



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD DECEMBER 5, 2017, AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
101 MARTIN ST., PENTICTON, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Tracy Gray	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice-chair Juliette Cunningham	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Dirk	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Ron Hovanes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Peter Waterman	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Brian Guy	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

REGRETS

Director Lisa Wilson	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
James Littlely	Operations and Grants Manager
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Gray called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Chair Gray respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional territory of Okanagan Nation.

2. INTRODUCTIONS OF LATE ITEMS

7.3 News article re: invasive mussel response by other B.C. organizations, and draft letter from OBWB following up with federal government re: their invasive mussel response

3. DELEGATIONS

3.1 Lisa Scott, Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) – Update on 2017 Okanagan Aquatic Invasive Species Program

Ms. Scott provided the board with an overview of OASISS' invasive mussel outreach efforts in 2017, noting that boater outreach didn't start until July due to lake flooding and most boaters were off the water until then. Three summer students were hired – one each for the North, Central and South Okanagan. The organization has been looking to diversify its funding sources, she added, saying it has been receiving some funds from the Canada Summer Jobs program but this has been decreasing over the last couple of years. The group would not be able to conduct its work without the funding it receives from OBWB, she said.

In addition to the invasive mussel outreach, OASISS received two years of federal Eco-Action funding for hands-on work. This year they removed invasive yellow-flag iris which is causing problems in riparian areas and replanted with native plants.

Dir. Dirk entered the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

OBWB funding helped pay for substrate monitors at 14 locations in the Okanagan. Next year, OASISS is looking to expand its effort with local residents launching and monitoring additional ones. The devices are launched in June and monitored until September.

The group also conducts plankton tows at 16 locations. Water samples are sent to a lab and the province reports back the results if they find something of concern. The province has not called which suggests it's good news so far, added Ms. Scott.

Most of OASISS' efforts on the mussel issue is outreach to boaters. This year included about 800 such conversations, as well as connections with about 1,400 people at fairs and festivals, and delivery of Don't Move A Mussel and other outreach materials to 354 locations.

In addition to partnering with OBWB, the society partners with the B.C. Conservation Officer Service, RDNO's water program, Okanagan Nation Alliance, the Vernon Yacht Club, and others.

Responding to questions, Ms. Scott said that the province provided \$2,200 for water sampling this year. They also review the survey OASISS conducts with boaters to ensure it is consistent with the province's questionnaire.

Based on OASISS' questionnaire results, 131 of the boaters surveyed (94%) were from Alberta, 4 (3%) from Saskatchewan, 1 each from Manitoba, Washington, Montana and Ontario.

Awareness of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and the "Clean, Drain, Dry" call to action is growing, said Ms. Scott. Of those surveyed, 91.6% who identified as being from the North Okanagan were aware, along with 88.7% in the Central Okanagan and 86.4% in the South Okanagan. There was a 60% level of awareness from those who say they are from the Fraser Valley.

Asked where they have heard the AIS and CDD message, those surveyed noted: from previous inspections in B.C. - 19%, Alberta inspections - 2%; TV advertising/news - 14%; boat launches - 8%; highway inspection signs - 6%; highway billboards - 4%; and radio - 6%.

Some of the identified gaps include: lack of funding, not all recreational boaters are stopping at the province's mandatory inspection stations, there are still Canada Border Services agents who are not fully trained and/or are unclear on their role, and there is a need for more public education. Solutions include: increased communication with boaters, as well as those who service/sell boats, more boat launch signs, links with car washes, workshops and training at boat sale and maintenance locations and dive shops, enhanced partnerships, and increased monitoring.

Ms. Jackson noted that OBWB and OASISS staff work closely together to ensure best coverage possible through the summer months, preventing duplication but also providing additional support when and where needed. She added that staff have identified similar gaps noted by OASISS, in particular provincial and federal funding, and CBSA training, which have been included in recommendations to senior levels of government. It was also noted that the province recently announced that it hopes to have additional monitoring funds available soon through the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation.

Directors spoke in favour of more mussel-sniffing dogs. Dir. Findlater added that the lower awareness levels in the Fraser Valley are not surprising but need to be addressed, as well as the number of infested boats coming from Ontario.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 5, 2017 be approved.”

CARRIED

5. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of November 7, 2017 at Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of November 7, 2017 at Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna be approved.”

CARRIED

6. **CHAIR REPORT**

Chair Gray spoke to the OBWB - UBC Okanagan Community Water Forum which she attended on Nov. 14, looking at a “One Water Approach to the Urban Water Cycle.” The forum looked at the potential challenges with water quality and quantity in the next 10 years, with the needs for agriculture and the valley’s population growth.

7. **STAFF REPORTS**

7.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears presented the revised board meeting schedule for 2018.

Staff have been working with RDCO, RDNO and City of Kelowna on UBCM floodplain mapping grants. It’s expected that funding decisions will be known in January. Staff are continuing to discuss LiDAR flights with the province. If the funding application is successful, the RFP will go out to do aerial surveys in March while water flows are low.

OBWB has been leading a Water Monitoring Scan project with the BC Water Funders group, to understand the state of water quality and supply monitoring in the province, as well as quality and accessibility of the data. A final consultant’s report should be completed in January.

Dr. Sears updated the board on the Okanagan Falls constructed wetland project, noting that the project will be going ahead in 2018. Treated wastewater will be diverted into the wetland, allowing for another level of treatment before the water is directed into the Okanagan River channel. The OBWB will be assisting RDOS in finding additional funds to develop a boardwalk and signage, promoting the area as an outdoor classroom.

Following discussion of the Executive Director’s report, Dir. Fairbairn suggested that Dr. Sears contact the province regarding its review of this year’s floods and fires. Dr. Sears said she would follow up.

Dir. Guy added that the OBWB should be working with Okanagan Rail Trails group to provide signage that informs the public about water issues. Ms. Jackson noted that she followed up on this suggestion earlier but has not heard back, and added that she raised it at a recent Thompson-Okanagan Tourism Association meeting. Also, staff provided water messaging and

creative to RDNO this summer for a wrap on some industrial bear-proof garbage cans along the trail in the Vernon area, she added.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Nov. 29, 2017, be received.”
CARRIED

7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel provided an update on last month’s council meeting and presentations by Ag Canada’s Denise Neilsen on the impacts of climate change on crops. Scott Boswell also presented on Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program projects including one on habitat corridors, and Mr. Littley gave an update on the OBWB’s mussel policy efforts. The Dec. 14 meeting will include a presentation by Francis Zwiers of the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, Scott Smith with Ag Canada, and Brian Guy, formerly with Associated Engineering.

A constructed wetlands workshop was held on Nov. 20. The Okanagan Wetland Project team is also working on a guidebook for local government. This will become part of the tools that OBWB’s Policy and Planning Specialist Kellie Garcia will be promoting.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s report, dated Nov. 28, 2017, be received.”
CARRIED

7.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

The OBWB’s five-year environmental permit for milfoil treatment program ends in 2018. Staff are now working with GIS contractors to submit a new application for permits, said Mr. Littley.

The board requested and was provided with a draft letter to the federal government regarding invasive mussels. This was a follow-up to a June meeting in Ottawa between directors and senior government staff. The board provided some feedback. The letter will be revised and once approved by the chair will be sent out.

There was discussion about sending a letter to the Invasive Species Council of BC to clarify the efforts of the Water Board on the mussel issue and encourage continued collaboration. Dr. Sears noted that she spoke with the Fraser Basin Council and explained the risks and offered to have OBWB staff talk with their board to provide more information.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board send a letter to the Invasive Species Council of BC to clarify the Water Board’s efforts on the invasive mussel issue and welcome continued collaboration.”

CARRIED

The board was told that staff have sent the recently updated changes to the Water Board’s Sewerage Facilities Grants Program to local governments, reminding them that funding is available. There was some discussion about the policy of only funding projects that comply with the 1 ha. policy, where the community has zoning policies or bylaws that prohibit the creation of lots smaller than 1 ha. that are not serviced by community sewers. Following discussion, there was general agreement that it was appropriate policy.

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager’s Report, dated Nov. 28, 2017, be received.”
CARRIED

7.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson reported on a Destination BC working group planning session she attended, to help develop a 10-year Okanagan valley destination development strategy. The meeting allowed an opportunity to ensure the need for water protection was addressed. Referring to earlier mention of Rail Trail signage, she added that there was discussion about using signage as a method to educate tourists on such issues.

The OBWB has been approved for funding through the UN Association in Canada’s Green Corp program to help with the cost of a Communications and Outreach contract position. Pre-interviews will begin next week.

Ms. Jackson also provided updates on work with the Water Stewardship Council’s Communications Committee, the OBWB-Canada Water Resources Assoc. Environmental Flow Needs conference in Oct. 2018, and the recent Water Board-sponsored Building Sustainable Communities Conference.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Nov. 29, 2017, be received.”
CARRIED

8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Letter from B.C. Min. of Environment and Climate Change Strategy George Heyman to OBWB re: Water Board introduction to new government

8.2 Letter from Federal Min. of Fisheries and Oceans Domenic LeBlanc and Min. of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Ralph Goodale to MPs Mel Arnold and Dan Albas re: invasive mussels

“THAT the correspondence from B.C. Min. of Environment and Climate Change Strategy George Heyman to OBWB re: Water Board introduction to new government be received.”
CARRIED

“THAT the correspondence from Federal Min. of Fisheries and Oceans Domenic LeBlanc and Min. of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Ralph Goodale to MPs Mel Arnold and Dan Albas re: invasive mussels and forwarded to OBWB be received.”
CARRIED

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan.

10. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 5, 2017 be adjourned at 1 p.m.”
CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director