

# Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



**DATE:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023

**TIME:** 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**PLACE:** Online

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.*

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 January 10, 2023 held online ([page 1](#))

5. **FILM PRESENTATION**

5.1 "Nk'mip (Osoyoos Lake) Heart of the Watershed" film about the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum – pre-release viewing

6. **STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

6.1 Water Stewardship Director presentation: Overview of Water Management Projects

6.2 Communications Director presentation: Overview of Communications Program

6.3 Office and Grants Manager presentation: Overview of Water Quality and Conservation Improvement Grants Program

7. **STAFF REPORTS**

7.1 Executive Director Report ([page 7](#))

7.2 Deputy Administrator Report ([page 10](#))

7.3 Water Stewardship Director Report ([page 13](#)) (*resolution required*)

7.4 Communications Director Report ([page 17](#))

8. **NEXT MEETING**

8.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be **Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 10 a.m. ONLINE**

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

**\* NOTE:** Meetings of the Okanagan Basin Water Board are open to the public, and only closed for in-camera sessions as set out in the B.C. Community Charter. From time-to-time, the board will be holding its meeting online. If you are interested in attending this online meeting, please contact our Communications Director Corinne Jackson at [corinne.jackson@obwb.ca](mailto:corinne.jackson@obwb.ca) for further details. Thank you for your patience and understanding.



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD JANUARY 10, 2023, ONLINE  
OKANAGAN, B.C.**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Christine Fraser	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Scott Boswell	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

**REGRETS**

Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
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**GUESTS**

MLA Dan Ashton	Riding of Penticton
Alt. Dir. Adrienne Fedrigo	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt. Dir. Matt Taylor	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Laurie Cordell	City of Armstrong Manager of Planning Services

**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
James Littlely	Deputy Administrator
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Exec. Dir. Sears called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

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

Staff, directors and guests were invited to introduce themselves.

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Dr. Sears welcomed directors appointed for 2022.

Directors appointed to the board:  
From **Regional District of North Okanagan**  
Mayor Victor Cumming  
Director Rick Fairbairn

Mayor Christine Fraser  
 Alternate – Bob Fleming

**Regional District of Central Okanagan**

Director Wayne Carson  
 Director Charlie Hodge  
 Mayor Blair Ireland  
 Alternates – Gordon Lovegrove, Patrick Van Minsel, Kevin Kraft

**Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen**

Director Doug Holmes  
 Director Rick Knodel  
 Mayor Sue McKortoff  
 Alternates – Adrienne Fedrigo, Subrina Monteith, Matt Taylor

**Water Management Appointments**

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Coun. Tim Lezard  
 Alternate – TBD

Water Supply Association of BC

Mr. Bob Hrasko  
 Alternate – TBD

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Chair Scott Boswell  
 Alternate – Vice-chair Jeremy Fyke

Dr. Sears requested nominations for chair. Dir. Fraser nominated Dir. McKortoff. Dir. McKortoff accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Dir. McKortoff was re-elected chair.

Dir. McKortoff offered her thanks to the board and staff.

Dir. McKortoff requested nominations for vice-chair. Dir. Cumming nominated Dir. Ireland. Dir. Ireland accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Dir. Ireland was elected vice-chair.

Dir. Ireland offered thanks and noted his interest in joining the board and being a voice for water in the Okanagan.

**3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

No late items were brought forward.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Jan. 10, 2023 be approved.”*

**CARRIED**

**5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 4, 2022, held online.

*“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Oct. 4, 2022, held online, be approved.”*

**CARRIED****6. STAFF PRESENTATIONS****6.1 Executive Director presentation: OBWB overview**

Recognizing that there are several new faces on the Board of Directors, Dr. Sears provided an overview of the OBWB, noting that staff will each be providing presentations on the various Water Board programs they are involved in.

The board was told that the OBWB's purpose and vision is to provide a sustainable and healthy water supply in perpetuity. Background was provided on the board's structure, and how the organization was designed to support local government collaboration.

The mandate includes; defining water problems and priorities; communicating and coordinating between levels of government for water use and management; participating in surveys, investigations or projects on behalf of Okanagan local governments; establishing a liaison committee (the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council); contributing to the cost of constructing and upgrading sewage facilities; and, administering a milfoil control program within the basin.

The OBWB was set up to pool valley-wide funding, where everyone pays and everyone benefits, the board was told. It was structured to receive grants from senior government and provide grants to local partners, assist local partners to get external funding, and provide a platform for joint initiatives.

In July 2021, the board agreed to work towards establishing a working group to implement the spirit of UNDRIP and Syilx rights and responsibilities into the OBWB and work on other approaches to strengthen the relationship with the Syilx community. And, in 2022, a change was formally made to OBWB governance, ensuring the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) board representative had equal voting powers as regional district directors.

Current board priorities, added Dr. Sears, include: efforts to protect Okanagan waters from invasive zebra and quagga mussels, Okanagan Lake level management, studies and work to reduce flood and drought risks, the build out of stream flow (hydrometric) monitoring, and source protection. Challenges include: extreme weather, population growth and the need for upgraded infrastructure, legislative uncertainty with reorganizations and overlapping strategies, and lack of capacity in senior, local government and ONA. Strengths include the Water Board's structure for collaboration, diverse partnerships and supporters, and the fact that the agency has become a hub for valley-wide strategic planning with long-term vision.

**6.2 Deputy Administrator presentation: Highlights of the OBWB's SFA and Milfoil Programs**

Mr. Littley provided an overview of the Eurasian Watermilfoil Control Program, which began in 1976 as a cost-shared program with the Province of B.C. until they stopped funding it in 1996. The invasive plant was introduced in the early 70s and had spread throughout the Okanagan's lakes by 1974.

The plant causes a number of issues including blocking out light for native plants, prevents water from mixing which creates warmer surface water and colder water in the bottom. Its thought to promote algae blooms and impact native species while potentially helping some invasive species. The milfoil control program is important to ensuring a healthier local ecosystem and economy. Rototillers operate in the fall and winter and can reach down 18-20 feet. Harvesters operate in summer and can reach about five feet down. Current issues include: weed control made difficult

with increased in-lake/shoreline development, access to boat launches to deposit and truck the milfoil away, as well as concern for protected native Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels. Recent research has suggested that the milfoil itself can be a problem for the local mussels and that weed control may be a solution.

Mr. Littley also explained how, under the OBWB's Letters Patent, the agency operates a Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) Grant Program, contributing to the cost of constructing or upgrading sewage facilities in the valley. The current requisition is well-below the cap, Mr. Littley added. The program is currently undergoing a review which includes mapping areas still eligible for SFA funding under the current Terms of Reference.

## 7. STAFF REPORTS

### 7.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears told directors that they will receive board meeting invites soon, with some being in-person and others online. Board training will also continue next month, she added.

Over the last couple of months, staff attended water policy consultations with the province on the B.C. Flood Strategy and B.C. Watershed Security Strategy. Staff are also beginning to look at long-term water indicators for the valley to track water quality and climate changes– a stated interest from members of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council and directors, added Dr. Sears.

Directors were provided an update on snow conditions and told that the province is having problems with the equipment used to collect Mission Creek snow pillow data and that the data is expected to be unavailable for the rest of the year.

***“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Jan. 4, 2023, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

### 7.2 Deputy Administrator Report

Mr. Littley updated the board on development of an invasive mussel vulnerability toolkit for local water utility use, and a request for proposal for an amphibious harvester to tackle milfoil. After some discussion about the benefits of an amphibious vs. traditional harvester, the board directed staff to initiate an RFP.

***“THAT staff issue a Request for Proposals for the supply of an amphibious milfoil harvester, with options for a conventional milfoil harvester, and following that process, bring a recommendation to the board for approval.”***  
**CARRIED**

The board was told that the SFA grant program review is moving forward with a technical advisory committee that includes staff from a number of provincial ministries, Interior Health, local governments and Westbank First Nation.

***“THAT the Deputy Administrator Report, dated Dec. 12, 2022, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

### 7.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel reported that the current Okanagan Water Stewardship Council 18-month term ends in March and then member groups will be invited to reassign representatives for the new term.

An update was given on the hydrometric station program which began in 2021, reactivating and adding new stations, and run in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Okanagan Nation Alliance. In response to a question, Mr. Jatel added that ECCC is looking to add two more stations in 2023, bringing their number to six (added through this initiative). Currently there are 16 being operated by the ONA with the intention of expanding these to 24. The real-time data is public and available through the province's data warehouse.

The board was told that updated flood-risk mapping is being completed and maps should be available for local government planning by April 1.

Directors were also updated on a project that looks at the value of agricultural water use, being conducted in partnership with UBC Okanagan, BC Fruit Growers Association and others.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated Dec. 16, 2022, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

#### 7.4 Office and Grants Administrator Report

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo told the board that the OBWB's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program issued its call for proposals on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>. Several categories are available for funding, but the board in October approved the theme of “from data to action for community resilience,” to encourage the use of open data developed by the OBWB, and others, to address Okanagan water challenges. The application deadline is Feb. 24, 4 p.m. Successful applicants can receive between \$3,000 and \$30,000.

The board was also updated on the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, held Oct. 27 to 29, hosted by the Osoyoos Indian Band and Town of Osoyoos, and presented by OBWB, the International Joint Commission and Okanagan Nation Alliance, and others. This was the fourth such conference with earlier ones held in 2007, 2011 and 2015. The theme of the most recent conference was bridging Indigenous and western approaches to knowledge, science and management. The event was well-attended and feedback was positive. A film and final report are being developed.

***“THAT the Office and Grants Manager’s Report, dated Dec. 14, 2022, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

#### 7.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson provided directors with wrap-up reports for the valley-wide “Make Water Work” (MWW) outdoor residential water conservation campaign, and “Don’t Move a Mussel” (DMM) campaign to raise awareness regarding invasive mussels and promote water protection.

Campaign highlights included 7,162 new visitors to the MWW website and millions more reached with billboards, TV and bus ads, social media ads and more. It also leveraged almost \$59,000 in funding to deliver a campaign worth \$127,000 thanks to in-kind support. DMM had 7,919 new visitors and reached millions more with similar advertising, and leveraged \$46,800 in funding to deliver a campaign worth \$78,000.

The board was told that additional recent communication efforts included support to the OLWSF and WCQI grant application program.

***“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Jan. 4, 2023, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

**8. CORRESPONDENCE**

8.1 Letter cc'd to the OBWB from the Shuswap Watershed Council re: resources needed to prevent invasive mussels

The board was provided with a letter from the Shuswap Watershed Council to the province regarding invasive mussel prevention and cc'ed to the OBWB. There was some discussion regarding the letter and Dr. Sears was asked to follow up with the council.

***"THAT the letter from Shuswap Watershed Council to the B.C. government and cc'ed to the OBWB, re: resources to prevent invasive mussels, be received."***

**CARRIED**

**9. NEXT MEETING**

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 10 a.m., online.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

***"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of January 10, 2023 be adjourned at 12:33 p.m."***

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
February 7, 2023  
Agenda No: 7.1

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Anna Warwick Sears  
Date: February 1, 2023  
Subject: **Executive Director Report**

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### **Board Training - continued**

At our February meeting, Nelson Jatel, Water Stewardship Director, will cover a range of Water Management Projects that he is leading, Corinne Jackson, Communications Director, will give an overview of OBWB's communication initiatives, and Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo, Office and Grants Manager, will go over the OBWB's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants Program.

### **Board Meeting Schedule**

Board directors should all now have calendar invitations for the remainder of the 2023 OBWB meetings. April, May, June, August, September, and October meetings will be in person. The July meeting is cancelled, and the remainder of the meetings will be online.

### **Staff transitions**

I'm very pleased to announce that Kellie Garcia will be rejoining the staff of the OBWB as part-time Policy and Planning Director. She will continue to also work part-time for the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program. Kellie has excellent project management skills, and will resume managing our initiatives to reduce risks from drought and flood, and collaborating with local communities.

### **Water Indicators Pilot**

I've spent considerable time this month developing the Okanagan climate indicators project, and am looking at hiring one or two interns to assist with the project this summer. We have access to data on the inflows to Okanagan Lake, to snow pillow data, and to temperature and precipitation data, and we will be investigating whether it is possible to see climate change trends in these weather observations. The goal is to create a dashboard that can be viewed by the public, to better understand the effects of climate change on the region.

Larratt Aquatic Consultants are working separately on a water quality indicator study, looking at trends over time for the quality of Okanagan lakes.



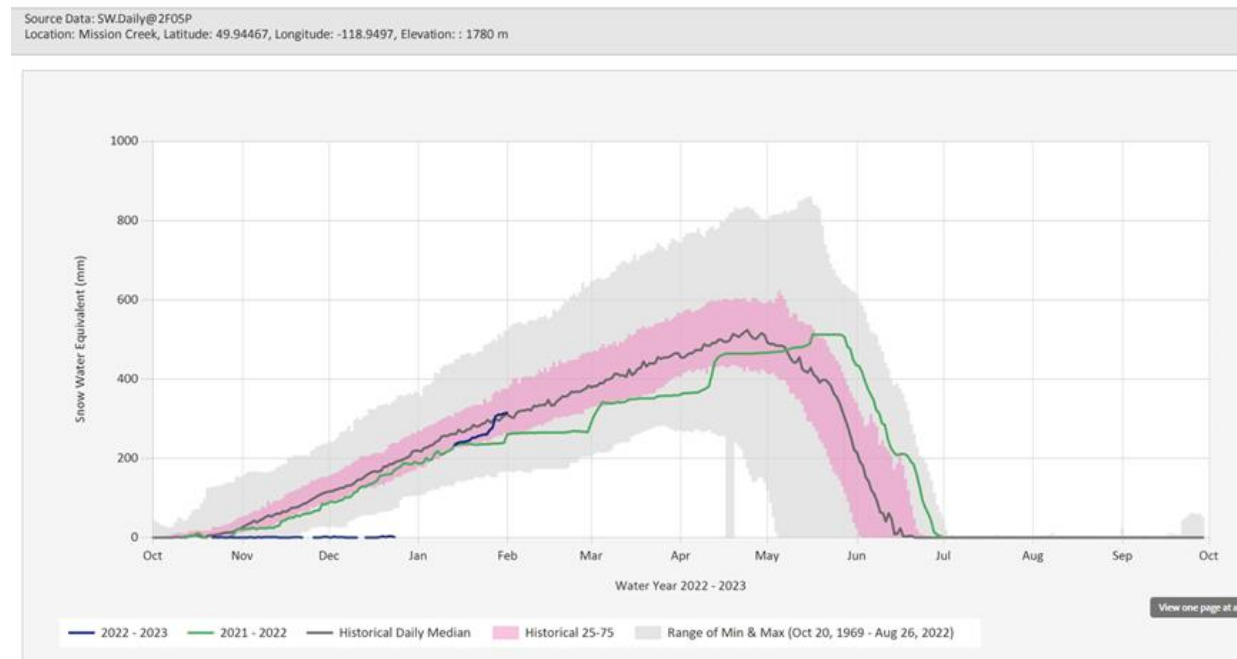
## Weather Report

In response to public concern, staff at the BC River Forecast Centre have gone above and beyond their normal efforts, and have managed to repair the Mission Creek Snow Pillow, which is important for local water forecasts.

The BC River Forecast Centre's most recent biweekly snow conditions commentary (January 16) finds the Okanagan's snow pack to be slightly above normal (106%) compared to the long-term median. The next official snow report, which takes into consideration the snow pillow data as well as the manual snow surveys, will be published on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

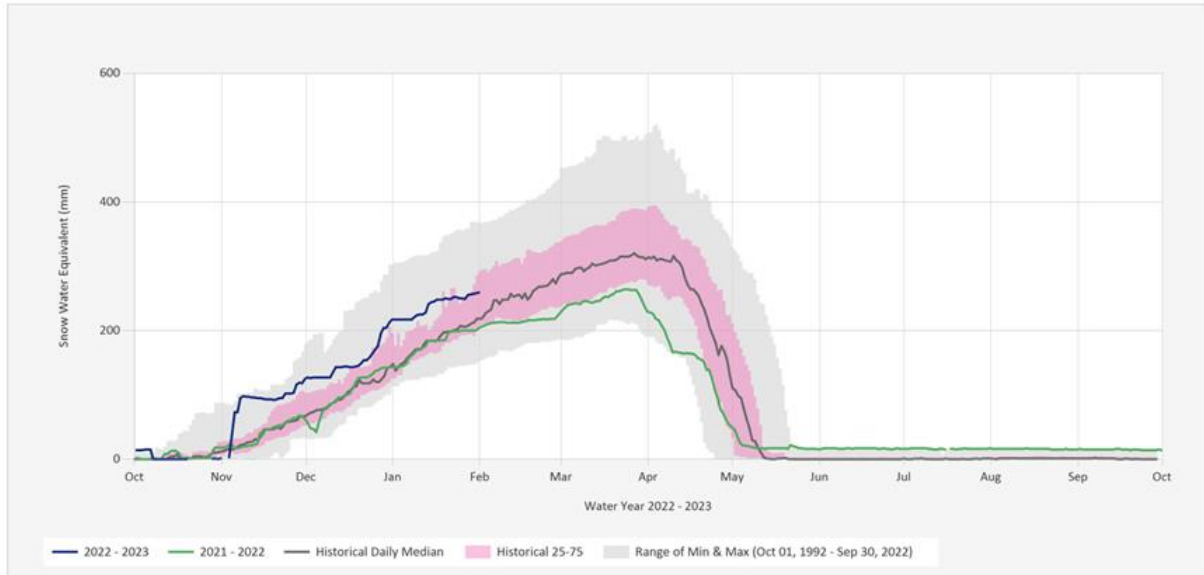
There was a short article this week about the weather station on Silver Star Mountain, for your further interest ([link here](#)).

Mission Creek snow pillow – elevation 1780m. Current year given in dark blue. Water year data prior to January 13, 2023 is erroneous.



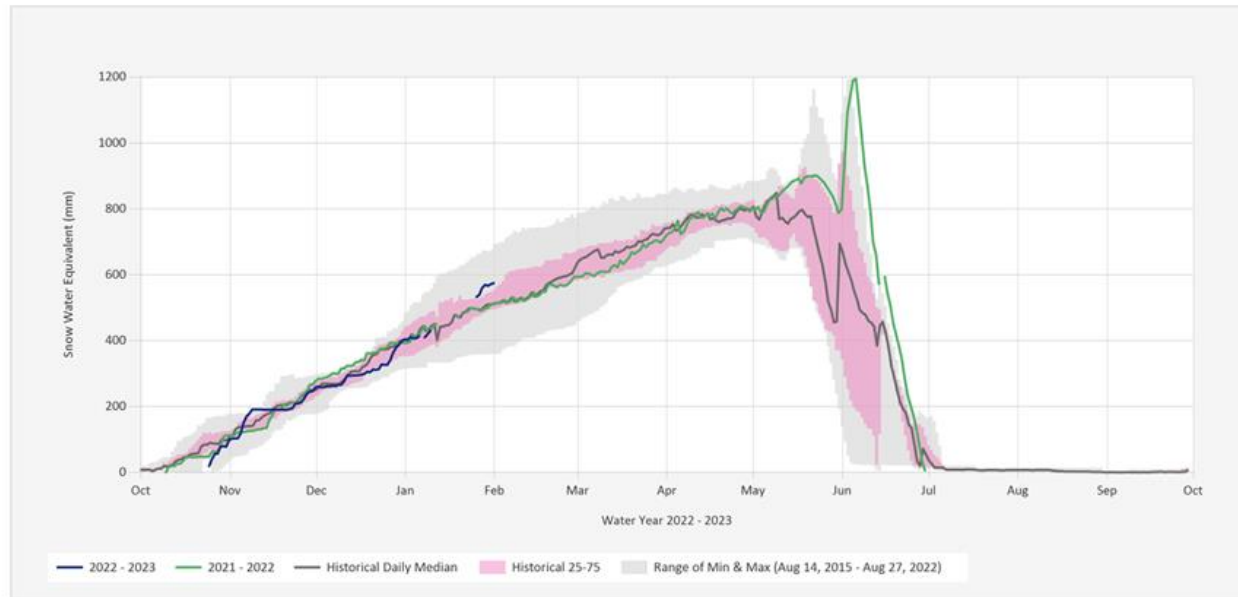
Brenda Mine snow pillow – elevation 1460 m. Current year given in dark blue.

Source Data: SW.Daily@2F18P  
Location: Brenda Mine, Latitude: 49.8623611, Longitude: -119.9821111, Elevation: : 1460 m



Silver Star snow pillow – elevation 1840 m. Current year given in dark blue.

Source Data: SW.Daily@2F10P  
Location: Silver Star Mountain, Latitude: 50.37136, Longitude: -119.06211, Elevation: : 1840 m



## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Feb. 7, 2023  
Agenda No: 7.2

To: OBWB Directors  
From: James Littley  
Date: January 31, 2023  
Subject: Deputy Administrator Report

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### Milfoil Operations

Winter de-rooting is now complete in Wood Lake, the Vernon arm of Okanagan Lake, Penticton Yacht Club, Peachland boat launch, West Kelowna, and most of the Kelowna foreshore. We are monitoring water levels in Osoyoos Lake to launch a rototiller as soon as possible. We also have Kalamalka Lake remaining, which will be de-rooted in late February or March, coordinated with Greater Vernon Water intake requirements. To this point we have had a very efficient de-rooting year, with minimal growth noted in most areas, and almost no delays in operations.

We have also been transferring historical slides of aerial photos into digital files to help us understand the effects of the milfoil control program over multiple decades. I have included a few sample photos with descriptions below this memo.

### Topobathymetric LiDAR Project Data Use

In 2021, OBWB completed a project to map the bathymetry (underwater elevations) of shallow areas of seven lakes in the Okanagan. The primary purpose of the project was to provide data for flood modelling, and the project was funded by the National Disaster Mitigation Program for that purpose. In addition to flood mapping, the high-quality data is also useful for many other projects and studies, and the OBWB has made it available on request to other levels of government, First Nations, local governments, academic institutions, and consultants.

So far, these are some of the additional ways the data is being used:

- Structural flood mitigation planning
- Investigating interactions between Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels and invasive milfoil in Okanagan Lake
- Updating Foreshore Inventory Mapping
- Deciphering the last glaciation in the Okanagan using landform features
- KVR drainage improvements
- Utilizing imagery to identify illegal buoys
- Updating navigation and hazard charts for Okanagan Lakes
- Aquatic plant mapping study
- Aquatic habitat mapping study

These uses demonstrate the added value of high-quality data when it is made open to the public, beyond its original purpose.



Image 1: Turtle Bay, Lake Country, circa 1974



Image 2: Kelowna shoreline milfoil, circa 1987 (floating bridge in background)



Image 3: Kin Beach, Vernon 1974



Image 4: Vaseux Lake milfoil, circa 1987

## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
February 7, 2023  
Agenda No: 7.3

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Nelson R. Jatel  
Date: February 1, 2023  
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

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### **Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)**

The council is the Water Board's standing technical advisory body and meets monthly to discuss relevant and time-sensitive watershed issues, supporting information sharing and knowledge building. Two volunteers provide the current leadership: Council Chair Mr. **Scott Boswell** (Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program) and Vice-chair Dr. **Jeremy Fyke** (Environment and Climate Change Canada). The council has a two-year term and develops a work plan at the start of each time. The new council term starts on April 1, 2023.

The council's 2021-23 work plan includes the designation of sub-committees to support and respond to OBWB Board requests/needs and advance priorities the council sets. This term, the council has seven committees: *Policy, Water and Climate, Alluvial Fans, Wetlands, Agriculture Water, Water Quality, and Source Protection* (a permanent standing committee). The committee chairs meet monthly to discuss progress and cross-cutting issues, inform the guest speaker selection process, and discuss council leadership and membership.

Recently, a council sub-committee chaired by Dr. **Bernie Bauer** published a report on Okanagan Dams and Reservoirs, and it is now available on our website: <https://www.obwb.ca/okanagan-dams-and-reservoirs-past-present-and-future/>

Our next council term is ending on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Members of the OWSC are organizations that have been approved by the board. I have attached a proposed list of council members (*Appendix 1*) for board review and approval.

**Proposed Motion:** *That the Board approves the slate of organization members for the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council's 11<sup>th</sup> term (April 2023 – March 2025), as provided by staff.*

Our January guest speaker was Mr. **Bob Hrasko**, Manager of the Black Mountain Irrigation District (and OBWB director), who presented on [polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#), an emerging class of contaminants for drinking water. PFAS are a group of over 4,700 human-made substances used as surfactants, lubricants, and repellents (for dirt, water, and grease). They can be found in certain firefighting foams, textiles (including carpets, furniture, and clothing), cosmetics, and food packaging materials. Adverse environmental and health effects have been seen for well-studied PFAS, and they have been shown to pose a risk to the Canadian environment. A council report is attached as *Appendix*

2. There are no commercial sources of PFAS pollution in the Okanagan and the current assessment is that they are a low-risk compound of interest to Okanagan water suppliers. Sampling for PFAS has found no or low concentrations in the Okanagan that are below the Canadian Guidelines.

Our next council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup> from 12 to 4 p.m. at the Kelowna Coast Capri Hotel. Our guest speaker will be Mr. **Patrick Riley**, Research and Environmental Projects Manager, Okanagan Indian Band. Board members are encouraged to attend.

### **OBWB Hydrometric Service**

Water data quality control and quality assurance (QA/QC) were actively worked on throughout January for recently collected hydrometric data. QA/QC of hydrometric data was done by the Okanagan Nation Alliance team that had collected and reported the data. Data was then audited by a third-party organization, Associated Engineering.

Hydrometric information is fundamental to water planning, operation, and management. Several activities that depend on hydrometric data include water resource planning, water licensing, regulation development and control, assessment of the impact of operational policy, allocation of flow, fish management, environmental flow and critical flow management, and contingency planning.



Pearson Creek (08NM172). Activated on May 21, 2021.  
Photo courtesy ECC.

<b>Appendix 1. Proposed Council Membership List</b>	
<b>Term 11: April 1 2023 - March 2025.</b>	
1	Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
2	Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC
3	BC Agriculture Council
4	BC Fruit Growers Association
5	BC Groundwater Association
6	BC Water Supply Association
7	BCWF - Okanagan region 8
8	Canadian Water Resources Association
9	City of Kelowna
10	City of Penticton
11	City of Vernon
12	Denise Neilsen, Emerita
13	Environment Canada - Pacific and Yukon Region
14	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
15	Interior Health Authority
16	Ministry of Agriculture
17	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
18	Ministry of Forestry
19	Ministry of Land, Water & Resource Stewardship
20	Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program
21	Okanagan College
22	Okanagan Nation Alliance
23	Osoyoos Indian Band
24	Penticton Indian Band
25	Regional District of Central Okanagan
26	Regional District of North Okanagan
27	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
28	Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association
29	University of British Columbia Okanagan
30	Westbank First Nation
	Total Member Requests: 30





January 2023

## Council Members (Term 10, April 2021-March 2023)

### Appointed representatives | alternates

- **AAFC, Research Branch**  
Kirsten Hannam | Thomas Forge | Jesse MacDonald
- **BC Agriculture Council**  
Hans Buchler
- **BC Cattlemen's Association**  
Lee Hesketh | Keith Manders
- **BC Fruit Growers Association**  
Katie Sardinha | Glen Lucas
- **Ministry of Forests**  
Sheena Spencer (Research Hydrologist)  
Kelly Chiatto | Ray Crampton
- **BC Ground Water Association**  
Marta Green | Doug Geller
- **BC Water Supply Association**  
Patti Meger | Bob Hrasko | Shawn Grundy
- **BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8**  
Lorne Davies | Jackson MacPherson | Nick Kozub
- **Canadian Water Resources Association**  
Brian Guy (past chair) | Dwayne Meredith
- **City of Kelowna**  
Rod MacLean | Ed Hoppe
- **City of Penticton**  
Mike Firlotte
- **City of Vernon**  
Ed Stranks
- **Fisheries and Oceans Canada**  
Lynda Ritchie | Sue Lemke | Teri Ridley
- **Environment and Climate Change Canada**  
Jeremy Fyke (vice-chair) | Dave Hutchinson | Alyssa Charbonneau
- **Emerita**  
Denise Neilsen (past chair)
- **Engineers & Geoscientists BC**  
Mike Nolan | Stephen Horseman
- **Interior Health**  
Rob Birtles | Judi Ekkert
- **Irrigation Industry Association of BC (IIABC)**  
Bruce Naka | Ted van der Gulik (past vice-chair)
- **Ministry of Agriculture**  
Stephanie Tam
- **Ministry of Environment and CC Strategy**  
Kym Keogh | Dennis Einarson
- **Ministry of Land, Water & Resource Stewardship**  
TBD
- **Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program**  
Scott Boswell (chair)
- **Okanagan College**  
Allison O'Neill | Rob St Onge
- **Okanagan Indian Band**  
Patrick Riley | Dan Wilson | Tim Isaac
- **RD Central Okanagan**  
Jing Niu | Todd Cashin
- **RD North Okanagan**  
Tricia Brett | Zee Marcolin
- **RD Okanagan –Similkameen**  
Shelley Fiorito
- **Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association**  
Randy Hardy | Matt Scott
- **Thompson - Okanagan Tourism Association**  
Ellen Walker – Matthews | Mike Overend
- **University of British Columbia - Okanagan**  
Bernie Bauer (past chair) | Craig Nichol | Derek Gratz

## Council Meeting Highlights

### Emerging contaminants (presentation by Mr. Bob Hrasko)

Certain Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) chemicals are found in food packaging, consumer products and clothing. Some PFAS have known human toxicity and tend to accumulate in the human body. Several studies show that the migration of PFAS from food packaging into food has raised concerns about human health risks. Exposure to PFAS has been linked to several human health risks. It is important to note that research on the health effects of PFAS exposure is ongoing. The strength of the evidence linking PFAS exposure to specific health risks varies depending on the specific compound and the population studied. There are no commercial sources of PFAS pollution in the Okanagan and the current assessment is that they are a low-risk compound of interest to Okanagan water suppliers. Sampling for PFAS has found no or low concentrations in the Okanagan that are below the Canadian Guidelines. PFAS chemicals have been found to bioaccumulate in fish. Recent studies found that PFAS concentrations were higher in predatory fish, such as tuna and swordfish, compared to non-predatory fish, such as tilapia and catfish. It's important to note that the concentrations of PFAS in fish will vary depending on the location and the species of fish, as well as the specific PFAS compounds present.

### Council committee highlights:

- **Climate Change** [Neilsen | Fyke] Climate modelling for Similkameen is underway. New Okanagan climate change indicators being developed.
- **Agriculture and Irrigation** [Hannam | Naka] Exploring funding opportunities for irrigation education videos. Developing a new agricultural irrigation economic analysis project (two-year study).
- **Wetlands** [Boswell] Predictive modelling for the Thompson-Nicola region is underway. Working wetland mapping and connectivity corridors.
- **Alluvial Fans** [Bauer] A new report on Okanagan Alluvial fans and their importance to various ecological services is under development.
- **Water Quality** [Birtles | MacLean]
- **Policy** [Green]

### Other news

- The newly appointed OBWB board met for the first time on January third since the October municipal elections. **Sue McKortoff** (RDOS) was elected Board chair, and **Blair Ireland** (RDCO) was elected Board vice-chair.
- OBWB Water Grant Program 2023's deadline is 24 February. Awards are up to \$30,000. <https://www.obwb.ca/overview-grants/wcqi/>
- The federal government is developing a national freshwater science agenda as part of the new Canada Water Agency.

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## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
February 7, 2023  
Agenda No: 7.4

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Corinne Jackson  
Date: January 31, 2023  
Subject: **Communications Director Report**

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I look forward to providing an overview of the OBWB's communications program and initiatives at the upcoming board meeting. The following is a brief overview of some of the work that has been happening since our last meeting on Jan. 10.

### UN World Water Day

For the last several years, the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise has been hosting a very popular film-screening and panel discussion to celebrate annual UN World Water Day (WWD), focusing on various water-related themes relevant to the Okanagan. Save the date! This year we are planning to do this again, online, in the evening of Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> (a day ahead of WWD). I will have more details at next week's board meeting.

### Make Water Work 2023

As noted last month, we sent our annual offer of matching funds to Okanagan local governments and utilities for participation in the Make Water Work program, providing a valley-wide message for outdoor residential water conservation. The matching fund arrangement, in place since the program went valleywide in 2012, has allowed us to leverage additional dollars to build out a strong campaign, but it has also been instrumental in engaging local governments and water utilities to develop a campaign with messaging that works for their community, as well as for the valley as a whole. So far, partners that have expressed interest in participating this year include: City of Armstrong, Regional District of North Okanagan (Greater Vernon Water), District of Lake Country, City of Kelowna, Rutland Waterworks, City of West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, District of Peachland, Town of Osoyoos, and Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

We are also in the process of re-connecting with our business partners, including garden centres and irrigation supply companies in communities throughout the Okanagan, regarding a continued partnership in 2023 to promote WaterWise landscaping, including use of the "Make Water Work Plant Collection."

### Other communication initiatives

In addition to the above, communications support has been provided to a number of in-house projects this month, including: the **Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum** with a follow-up short documentary film and summary report; promotion of the **Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program** application intake; and update to the **OBWB's website** with the most recent Water Supply and Demand Report information.

From time-to-time we are also asked for **communications support** from Okanagan groups, helping promote a water-related event or initiative. For example, we have been helping the Okanagan Xeriscape Association promote a “Xeriscape Horticulture for Professionals Workshop,” Feb. 10 in Kelowna. Also, the OBWB’s Okanagan WaterWise program has been a major funder to the Okanagan Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS), assisting with the hiring of aquatic outreach staff to conduct boater outreach and extend our “Don’t Move A Mussel” message, helping prevent an introduction of invasive mussels in our valley. We will be helping OASISS as it launch’s its latest hiring call.

Finally, we have also seen a significant uptick in the number of requests for **outreach**, from local government and business groups looking for Okanagan water-related information, to gardening events, boater-related events, education-related support, and more. A number of these events are the first time back to in-person gatherings since March 2020 and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working with partners to address as many requests as possible.

### **Summary of OBWB-Related News Coverage**

- Dec. 15        “[UBCO engineers dive into local flood recovery, prevention](#),” *UBC Okanagan News*
- Dec. 15        “UBCO engineers dive into local flood recovery, prevention in Central Okanagan,”  
*Kelowna Capital News*
- Dec. 16        “UBCO looks at what happens after floods recede,” *Castanet.net*
- Dec. 21        “Gardening with Nature Column: Picking the right plant for your xeriscape garden,”  
*Castanet.net*
- Jan. 13        “Okanagan Basin Water Board puts out RFP to replace aging milfoil harvesters,”  
*Castanet.net*
- Jan. 18        “Gardening with Nature Column: Don’t be a dinosaur—conserve water,” *Castanet.net*
- Jan. 19        “[Mayor embraces interest in water issues](#),” *Kelowna Capital News, Lake Country  
Calendar*
- Jan. 19        “[Mussel prevention war grinds on in the Okanagan](#),” *Kelowna Daily Courier, Penticton  
Herald*
- Jan. 19        “Water board looks to modernize milfoil machine fleet,” *Kelowna Capital News*
- Jan. 23        “Okanagan Basin Water Board warns flood predictions may be less accurate this  
spring,” *Castanet.net*
- Jan. 24        “Gardening with Nature Column: Xeriscape supporters are supporters of Mother  
Nature,” *Castanet.net*
- Jan. 24        “[Water board considers upgrade in war on weeds](#),” *Kelowna Daily Courier, Penticton  
Herald*
- Jan. 31        “[Valley water use challenges loom](#),” *Kelowna Daily Courier*