCP says **"RDKB will encourage BW or other private... to create a golf course"**

Re existing bed/units

Regional District as of Sept 2008 had on agenda an application under Big White's existing Master Plan for an additional 1038 bed/units to **existing total of 10,289** for a build out total of 11,327 A Report from BW consultants indicates that (prior to 2005 water licence) existing water licence capacity will serve 14,000 bed/units + fire etc.

The 2005 licence is either a 90% or 112% increase over existing licences, depending on whether the reservoir is 21% bigger than licenced⁴. On basis of smaller figure, extrapolating the math used by BW's consultant, it would enable build out to 26,600 bed/units, (A 258% increase over the actual of 10,289 and considerably more than the "doubling" of the resort that Ballingall has publicly proposed) No wonder that Ballingall has said publicly "they don't need the new water" (for development servicing)

Application includes support letter from MTCA who advise the District that **"BW's consultant, BHA, acting as an agent for Big White, is authorized by MTCA to also act as agent for MTCA"** Such an arrangement is incestuous and when considered along with the MTCA invitation to resorts to "apply for all the water available in the watershed" it is apparent that MTCA is effectively acting as an agent of Big White and other resorts.

³ Ballingall has variously stated that BW is presently at 16,000 bed units or 17,000 bed units and has talked publicly of doubling in size over next 30 years

⁴ Ballingall has publicly stated that the reservoir hold 60 million gallons, which would make its capacity 21% greater than that licenced.

What significance in the proposed withdrawals.

MOE Water Stewardship Branch, MOE and the Minister of the Environment have dismissed concerns over the proposed withdrawals, maintaining that the proposed withdrawals are “not significant.” Regional Hydrologist, MOE Phil Epp has stated that: stored water is largely used for residential purposes, small losses from reservoirs to evaporation, maybe transpiration if golf-course, proposed diversion small relative to downstream flows, “I do not share (expressed) concerns based on the information I have.” Unfortunately Mr Epp buys into the notion that this application is largely for development purposes (not for the future use described by Ballingall) he downplays reservoir evaporation losses as small, apparently doesn’t know that two golf courses are proposed in the Draft Master Plan, water hogs due to major evaporation and transpiration losses. Further evaporation losses from snowmaking that can be 10 to 20%.Evaporation from sewage lagoons.

Figures subsequently given of 9% of freshet of the 3 streams based on what data given the lack of flow data for the three streams? If based on any recent measures they wouldn’t include the 2005 licence and its effect which is not yet in effect. The data we were shown from a station higher up on Trapping was data collected for about 12 years, 27 years ago, what relevance? Above all there is a lack of hydrology information or study in the area that would indicate the effect of these withdrawals on groundwater recharge and the relationship of that recharge to the dependence of the Kettle on groundwater flows for summer and later flows. That lack of information should prompt MOE to decline this application until such time as the necessary studies are done and a Watershed Management Plan is in place. Big White obviously have no immediate or even medium term needs for additional water and likely wouldn’t have made this application if MTCA had not invited them to do so.

Public Consultation ?

MOE has avoided requests to hold or participate in a public hearing and now suggests we should direct our attention to the “public consultation” that will occur as part of the MTCA process of review of Big White’s new proposed Master Plan. The only “public hearing” that is proposed in that process is an “open house” that Big White will be required to hold, an open house at which no government representatives are normally in attendance. The public consultation process therefore has been reduced to concerns being directed to MTCA, the agency working to advance Big White’s interests.

It must be time to direct our concerns to the Premier himself and find out if there was anything meaningful in his claims that **“the application would receive full community consultation, environmental review, community use review and complete community and scientific studies.”**

See raw footage of interview Nov 19 2008 at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/SavetheKettle>

Or see transcript and our earlier comments re Premier Campbell’s assurances at: http://www.boundaryalliance.org/cambell_sassurances.pdf