



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: April 3, 2014

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OBWB Directors

Doug Findlater - Chair,
Regional District of Central
Okanagan

**Juliette Cunningham - Vice-
Chair,** Regional District of
North Okanagan

Doug Dirk, Regional District of
North Okanagan

Bob Fleming, Regional District
of North Okanagan

Keith Fielding, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Gerry Zimmermann, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Wes Hopkin, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

Allan Patton, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

Stu Wells, Regional District of
Okanagan-Similkameen

James Pepper, Okanagan
Nation Alliance

Toby Pike, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Don Dobson, Okanagan Water
Stewardship Council

**The next regular meeting of the
OBWB is 10 a.m., May 6, 2014
at Powers Creek Treatment
Plant in West Kelowna.**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Water Board steps up action to prevent invasive mussels in Okanagan: Directors were provided an overview of the March 12 incident when a quagga mussel-infested boat, bound for Okanagan Lake, was stopped at the Osoyoos border. Though the transporter was cooperative, Canada Border Services Agents did not have the authority to stop the boat. Federal legislation allowing this authority is pending but this incident shows that it needs to be approved immediately. In response the OBWB will be contacting Okanagan MPs and federal officials asking for an update and urging action. Provincial MLAs and staff will also be encouraged to follow-up on an earlier Water Board recommendation for an inspection program. In response to directors hearing concerns from the public, staff were asked to review opportunities to assist Okanagan residents in contacting their MLAs and MPs to register their concerns.

Board responds to report on proposed new Water Sustainability Act: The board was presented with a committee report from its Water Stewardship Council, reviewing B.C.'s proposed Water Sustainability Act. The report notes the act is a great improvement on the 104-year-old Water Act it replaces. The new act recognizes the connection between ground and surface water and the importance of stream health and aquatic environments. However, the report notes more clarity is needed to allow governance bodies like the OBWB to begin in other regions. While the committee is cautiously optimistic about the legislation, it noted the importance of the regulations to follow and that these must be strong and well-resourced. The board is submitting a request to review the regulations once drafted, and urging the province to ensure water licence fees are linked to water use reporting, B.C.-wide.

Funding approved for projects that will protect Okanagan water: Some \$300,000 was awarded to 20 projects through the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program. In all, there were 26 applications with a total ask of \$592,778. Funded projects include a summer water audit program by Greater Vernon Water, helping residents, and agricultural and commercial water users reduce consumption. Regional District of Central Okanagan will conduct flood assessments to help the region be better prepared for increased flood risk with climate change. And the Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society and Friends of Park Rill were awarded funds to improve and protect the Park Rill watercourse near Oliver. A news release and full grant details can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/m7y5xz7>.

Still time to enter MAP YOUR TAP youth contest: The 4th annual *Okanagan WaterWise Challenge* continues until April 25. As part of the "MAP YOUR TAP!" theme, Okanagan youth are invited to submit multi-media entries that connect the water coming out of their taps with the area where it originates (e.g. lakes, creeks, groundwater) and the need to protect these areas. Prizes include a 2-hour boat cruise on Okanagan Lake for a private and fun class lesson on Okanagan water with the Okanagan Science Centre. Contest details at www.OkWaterWise.ca. Visit www.mapyourtap.ca. to find out where your water comes from.

For more information, please visit: www.OBWB.ca