



## CENTRAL OKANAGAN

### Issue 'mussels' its way to agenda

*by Deborah Pfeiffer - Story: 83010  
Nov 9, 2012 / 7:12 am*

Okanagan Basin Water Board directors have approved a plan to develop and launch a public awareness initiative this spring on invasive zebra and quagga mussels and how to prevent them from being introduced into Okanagan waters.

The mussels are spreading west through North America and are easily introduced through infested water vessels (ex., recreational boats.) The resulting damage to infrastructure has cost millions to local governments in Eastern Canada and the U.S.

Other highlights from this week's board meeting include a staff report on the various obstacles affecting the ability of the OBWB's milfoil crew to remove the invasive weed from Okanagan lakes. Problems include the way various boat launches have been built and the growing number of water intakes.

The board asked staff to contact local governments in the valley with the concerns to help raise awareness and ensure continued effectiveness of the program.

In addition the board's public outreach program, Okanagan WaterWise, has partnered with the Irrigation Industry Association of BC (IIABC) to present "Water Conservation in the Okanagan: What can we learn from Las Vegas?" on Dec. 5 at Kelowna's Delta Grand Hotel and Conference Centre.

The event will feature a number of water experts, including Doug Bennett from the Southern Nevada Water Authority, speaking on the lessons they've learned. The workshop is intended for regional and municipal governments, water-related businesses and interested members of the public. The early bird rate (\$100 including lunch) is available until Nov. 20.

Staff will also be pursuing a provincial launch of its latest tool to help local governments save water - the Topsoil Bylaws Toolkit. The OBWB unveiled the toolkit earlier this fall which was developed in cooperation with the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC, (WSP).

The Water Board's budget for 2013-2014 has been approved with no increase for the coming year. The budget was developed recognizing the need for fiscal restraint. The overall tax requisition is \$3.4 million, down slightly from last year.

The requisition works out to approximately \$20 for a \$350,000 home. The budget focuses on priority water programs and services for the Okanagan including milfoil control, sewage facility grants to local governments, and the water management program.

For more information [click here](#).