

Important Osoyoos Lake water forum coming up

By [Wade Paterson - Kelowna Capital News](#)

Published: **August 18, 2011 3:00 AM**

Not since the signing of the original Operating Orders on Osoyoos Lake 25 years ago, regulating water levels on the lake between the U.S. and Canada, has there likely been so much interest in a meeting on water.

Elected officials on both sides of the border of Osoyoos Lake—as well as water utility staff, scientists and local citizens—are signing up to attend the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, Sept. 18 to 20, in Osoyoos.

“It’s a critical meeting,” said John Slater, Liberal MLA for Boundary-Similkameen and former chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Slater will be providing opening remarks along with Washington State Senator Bob Morton.

“Water is the one limiting resource to human settlement, industry and commercial growth. We know with population growth, agricultural growth and climate change, we’re going to have to be more careful with our water use and concerned with keeping what we have clean,” added Slater.

“Water is a big issue for us here in Central Washington,” Morton added, noting the need for increased water storage.

“We’re in a state where some of our main aquifers will be out of water in 10 years.”

Morton said a siphoning project currently underway, taking water from the Columbia River to Odessa, Wa. will help, but he also sees a potential dam on

the Similkameen River, helping retain water in Washington, as another solution to the state's water concerns.

“It's obvious we need to address this issue and the sooner the better,” he said.

The forum, presented by the OBWB, the Town of Osoyoos, the International Joint Commission and several other partners, will cover numerous water issues affecting the Okanagan Valley and in neighbouring Okanogon County.

Milfoil control will be discussed, including efforts to control the invasive weed in Osoyoos Lake on both sides of the border. For more information on the forum visit www.obwb.ca/olwsf