



**Okanagan Basin**

WATER BOARD

**BOARD REPORT: February 7, 2013**

1450 KLO Road, Kelowna, BC V1W 3Z4

P 250.469.6271 F 250.762.7011

[www.obwb.ca](http://www.obwb.ca)

## **OBWB Directors**

**Stu Wells - Chair,**  
Regional District of Okanagan-  
Similkameen

**Rick Fairbairn - Vice Chair,**  
Regional District of North  
Okanagan

**Bernie Bauer,** Okanagan  
Water Stewardship Council

**Michael Brydon,** Regional  
District of Okanagan-  
Similkameen

**Juliette Cunningham,**  
Regional District of North  
Okanagan

**Doug Dirk,** Regional District of  
North Okanagan

**Keith Fielding,** Regional  
District of Central Okanagan

**Doug Findlater,** Regional  
District of Central Okanagan

**James Pepper,** Okanagan  
Nation Alliance

**Toby Pike,** Water Supply  
Association of B.C.

**Tom Siddon,** Regional District  
of Okanagan-Similkameen

**Gerry Zimmermann,** Regional  
District of Central Okanagan

The next regular meeting of  
the OBWB is 10 a.m.,  
March 5, 2013 at Regional  
District of Okanagan-  
Similkameen, Penticton.

## **Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights**

**Water Board re-elects chair and vice-chair:** Directors re-elected Stu Wells (appointed by Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen) as chair of the Water Board and Rick Fairbairn (Regional District of North Okanagan) as vice-chair. Re-appointed to the board from RDNO are Juliette Cunningham and Doug Dirk. Board directors from Regional District of Central Okanagan are Keith Fielding, Doug Findlater and Gerry Zimmermann. RDOS directors include Michael Brydon and Tom Siddon. Additional directors include James Pepper with Okanagan Nation Alliance, Toby Pike of the Water Supply Association of BC, and Bernie Bauer – Chair of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (the technical advisory body to the board).

**Directors want inspection program to stop invasive mussels:** An infestation of zebra or quagga mussels in Okanagan lakes could cost \$43 million annually in added water infrastructure maintenance and lost revenue (e.g. tourism), aquatic biologist Heather Larratt told the board. This does not include the irreparable ecological damage, she added. To help prevent the mussels from reaching the Okanagan, the board is sending a letter to the federal and B.C. governments urging an inspection program, similar to ones in the U.S., to stop the spread of this and other invasive species. The board is asking Okanagan local governments to send similar letters. Zebra and quagga mussels have been spreading quickly through the east coast of Canada and U.S. and are making their way west, fouling water infrastructure, destroying natural lake ecosystems and costing governments millions each year to manage. Okanagan waters are considered some of the most at risk in B.C.

**Province asked for long-term permit on milfoil control:** After two years of meetings with the province to discuss the OBWB's program for milfoil control and ways to also protect native freshwater mussels, the board is asking for a long-term permit. The board is forwarding its request to B.C.'s Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, recognizing the need for winter rototilling while respecting the economic and social needs of Okanagan citizens and the needs of the environment. The board will be asking Okanagan local governments to also send letters.

**New Canada – U.S. deal on Osoyoos Lake levels met with optimism:** The board greeted the International Joint Commission's new Operating Orders for Osoyoos Lake with optimism. The OBWB was successful in its opposition to guaranteed water flows to the U.S., and wanted a deal that more effectively managed water for residents, agriculture and the environment on both sides of the border. It's believed a new rule curve for lake level management will address these issues. The agreement also leaves open the potential for greater and ongoing public input, and ensures the orders will be reviewed in another 25 years.

**Deadline approaches on 2013 water grants:** Directors were told there has been great interest in this year's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program. The deadline for applications is Feb. 22, 2013 at 4 p.m. Full details are at <http://www.obwb.ca/wcqi/>.

**For more information, please visit: [www.OBWB.ca](http://www.OBWB.ca)**