

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



DATE: Tuesday, December 3, 2019

TIME: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

PLACE: Regional District of Central Okanagan,
1450 KLO Road, Kelowna, B.C.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1.1 Acknowledgement of First Nations Traditional Territory

We acknowledge that we are holding this meeting on the unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation and the home of Westbank First Nation.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of November 5, 2019 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan (*page 1*)

5. DELEGATION

5.1 Wayne Wilson of the Central Okanagan Land Trust, presenting on COLT's wetland management planning process, funded by a grant from OBWB

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Executive Director Report (*page 6*)

7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report (*page 8*)

7.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report (*page 12*) (*resolution requested*)

7.4 Communications Director Report (*page 14*)

7.5 Policy and Planning Specialist Report (*page 18*)

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Memo & presentation - Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy Action Plan 2.0 (*page 21*)

9. NEXT MEETING

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan, in Kelowna, B.C.

10. ADJOURNMENT



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD NOVEMBER 5, 2019, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN
1450 KLO RD., KELOWNA, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Colin Basran	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Toni Boot	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Denise Neilsen	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

ABSENT

Okanagan Nation Alliance representative

STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Operations and Grants Manager
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Specialist

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Chair McKortoff respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of November 5, 2019 be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 1, 2019 at Regional District of North Okanagan.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Oct. 1, 2019 at Regional District of North Okanagan be approved.”

CARRIED

4. CHAIR’S REPORT

Chair McKortoff shared about her recent visit with family in Southern California, the recent

wildfires, the higher cost of water, efforts to “firesmart” homes with firebreak systems, and the strong sense of community and support in the neighbourhood she was visiting. Residents talk to each other if they’re going to be away, and evacuation kits are common, she added, noting that it was an interesting learning experience.

Dir. Basran entered meeting at 10:06 a.m.

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears provided an update on the LiDAR flood mapping data, explaining that the most recent data is being shared on a USB stick with local Okanagan governments. Data sharing agreements are being developed to ensure the ongoing integrity of the information. The province has ownership of the Okanagan LiDAR and will manage this public asset, but the OBWB, Okanagan First Nations and local governments have a perpetual license to use it for free.

As for weather, the long-term forecast for this winter is suggesting a neutral El Nino year, with equal probability of it being warmer and colder year. Snow is beginning to accumulate at valley snow stations, added Sears.

A database of water quality monitoring data is in the process of being established on the OBWB website and includes data collected for West Kelowna, Kelowna, and other public entities by Larratt Aquatic Consultants which has obtained client permission from their clients to share the information. This is intended as a resource for researchers.

Work is continuing on the OBWB’s five-year Strategic Plan. In addition to updating the OBWB’s strategic focus on water quality and water supply, the plan will more explicitly include ways OBWB will work with the Okanagan Nation. The board acknowledged this importance of this effort and interest in having an ONA director re-appointed as soon as possible.

Dr. Sears presented the board meeting schedule for 2020.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting schedule for 2020 be adopted.”
CARRIED

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Oct. 30, 2019, be received.”
CARRIED

5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported on the October Water Stewardship Council meeting and discussion around an Agricultural Water Reserve (AWR) and the upcoming meeting which will include a presentation from the Fraser Basin Council on some of their projects and what the Okanagan can learn from them. The Dec. 14 meeting will look at climate and weather forecasting.

The council is reviewing the province’s emergency legislation update as it relates to flooding and fire. The deadline for feedback is in February 2020. The council will provide a report to the board for feedback.

The council has also invited four Okanagan bands to join the council and is waiting for a response.

In response to questions about a potential AWR, it was noted that B.C.'s Water Sustainability Act, introduced in 2016, allows for these reserves and it could be a tool for supporting food security, but it is a very complicated process.

A flood mapping meeting was held with local government and First Nations partners. Partners discussed the development of a website to share the maps, and provide information on reducing flood risks. The site will be built in partnership with the province, allowing local governments to submit and update maps. It will be hosted by RDCO's server and have support from GIS departments in the three Okanagan regional districts. Work is underway to have the site ready in time for spring freshet.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Oct. 30, 2019, be received."

CARRIED

5.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley provided an update on the provincial permit for milfoil rototilling, allowing work to resume in some areas under new restrictions. Dr. Sears added that the long-term goal is to work toward a permanent exemption for the program and to have high use public areas prioritized.

There was some discussion about the board's request for provincial research that looks at the impact of milfoil on the native Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel and the need to push this. Dir. Cumming noted that he would be interested in inviting provincial staff to present to his council. There was also discussion about having provincial staff present to the OBWB directors at an upcoming board meeting.

The board discussed the upcoming call for applications to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program and the annual theme of collaboration.

"THAT for the 2020-2021 WCQI grant competition annual theme, the OBWB seeks projects in any category that have multiple partnering organizations, especially organizations from multiple Okanagan Regional Districts; and THAT applications in these categories are prioritized for funding during staff review with the awarding of up to 10 extra points toward the total score; and THAT the process and scoring criteria for the grant competition be approved as outlined."

CARRIED

"THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated Oct. 23, 2019, be received."

CARRIED

5.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson reported on the WaterSmart Innovations water conservation conference and sessions on outdoor landscapes and climate resiliency.

The board was also provided an update on various invasive mussel initiatives, including an OBWB-OkWaterWise sponsored workshop for those in the watercraft industry (marinas, retailers, storage facilities, etc.) The workshop included information on the mussels, the province's inspection and decontamination program, and tips to protect local waters.

Provincial inspection numbers were also shared for May to Sept. 15 and included interception of 19 mussel-infested watercraft, three bound for the Okanagan.

An update was provided on additional communication initiatives, including the AquaHacking launch and its posting on the Okanagan WaterWise YouTube channel.

There was some discussion about water conservation programs and messaging in spring during freshet, and then during summer when it is drier, there is more demand and competing needs for what's available. Board directors spoke in favour of efforts to encourage people to use only what they need and landscaping with waterwise plant material.

"THAT the Communications Director's Report, dated Oct. 30, 2019, be received."
CARRIED

5.5 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia told the board about the Lower Mainland Flood Forum she attended and its major themes which included the need for collaboration, resource capacity, and UNDRIP. The discussions will be valuable in helping inform flood planning for our valley, she added.

The WSC Source Water Protection Committee recommended creation of a source protection (SP) toolkit to address the gap in knowledge and provide examples of local governments who have implemented SP plans, and funding models for SP work. Staff will be attending the Water Supply Assoc. of B.C. fall workshop and requesting feedback on the development of such a kit.

The Sustainable Water Strategy was adopted by the council in October and the document is now with a graphic designer. A copy should be available at the next board meeting and directors will be asked to receive the strategy.

"THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist Report, dated Oct. 30, 2019, be received."
CARRIED

Dirs. Hrasko and Baker exited the meeting.

6. **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

6.1 Budget Features Memo - Proposed OBWB 2020-21 Budget

Dr. Sears presented the draft 2020-21 budget and noted there is a zero over-all increase in requisitions. The overall requisition is \$3.45 mill. which funds the Milfoil Control Program, Sewage Facilities Grants Program and the Water Management Program (which includes the Water Stewardship Council, water research, Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants [WCQI], and communications and outreach).

The presented budget included a recommendation that the WCQI grant budget be increased from \$300,000 to \$350,000, the first increase since the program began in 2006, to address inflation. This does not increase the overall requisition.

"THAT the OBWB adopts the 2020-2021 budget as presented."
CARRIED

6.2 B.C. AquaHacking Challenge 2020 Update Memo

The board was provided an overview of the AquaHacking program and given an update, including the showing of five brief videos that explain the issues chosen to be tackled as part of the challenge. The five issues are potable water in Indigenous communities, invasive mussels, flooding, outdoor water conservation, and stormwater contaminants.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

“THAT the letter from B.C. Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development to OBWB re: milfoil control & Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels be received.”

CARRIED

8. **NEXT MEETING**

8.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held on Tues. Dec. 3, 2019 at Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 5, 2019 be adjourned at 1:32 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
Dec. 3, 2019
Agenda No: 7.1

File No. 0550.04

To: OBWB Directors
From: Anna Warwick Sears
Date: November 27, 2019
Subject: **Executive Director Report**

ONA Flood/Debris Flow Steering Committee

On November 22 I attended the Sylix Okanagan Flood and Debris Flow Risk Assessment steering committee. The committee includes representatives from local governments and Indigenous communities from both the Okanagan and Similkameen watersheds. The risk assessment has been a parallel, mutually-supporting process with the OBWB's flood mapping project. Recommendations from the report (still in draft) include four priorities from the Sendai Framework, a global blueprint for reducing disaster risk and increasing community resilience. Below I've listed the Sendai priorities and a few (paraphrased) highlights of recommendations that relate to current or potential OBWB activities.

Priority 1: Understanding Disaster Risk

- Undertake detailed mapping of hazards and undertaking vulnerability assessments
- Further research and training
- Develop and implement public outreach initiatives including interactive websites

Priority 2: Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance

- Implement governance arrangements that embrace Sylix self-determination, and work toward risk reduction in the region as a whole
- Develop processes for collaborative decision making
- Local government changes to flood plain regulations and zoning bylaws, and planning processes that reduce risks from flood and debris flows

Priority 3: Investing in Disaster Risk for Resilience

- Educate homeowners on how to reduce risks on their own properties
- Increase adoption of green infrastructure for flood defenses, including wetland restoration and techniques to reduce storm water runoff

Priority 4: Enhancing Preparedness for Response

- Further develop flood and debris flow forecasting and early warning systems
- Integrate emergency management planning with long-term flood risk management planning

ONA Representative

We have not yet had the announcement about the new OBWB director from the Okanagan Nation Alliance. I will share the news with the board as soon as we receive the new appointment.

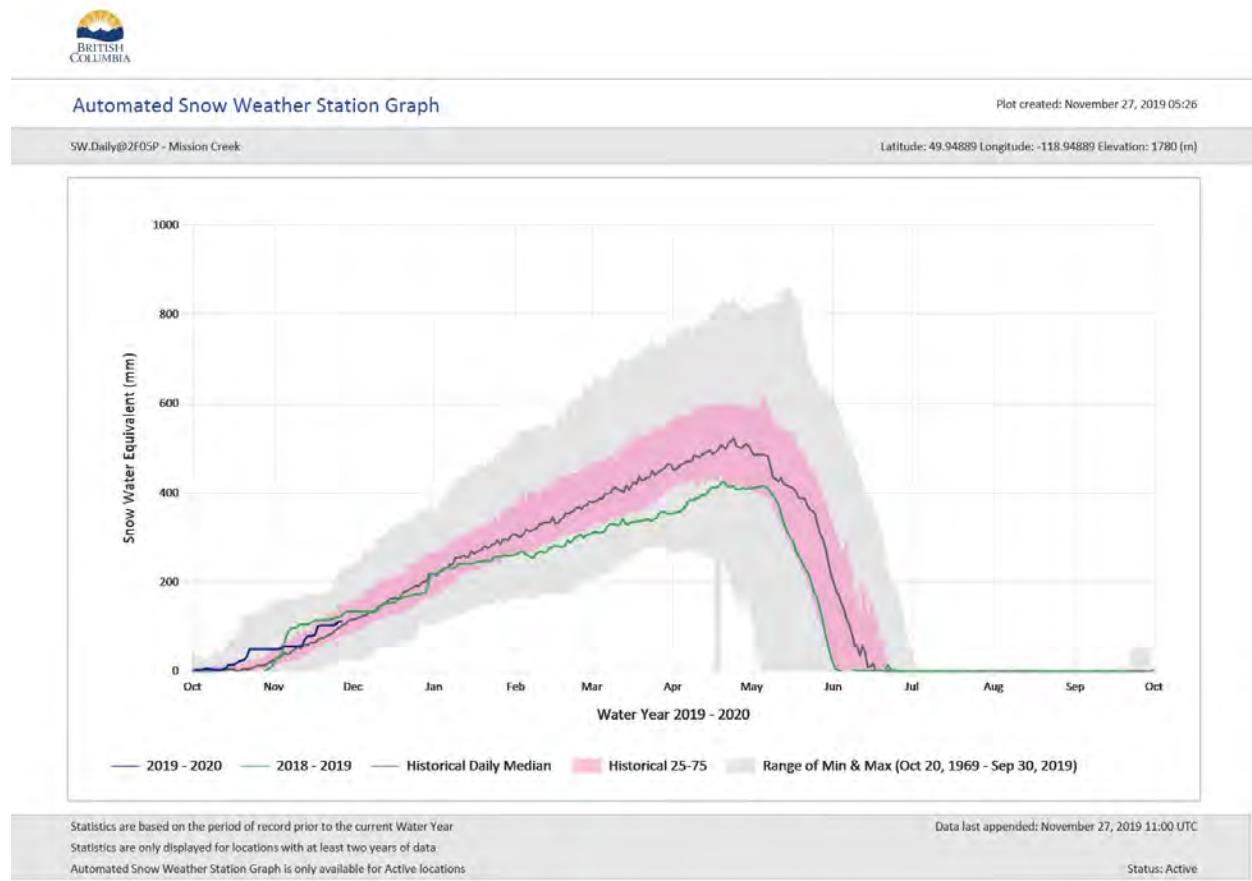
CEPF Grants from UBCM

UBCM has opened up another round of grants for the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund, with a deadline January 4, 2020. Eligible projects include a variety of activities related to emergency response, and flood mitigation. We are reaching out to local governments to determine the interest of further collaborations related to the lakeshore flood mapping project. The current mapping project wraps up on March 31, 2020.

Weather Report

There have not been any significant changes to the seasonal forecasts for this winter. The long-term forecasts by Environment Canada, NOAA (USA), and the Weather Network continue to predict a warmer than average winter. Some forecasts are calling for lower than average snowfall, increasing the potential for late spring and summer drought next year. However, snow is beginning to accumulate on valley snow stations – following normal patterns.

Mission Creek snow pillow – November 27, 2019.



MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
December 3, 2019
Agenda No:7.2

File No. 0550.04

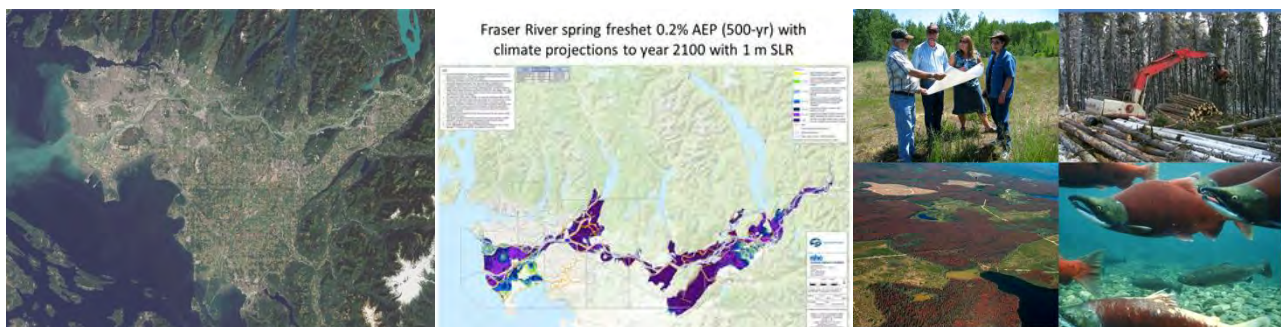
To: Board of Directors
From: Nelson R. Jatel
Date: November 26, 2019
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

Water Stewardship Council

The November Council meeting marked the start of the new term. Elections were held and Dr. Denise Neilsen was re-elected as Chair and Mr. Scott Boswell was re-elected as Vice-Chair for the upcoming 18-month term. Subsequently, the Council will transition from an 18 to a 24 month term.

The November Council meeting was well attended and our guest speakers were Senior Program Managers **Steve Litke** and **Jim Vanderwal** for the Fraser Basin Council. The Fraser Basin is one of the largest watersheds in Canada and covers over one quarter of the province. The presentation provided an overview and organizational mandate of the Fraser Basin Council and example projects of the Fraser Basin Council including:

- flood management strategy for the lower mainland,
- strategy for the Nechako watershed – issues and initiatives,
- climate adaptation strategies, and
- new climate change tool being development.



The upcoming December 12th Council meeting will be hosted at Kelowna's Coast Capri Hotel from 12:30 – 4:30 p.m. Our discussion will include presentations from **Environment and Climate Change Canada** staff on weather, climate, and Canada's hydrometric monitoring system in the Okanagan. Our annual holiday party will follow at Dr. Anna Warwick Sears's home. Board members are invited.

Project updates:

Over the past year, the OBWB office – with support from senior government funding partners - has managed important projects that are contributing to the core function of the OBWB: defining water problems and priorities; and communicating and coordinating between levels of government. I provide a short project updates on three active projects this month.

Hydrologic Model of 19 Okanagan Sub-basins

We are looking to improve and expand on hydrologic modelling within 19 priority Okanagan Basin watersheds to support a range of user needs including: water allocation decision-making, local government hydraulic models, long-term infrastructure planning, flood and drought management, climate change adaptation strategies and actions, environmental flow need investigations, fishery restoration and management, and other water management activities. The Raven Hydraulic Modelling Framework (Raven) is being customized to Okanagan-specific conditions. Upon completion an Okanagan Raven model framework will be ready to supply modelled outputs specific to Okanagan user needs. This project is scheduled to be completed at the end of December. This project is on schedule and on budget.

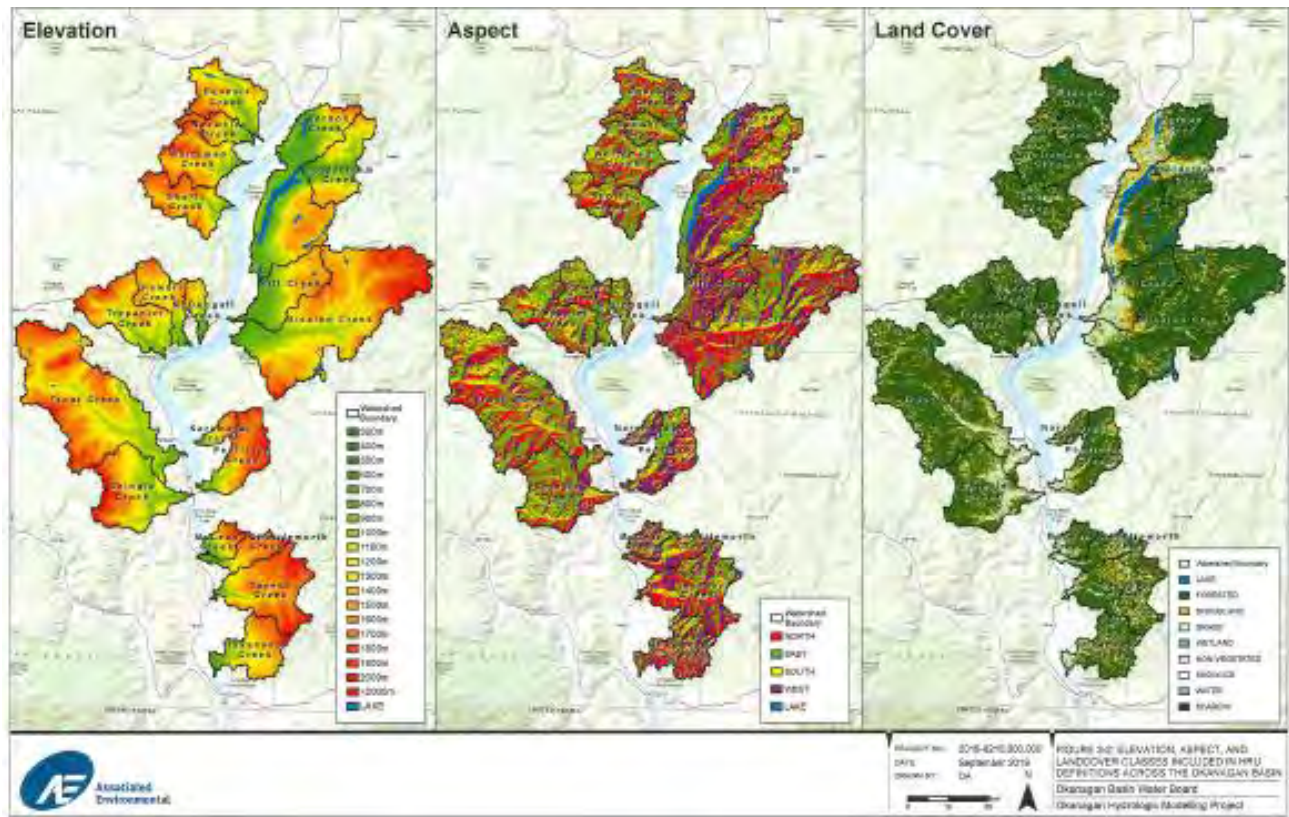


Figure. 1. Okanagan Raven hydrology model data layer inputs.

Okanagan Mainstem Lake Flood Modeling

The objective of this project is to: Develop floodplain maps for the Okanagan Lake and River system watershed, based on historic observations, and for a future time period subject to projected climatic change; and improve our understanding of flood management options available to Okanagan water managers and operators, in the face of climate variability and change. To accomplish our project objective the consulting team is *develop a hydrologic model from the Okanagan River basin, calibrate the model for unregulated sub-basins, complete a peak flow frequency analysis on the Similkameen River near Nighthawk, and prepare a final report and model.*

A recent review of Environment Canada climate data for the Okanagan has provided important insights into the limitations and application of recent (2016-17) datasets with missing climate data. This project will apply the recently updated Okanagan-Similkameen 1945 -2012 climate data set.

This project is scheduled to be completed for March 2020 and is on schedule and on budget.



Figure 2. Fictional flood map for map design purposes only. Features include Orthophoto (faded), contours, property boundaries, flood extent with and without freeboard.

Development of Okanagan Flood Website

The OBWB, as part of our regional flood modelling project, is working with local government and Provincial government partners to develop a new Okanagan flood web-based communication tool similar to the one developed by Calgary staff (<https://maps.calgary.ca/riverflooding>). The Okanagan flood story website will provide information on a range of important flood topics including: flood maps, land use regulations, our flood history, reducing flood risk, how to prepare, and our changing climate.



Some key considerations for this website content include: a very visual impactful design without too much technical jargon, description of natural assets for flood mitigation, links to public facing EOC websites, account for a variety of flooding types (lakes, rivers, overland flow). The website is anticipated to be ready for review by local government communication staff in mid-March, and released in early Spring of 2020.

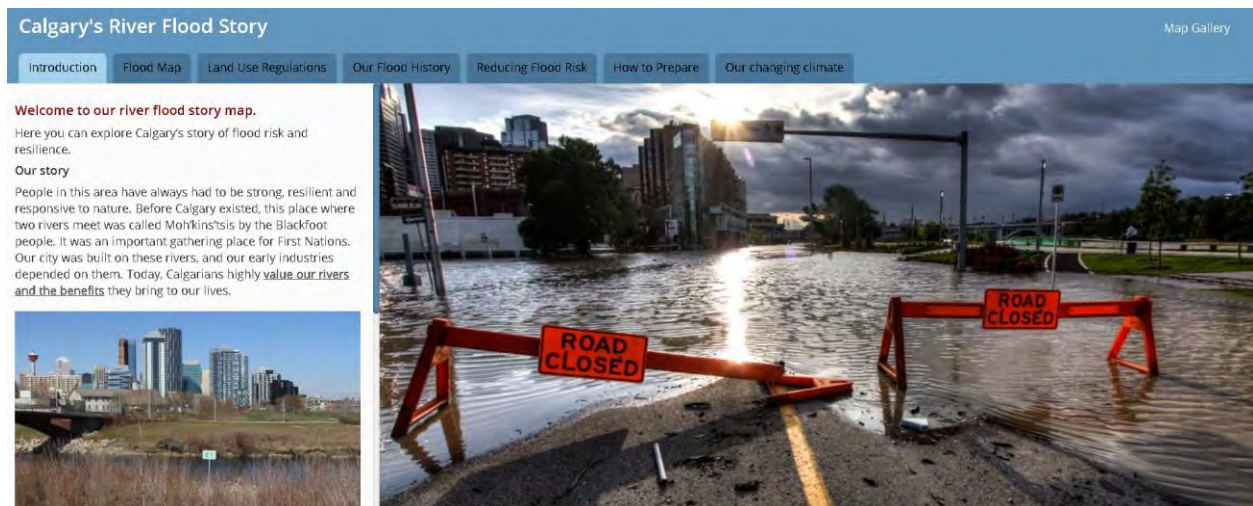


Figure 3. Example from Calgary's flood website.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
Dec 3, 2019
Agenda No: 7.3

File No. 0550.04

To: OBWB Directors
From: James Littley
Date: Nov. 25, 2019
Subject: **Operations and Grants Manager Report**

Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grants

The OBWB has received the following applications for new grant funding from the City of Vernon.

1. Peters Road Sewer Project 5776. This is an application to install a community sewer line. The total budget for this application was \$60,081.84 servicing 100% pre-1978 development. The total annual OBWB grant for this project would be \$591.68. This project meets all OBWB requirements.
2. Okanagan Landing CWWF Sewer 5777. This is an application to install a community sewer line. The total budget for this application was \$3,676,925.53 servicing 97% pre-1978 development. The total annual OBWB grant for this project would be \$33,674.18. This project meets all OBWB requirements.

These projects by the City of Vernon are part of a larger, multi-year sewerage project being completed in stages. OBWB requires a notification for upcoming grant applications one year in advance of a grant approval to allow us to include new SFA grant costs in our annual budget. In this case, notification for the larger project was made in 2014, and so was inadvertently omitted from our annual budgeting process.

As the grant budget for 2020 was approved at the last OBWB meeting in November, funding for these projects would be drawn from the SFA reserves. This would not affect any other aspect of the approved 2020-2021 budget, and unanticipated funding needs are one of the reasons the reserve is in place. Staff at the OBWB and City of Vernon have discussed the notification requirements for all future grants related to this multi-year, incremental approach to a large sewerage project.

Recommendation:

“THAT the SFA application for the City of Vernon Peters Road project 5776 and Okanagan Landing 5777 project be approved as outlined above.”

AquaHacking Update

Following the successful kickoff of the AquaHacking Challenge in October, we now have 40 registered participants from across the country. While the majority of the participants are from the Central Okanagan, we also have students from the Lower Mainland, Ontario and Quebec registered.

The two major events for the AquaHacking Challenge are the Semi-Final which will be held on Saturday, March 7 at UBC Okanagan campus, and the final event at the Laurel Packinghouse on Thursday, June 11. The final will be followed by a VIP reception at the Kelowna Yacht Club.

The final and VIP reception will offer the chance to meet the teams, judges, technical and business mentors and AquaHacking funding partners from across Canada. OBWB Directors are asked to save these dates in your calendars, as OBWB is the host organization. Staff will send out Outlook Calendar invitations during the second week of December.

Milfoil Control program

The milfoil control program continues with winter rototilling in Wood Lake and Okanagan Lakes. Our milfoil program's environmental consultant, Ecoscape Environmental, completed a bathymetric survey of the Vernon Arm of Okanagan Lake and is using this accurate map of the lake bottom to prepare new maps delineating our treatment areas based on allowable depth.

We have also extended an invitation to provincial staff to present on the milfoil control permitting process at the OBWB's regular meeting in February or March 2020, and will schedule the delegation on the corresponding agenda package once confirmed.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
Dec. 3, 2019
Agenda No: 7.4

File No. 0550.04

To: OBWB Directors
From: Corinne Jackson
Date: Nov. 26, 2019
Subject: **Communications Director Report**

Community Water Forum

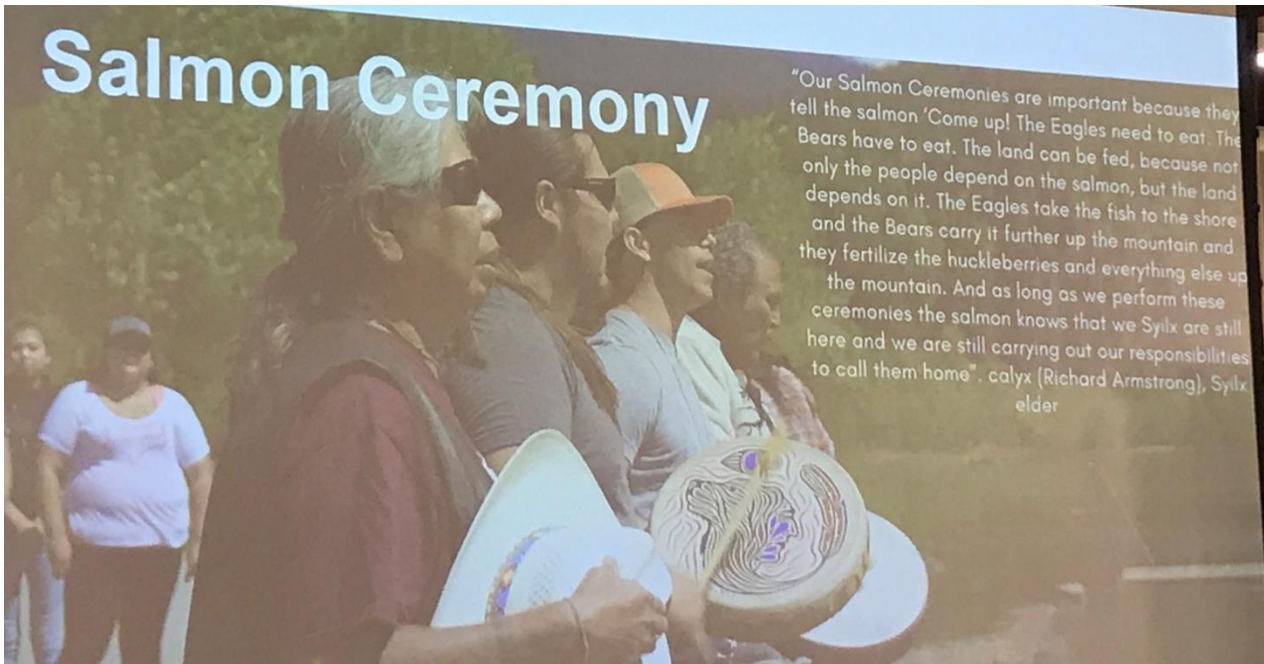
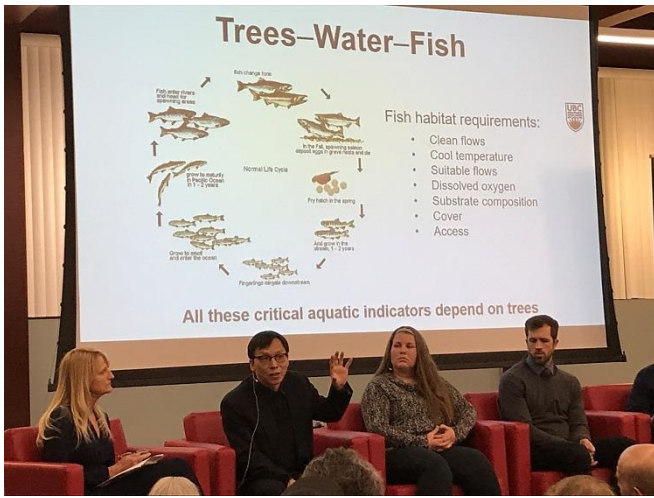
The OBWB-OkWaterWise hosted the third annual Community Water Forum on Nov. 19, in partnership with UBC Okanagan and Okanagan Nation Alliance.

The water forums are free and intended to engage the public in the work of the Water Board, UBCO and other partners, on critical water issues, and to encourage a wider conversation and exchange of ideas. The forums are a deliverable of the OBWB-funded Leading Edge Endowment Fund (LEEF) B.C. Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Economic Sustainability, as well as the Endowed Research Chairs in Water Management.

This year's theme was "Forests, Freshwater, and People – The Restoration Imperative," acknowledging that 80% of B.C.'s drinking water comes from creeks and lakes in our forests, but that these areas are under increasing pressure from wildfires, floods, droughts, and more. As a public event, we invited elected officials and government staff, industry, and Okanagan residents. With a 100-seat capacity, the event sold out.

You can find some of the discussion on our Facebook page here: <http://bit.ly/2QVUz7p>. (Photos below.)





Other communication initiatives

This month has been busy with several communications projects, finishing up development of some outreach materials with our Communications and Outreach Coordinator, providing communications support to the AquaHacking project, and other water-related projects that the OBWB is involved in. Some of these include an Okanagan flood website, an upcoming RDCO climate event, BC Agricultural Climate Adaptation Research Network (ACARN) annual workshop Dec. 2-3 in Kelowna, and more.

We have also initiated a survey of eco-educators in the valley to create a searchable database for Okanagan teachers looking for “experts” to come in and speak to students and a variety of water-related topics, or to visit for fieldtrips. This is in response to a growing demand for support in schools.

Staff conducted research with other B.C. local governments, regarding a potential rain barrel sale in the spring, and have met with RDCO’s Waste Reduction Office about next steps. The OBWB-OkWaterWise rain barrel sale has partnered with RDCO’s composter sale for the last four years and had excellent response from the public.

Staff was also asked to attend a meeting of the Kelowna Yacht Club’s Environmental Advisory Committee to discuss partnership opportunities for water stewardship. I will provide an update at the board meeting.

We have also had discussions with the Okanagan Xeriscape Association, a partner in the Make Water Work initiative, regarding strengthening our garden centre efforts for 2020.

Summary of Recent OBWB-Related Media

- Oct. 30 “AquaHacking Launches 2020 Challenge in British Columbia,” *Water Canada Magazine*
- Oct. 31 “Weed war expands again in valley lakes,” *Kelowna Daily Courier*
- Oct. 31 “Young entrepreneurs tapped for solutions to water issues,” *Kelowna Daily Courier*
- Nov. 1 [“The AquaHacking Challenge kicked off this week at UBC Okanagan,”](#) *Castanet.net*
- Nov. 4 [“New rototilling rules will be a boost to swimmers at Okanagan Beaches next summer,”](#) *InfoNews.ca*
- Nov. 19 [“Dozens attend community water forum at Kelowna library hosted by UBC Okanagan,”](#) *Global Okanagan*
- Nov. 13 “Infestation coming to beach - Harvesting restrictions means a lot of milfoil at Vernon's Kin Beach,” *Castanet.net*
- Nov. 13 “Mussel inspections find 19 boats carrying invasive species,” *InfoNews.ca*
- Nov. 13 [“19 mussel-contaminated boats stopped from entering BC this year,”](#) *Castanet.net*
- Nov. 13 “Mussels found on watercraft – OBWB report said 19 watercraft had invasive mussels on them,” *Castanet.net*
- Nov. 13 “Spallumcheen farmers thanked for 'generous' land donation towards Wastewater project,” *Vernon Morning Star*

Upcoming Presentations

- Nov. 30 "Weeding fact from fiction – A look at water in the Okanagan, Canada's most water-stressed region" to Okanagan Master Gardeners – Corinne Jackson
- Dec. 2 "Okanagan Agricultural Water Supply Communications Project," to agricultural producers at Climate Adaptation Research Workshop

Recent Presentations

- Nov. 8 "Okanagan Source Protection Toolkit Project," to Water Supply Association of B.C. – Kellie Garcia
- Nov. 19 "Okanagan Agricultural Water Supply Communications Project," to Okanagan Agricultural Adaptation Working Group – Kellie Garcia
- Nov. 19 "Introductory welcome to participants," to UBCO Community Water Forum – Anna Warwick Sears

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
December 3, 2019
Agenda No: 7.5

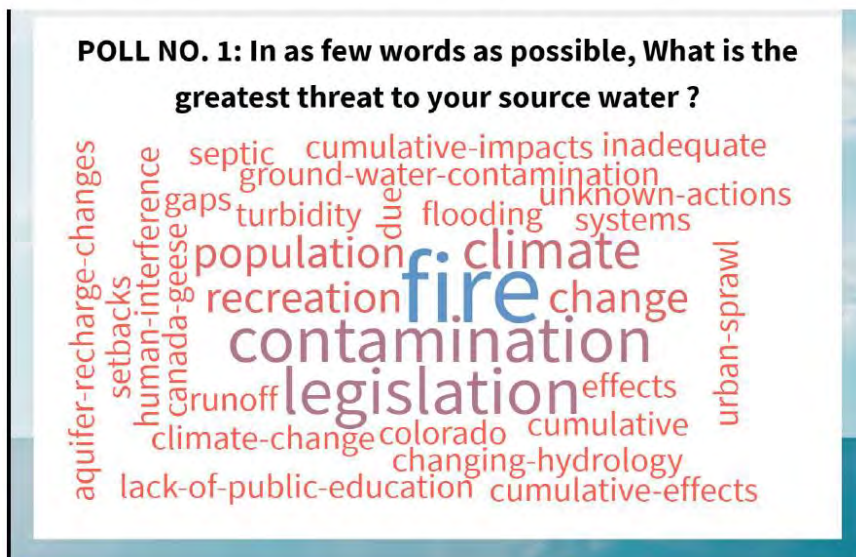
File No. 0550.04

To: OBWB Directors
From: Kellie Garcia
Date: November 26, 2019
Subject: Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Source Water Protection Toolkit

On November 8, I gave a presentation about the Source Water Protection Toolkit at the Water Supply Association of BC conference. The purpose of the presentation was to introduce the project and learn from the audience about their current challenges and what they would like to see in a toolkit. I used a live poll to ask questions during my presentation. During a live poll, audience members respond on their phones, tablets or laptops and their answers are automatically displayed on-screen. The questions and answers are shown below. About 55 audience members (of the 70 attending) responded to the poll.

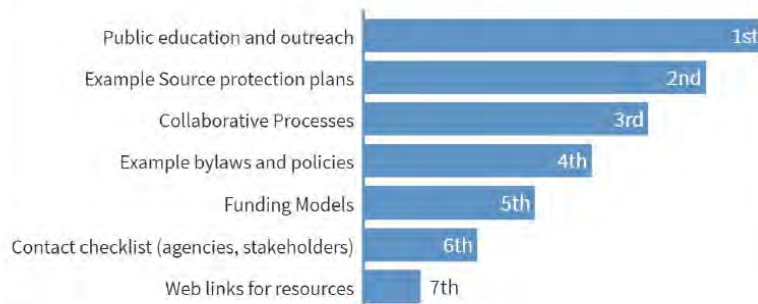
I am meeting with the Water Stewardship Council Source Water Protection Committee on December 12 to further refine the scope of the toolkit, discuss membership on the technical advisory group, and flesh out a work plan. I am also reaching out to each Okanagan water supplier to request a financial contribution to the project. The OBWB will hire a writing contractor early next year and it will be full steam ahead.



POLL NO. 2: In as few words as possible, what is the greatest barrier to source water protection planning at your utility ?



POLL 3: In order of importance, what topics would you like to have in the Toolkit (move highest rank to the top)



B.C. Agricultural Climate Adaptation Research Workshop

I will be presenting on the Okanagan Agricultural Water Supply Communication Project at the B.C. Agricultural Climate Adaptation Research workshop on December 2, and will give a verbal update at the board meeting. The afternoon of producer-focused sessions I am part of will discuss practices to improve soil health, store carbon, reduce the impacts of pests and disease, and adapt to increasingly variable weather (and its effect on water quality and availability). The conference also includes two keynote speakers, Dr. Lee Kalcsits, a tree fruit physiologist leading apple research at Washington State University’s Tree Fruit Research & Extension Centre in Wenatchee, and Dr. Ann Thrupp, who has decades of experience of leading sustainability initiatives in the California wine industry.

Okanagan Lake Responsibility Plan

I am on the Leadership Team for the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Plan, an effort that is being co-led by the Okanagan Nation Alliance, the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program, and the South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Program. The goal of the initiative is to identify ways to improve policy and planning processes that protect and enhance the environmental, cultural and economic values of Okanagan Lake. We are holding an *Okanagan Lake Foreshore Information Sharing Session and Workshop* on December 4. The workshop will bring together *Syilx* traditional knowledge keepers; Okanagan Nation Alliance fisheries and natural resources staff; Okanagan Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band and Westbank First Nation staff; local government planners; provincial and federal government staff; and UBC Okanagan researchers. More than 50 people have RSVP'd for the event.

Key objectives of the workshop are to share *Syilx* Okanagan knowledge and perspectives of Okanagan Lake; establish and strengthen networks and relationships between workshop participants; identify key elements for a shared vision and mutually beneficial goals between *Syilx* Okanagan Nation and local and provincial governments; and talk about how *Syilx* Okanagan knowledge, leadership and expertise can be used in local and provincial government policy development and planning processes.

Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy

The Water Stewardship Council adopted the Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy Action Plan 2.0 at their October meeting. I have been working with the graphic designer to put the finishing touches on the Strategy and am pleased to report that it is now ready to be reviewed and received by the Board.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
December 3, 2019
Agenda No: 8.1

File No. 0550.04

To: OBWB Directors
From: Kellie Garcia
Date: November 26, 2019
Subject: **Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy**

For more than two years, I have been working with the Water Stewardship Council to update their Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS). The SWS was first written in 2008 to bring a watershed-approach to balancing multiple uses and providing a sustainable supply of clean water for all needs in perpetuity. The 2008 Strategy (Action Plan 1.0) gave technical information about water in the Okanagan and important water management issues of the time and included 45 action items to protect water at its source, share water in times of shortages, manage water demand, and support good governance. Since its publication, Action Plan 1.0 has been a primary guide for prioritizing data acquisition, research, water management activities, and projects in the Okanagan basin.

It is now more than a decade since the release of the 2008 Strategy. While many issues that drove Action Plan 1.0 remain highly relevant, issues with increased prominence include:

- The impacts of ongoing climate change, which continue to increase the pressures on natural and managed ecosystems, water supply and water users;
- A rapidly growing population;
- An increased awareness of the need for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in the Okanagan and across Canada;
- Passage and implementation of the provincial *Water Sustainability Act*, with its focus on regulating groundwater and preserving instream flows for the benefit of aquatic ecosystems; and
- The risk that aquatic invasive mussels could be introduced to Okanagan waterbodies.

The effort involved in creating Action Plan 2.0 has been substantial. The work was guided by an Editorial Board, with significant input and review by the Water Stewardship Council. External contributors also provided input as requested. In fact, more than 80 people were involved in writing the Strategy. The result is a collaboratively developed, modern, comprehensive strategy intended to guide water management priorities in the Okanagan for years to come.

The file is too large to share through email, but the Strategy can be downloaded [here](#). I have included key sections in this memo, and will also give a good overview in my presentation.

Guiding Principles

Ten principles provide a framework for the actions in the Strategy. Although the principles are presented individually, they are interconnected and must be considered together for the Strategy to be effective.

- 1. Respect water.** Water connects and sustains all life. It is our responsibility to protect water and watersheds.
- 2. Think and act as one watershed.** Local decisions must consider water and ecosystem interconnections within a broad, Okanagan watershed context. Collaboration and partnerships across political boundaries are essential for informed and coordinated decision-making.
- 3. Control pollution at its source.** The Okanagan must be protected from pollution for the benefit of healthy ecosystems and to safeguard a clean, safe, and reliable water supply for human use.
- 4. Restore aquatic and riparian ecosystems.** Natural ecosystems, especially those that are rich in biodiversity, are needed to maintain water quality and quantity. Their protection is also critical for maintaining resilience to climate change.
- 5. Put water stewardship at the forefront of land-use planning decisions.** Land and water are interconnected. Urban and rural land-use decisions must minimize local and cumulative impacts on water resources and aquatic habitats.
- 6. Allocate water in a transparent and responsible manner.** How and when water is allocated must be determined in a way that is rational, evidence-based, and easy to understand. Sufficient water must be available for the environment, basic human needs, agriculture, cultural self-determination, and economic livelihoods - now and in the future.
- 7. Ensure community water supply systems are resilient to climate change.** Water systems must be designed to reduce water waste, maximize water use efficiency, and minimize environmental impacts. When practical, alternative sources such as rainwater harvesting and greywater reuse should be developed.
- 8. Collect and share knowledge.** Decisions about water should be informed by technology, science, and traditional knowledge (when used with permission). Data must be integrated and easily accessible. Decisions should be based on evidence; however, a lack of data must not limit action to protect water.
- 9. Encourage active public engagement and learning.** Transparent and collaborative decision-making and opportunities for information sharing and communication are essential to a collective understanding and acceptance that human activities affect water.
- 10. Practice adaptive management and think long-term.** Continuous learning, innovation, planning, and improvement are essential for sustainable water management. Long-term 'water-first' thinking prevents the cumulative effects of short-sighted land-use actions.

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Actions

The Strategy contains 50 actions to protect water at its source, share water in times of shortages, plan for flooding, manage water demand, collect and share data, and collaborate and build partnerships. The ultimate responsibility and jurisdiction for many of the actions in the Strategy lies with other agencies (for example, the provincial government), but most of the actions require collaboration between several partners. The “Recommendation for the OBWB” column describes what the OBWB can do within its mandate to move the action forward and support the efforts of its partners. I am happy to answer any questions you have about the actions.

ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Water Quality			
2-1	Account for the impact of weather and climate on water in all planning and decision-making.	All organizations involved in protecting water.	Apply a climate lens to all initiatives led by the OBWB.
2-2	Prepare and fully resource collaborative source protection plans for all watersheds in the Okanagan.	Water suppliers, Interior Health, B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNR), tenure holders, conservation groups, First Nations.	Convene a group with Okanagan-wide representation to coordinate and lead source protection initiatives, provide technical advice, and encourage consistency in the format and content of source protection plans.
2-3	Develop and conduct outreach and education programs to raise awareness about the importance of source protection.	Water suppliers, watershed users (licensees, provincial staff and public) and conservation groups.	Expand Okanagan WaterWise water quality strategies.
2-4	Review and update forestry, mining, range, recreation and wildfire management practices to increase water infiltration and reduce potential for surface runoff and contamination of source waters.	FLNR, B.C. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (EMPR), water suppliers, tenure holders (range and forestry), Interior Health, First Nations.	Advocate for source protection considerations to be included in natural resource management by provincial agencies. Facilitate communication and coordination among levels of government.
2-5	Improve understanding of nutrient sources in rural areas and undertake collaborative and coordinated efforts to monitor nutrient inputs to surface water and groundwater.	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI), BC Agriculture Council, B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), B.C. Ministry of Environment (ENV), water suppliers.	Support farmers, local governments and water suppliers in protecting water in rural areas.



ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Water Quality (continued)			
2-6	Bring areas with septic systems onto community sewer.	Local governments, B.C. Ministry of Health, B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, ENV.	Provide grant funding through the Sewerage Facilities Assistance program.
2-7	Prepare natural asset strategies for Okanagan communities.	Local governments.	Facilitate knowledge-sharing among local governments and provide funding to support natural asset strategy projects.
2-8	Improve stormwater management practices and policies in Okanagan urban communities.	Local governments, MOTI.	Research best practices for stormwater management and share that information with local governments. Provide funding for innovative stormwater management projects. Encourage stormwater utilities to create funding through their rates for projects to protect source water.
2-9	Develop Okanagan-wide policies and plans for wetland protection focusing on no net loss, and restoration and enhancement.	Local governments, conservation groups.	Facilitate collaboration, identify funding opportunities, and participate in investigations, reporting and projects.
2-10	Strengthen provincial legislation to protect, restore and enhance wetlands.	Provincial government.	Advocate for improved legislation.
2-11	Prepare shoreline protection plans for Okanagan, Kalamalka, Wood, Skaha, Vaseux and Osoyoos Lakes.	Local governments, provincial government, federal government, First Nations, nongovernmental organizations.	Participate in the planning processes.
2-12	Strengthen local government oversight of riparian area and other development-related assessments completed by Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEPs).	Local governments, provincial government, QEPs.	Bring planners and QEPs together to share knowledge and experiences, develop a template terms of reference for environmental impact assessments and restoration plans, and share the template with interested local governments.
2-13	Collect up-to-date ecosystem inventory and mapping information across the valley and integrate into land use and source protection policies and plans.	Local governments.	Provide funding to support data collection projects.



ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Water Quality (continued)			
2-14	Focus new development in areas currently served by community water and sewer, and minimize development in hazard areas and on or near sensitive aquatic ecosystems.	Local governments.	Bring planners together to share knowledge and resources, and promote consistency in policies across local jurisdictions.
2-15	Educate elected officials about the importance of considering water in all development decisions and understanding that water management decisions should be based on watershed boundaries, not jurisdictional boundaries.	Local governments.	Develop a "Water 101" education package for elected officials and support planning staff in educating elected officials and voters.
2-16	Provide funding and support initiatives for the prevention, early detection, rapid response and containment of aquatic invasive species.	Provincial government, federal government, local governments, conservation groups.	Advocate for resources to carry out robust aquatic invasive species programs.
2-17	Educate the public about aquatic invasive species.	Provincial government, federal government, local governments, conservation groups.	Build-out OBWB public outreach and education campaigns related to invasive species and coordinate the campaigns with neighbouring watersheds where appropriate.
2-18	Complete vulnerability assessments of water intakes and other in-lake infrastructure to identify the potential impacts of invasive mussels and other aquatic invasive species.	Water suppliers.	Provide funding and compile and share best practices and technical standards to support vulnerability assessments.
2-19	Control Eurasian watermilfoil in Okanagan lakes.	Provincial government, federal government.	Continuously improve the OBWB Eurasian watermilfoil control program using relevant new technologies and the best available science.
2-20	Develop standard methods for water quality data collection. Consistently track and enhance access to the data.	ENV, Interior Health, water suppliers, First Nations.	Encourage partnerships and enhance sharing of water quality data to ensure timely application of valuable water quality data to water management decisions. Develop a public web-based water quality data portal that supports benchmarking long-term water quality changes.



ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Water Quality (continued)			
2-21	Review and update existing provincial Water Quality Objectives (WQO) in the Okanagan, and expand to other Okanagan lakes and streams if needed.	ENV, water suppliers.	Support the Provincial government and Okanagan water suppliers in the review and provide recommendations on other lakes and streams that would benefit from WQOs.
2-22	Develop tools that support benchmarking, measuring, tracking, management, and accountability for water in the Okanagan.	Water suppliers, provincial government.	Participate in or lead projects that contribute to progress reporting on watershed indicators.
Water Quantity			
3-1	Determine EFNs for all Okanagan streams, and share with decision-makers to support sound and defensible water allocation decisions that maintain proper functioning of aquatic ecosystems.	Okanagan Nation Alliance, Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), FLNR.	Obtain funding, provide project management services, and share results.
3-2	Develop a pilot Agricultural Water Reserve for a watershed in the Okanagan basin and then work towards a basin-wide Agricultural Water Reserve if it is deemed feasible based on the learnings and outcomes of the pilot.	FLNR, AGRI, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), water suppliers, agricultural associations.	Identify funding sources, help facilitate the pilot project, and assist with the basin-wide planning process.
3-3	Build more flexibility into irrigation licences to allow for early-season, late-season and part-season irrigation in the Okanagan, without increasing allocation of water or jeopardizing environmental flows.	FLNR, agricultural associations.	Lobby the provincial government to consider flexible licensing for agriculture.
3-4	Prepare or update Water Conservation Plans for all Okanagan water suppliers.	Water suppliers.	Promote best practices and provide funding to support water conservation initiatives identified in the plans.



ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Water Quantity (continued)			
3-5	Improve irrigation management and water efficiency in the residential, commercial, parks and recreation, and agricultural sectors.	Water suppliers, irrigation and landscape contractors, agricultural associations, Irrigation Industry Association of BC (IIABC), AGRI.	Prepare a model topsoil bylaw (using information from the Topsoil Bylaws Toolkit) and standard landscape guidelines and promote adoption throughout the Okanagan. Support water suppliers and agricultural and irrigation organizations in promoting water efficiency and delivering irrigation and landscaping certification programs. Advocate for senior government resources and funds to support farmers in improving water efficiency.
3-6	Implement universal water metering in the Okanagan and promote best practices for how and when meter data are collected and how data are stored for analysis and communication to customers.	Water suppliers, appropriate business sectors (water utility software companies, for example).	Organize a workshop to enable the sharing of knowledge and experiences among water suppliers and prepare a 'water meter data collection and analysis best practices and standards' document.
3-7	Carry out education and outreach campaigns focused on water conservation and efficiency.	Water suppliers, appropriate business sectors (for example, nurseries and garden centres, landscape and irrigation).	Build on and deliver the water conservation and efficiency outreach program under Okanagan WaterWise.
3-8	Prepare drought management plans for all Okanagan communities. Periodically review the plans and update as needed to reflect changing conditions.	Water suppliers, local governments, provincial government, agricultural associations.	Encourage consistency in these plans and coordination and collaboration among the different partners. Support the dissemination of best practices via OBWB/CivicInfo Planning Guides database.
3-9	Optimize and modernize the operation of existing storage reservoirs. Investigate opportunities to increase storage capacity in the Okanagan.	Water suppliers, provincial government.	Support research and infrastructure investment.

ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Water Quantity (continued)			
3-10	Explore ways to offer tangible incentives to dam owners who provide services for the public good, such as timed releases for environmental flows and ecosystem services, and holding back water to relieve flooding.	Provincial government, First Nations.	Communicate with water suppliers to identify and rank possible incentives.
3-11	Investigate the feasibility of using aquifer storage and recovery (ASR).	Local governments, water suppliers, researchers.	Obtain funding to assist water suppliers. Leverage valley-wide information and data to add value to studies by individual water suppliers. Contribute to monitoring and assessment of ASR opportunities.
3-12	Improve the knowledge base to better inform flood management decisions and mitigation activities.	Local governments, provincial government, First Nations.	Obtain funding and lead initiatives with valley-wide significance. Help local governments understand how to use the latest data. Work with Indigenous communities to establish long-term goals and progressive actions to mitigate flood impacts and risk.
3-13	Develop and maintain up-to-date flood inundation, hazard and risk mapping for the Okanagan valley bottom.	Local governments, provincial government, First Nations.	Identify and obtain funding, provide project management and coordination services, and support and facilitate collaboration.
3-14	Improve flood management by strengthening collaboration, increasing public engagement, and including (with permission) local and Indigenous knowledge in decision-making and mitigation activities.	Local governments, provincial government, First Nations.	Include (with permission) local and Indigenous knowledge in OBWB-led projects, act as a bridge between Okanagan communities, and include public engagement on OBWB initiatives.
3-15	Review flood construction levels and floodplain setbacks and strengthen land use regulation in floodplains.	Local governments, provincial government, First Nations.	Identify and obtain funding, provide project management and coordination services, and support and facilitate collaboration.



ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Water Quantity (continued)			
3-16	Add to snow data networks and improve inflow forecast models. Complete watershed assessments to identify risks to water flow and timing and other risks related to a changing climate.	Provincial government, water suppliers.	Encourage water suppliers to apply common approaches and standards to these assessments. Make climate change projections widely available. Support vulnerability (quantity) mapping research.
3-17	Maintain and expand the network of hydrometric stations in the Okanagan and enhance the sharing and open sourcing of collected hydrometric data.	Provincial government, federal government, local governments, First Nations.	Influence the provincial and federal governments to expand their networks. Provide funding for local organizations to collect and report data. Encourage use of the Integrated Hydrometric Data System to support the provincial hydrometric data warehouse.
3-18	Increase climate stations in the Okanagan to allow for better resolution in weather projections.	AGRI, AAFC, local governments, water suppliers, agricultural associations.	Identify funding sources and coordinate partners to submit funding applications.
3-19	Undertake groundwater mapping, aquifer characterization, and groundwater-surface water interaction studies in the Okanagan. Link these efforts with ongoing EFN studies to identify water-stressed areas.	Researchers, provincial government, local governments, First Nations.	Identify priority areas for aquifer mapping and groundwater/surface water interaction assessments and obtain funding for research.
Delivering the Strategy			
4-1	Integrate management objectives throughout government agencies and with external partners.	Federal government, provincial government, local governments.	Advocate for local government participation in dialogue at the provincial and federal levels
4-2	Share Okanagan-specific information and knowledge with partners within the valley and beyond to facilitate common pools of knowledge and to bring in new partners.	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council member organizations, local governments.	Present at conferences and workshops. Participate in the work of professional organizations.



ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Delivering the Strategy (continued)			
4-3	Strengthen relationships between Okanagan local governments, non-governmental organizations, professional organizations, First Nations, and the faculty, staff and students at academic institutions to promote community-engaged research and learning.	Local governments, UBC Okanagan, Okanagan College, First Nations.	Work with faculty and researchers to identify opportunities for community-engaged research.
4-4	Increase opportunities for shared learning with Okanagan Indigenous communities, especially of cultural practices, environmental stewardship, and governance processes.	First Nations, provincial government, local governments.	Maintain dialogue and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities in the Okanagan basin.
4-5	Deliberately expand the network of Okanagan water professionals and interested parties to create a greater diversity of knowledge from which to develop solutions. Facilitate knowledge transfer across generations, cultures, communities and sectors. Support new professionals by linking them with research networks and employment opportunities.	UBC Okanagan, Okanagan College.	Work with the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council and ensure that membership remains diverse and active. Provide and facilitate mentoring opportunities. Convene workshops and other learning opportunities and provide funding for events offered by partner organizations.
4-6	Build-out outreach programs and communications strategies, working with all Okanagan communities and partner organizations to facilitate consistent messaging, mutual understanding, and a shared way of framing problems and solutions.	Local governments, provincial government, federal government, Okanagan Water Stewardship Council member organizations.	Facilitate working groups of OBWB partners to gather input on programs.

ID	ACTION	OBWB PARTNERS	RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OBWB
Delivering the Strategy (continued)			
4-7	Complete coordinated or joint funding applications for water planning, management or infrastructure projects, where possible.	Local governments, First Nations.	Support clear communication between organizations with similar goals in different parts of the Okanagan so that grants are more aligned and collaborative. Assist communities and organizations with grant application writing by providing technical assistance, review, or letters of support and/or linking groups with grant writing professionals.
4-8	Identify and match-make funding organizations and agencies that can support water projects in the Okanagan, and help Okanagan communities identify opportunities for grants.	Local and external funding organizations.	Convene gatherings of grantees and funders in the Okanagan to share successes and build relationships. Engage with funder organizations to raise awareness among funders about Okanagan water issues and innovative approaches.
4-9	Monitor progress on completing the actions recommended in the Strategy and report out on progress made.	Local governments, provincial government, and other agencies responsible for implementing the Strategy.	Compile information from implementing organizations, and track and report progress in addressing and completing each of the actions in the Strategy. Periodically revise and update the Strategy.

The Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy Action Plan 2.0 continues the tradition of leadership by the Council and the OBWB. Delivering on the actions in the Strategy will require collaboration and strong partnerships, especially with Indigenous peoples, good governance, informed decision-making, and adequate funding and resources. The actions are not intended to be simply checked off once completed. Rather, they are core components of a process of engagement, one that gives us all a sense of common purpose and has us working towards the same goal – a sustainable water future for the Okanagan.