

# Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



**Okanagan Basin**  
WATER BOARD

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 5, 2024

**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 February 6, 2024 held online (page 1)

## 5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Executive Director Report (page 7)

5.1.1 Auditor Report

5.2 Deputy Administrator Report (page 16)

5.3 Water Stewardship Director Report (page 18)

5.4 Office and Grants Manager Report (page 20)

5.5 Communications Director Report (page 22)

5.5.1 Make Water Work 2023 Wrap-Up Report (to be sent separately)

## 6. IN-CAMERA

6.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(k) and 90(2)(b) of the Community Charter)

## 7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Letter from Westbank First Nations to federal government, cc'd to OBWB, re: invasive mussels (page 29)

7.2 Letter from Thompson-Okanagan chambers to B.C. and federal government, cc'd to OBWB, re: invasive mussels (page 31)

7.3 Letter from District of Sicamous to federal government, cc'd to OBWB, re: invasive mussels (page 34)

7.4 Letter from District of Invermere to OBWB re: invasive mussels (page 38)

7.5 Letter from Shuswap Watershed Council to federal government, cc'd to OBWB, re: invasive mussels (page 39)

7.6 Letter from Environment & Climate Change Canada to OBWB, re: invasive mussels (page 43)

7.7 Resolution from District of Sicamous re: invasive mussels to Southern Interior Local Government Association (SILGA) (page 44)

7.8 Resolution from City of Kelowna re: invasive mussels to SILGA (page 45)

## 8. NEXT MEETING

8.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be **Tuesday, April 2, 2024, at 10 a.m. at the Regional District of North Okanagan, Coldstream, B.C.**

## 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 FEBRUARY 6, 2024, ONLINE  
OKANAGAN, B.C.**

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**PRESENT**

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

**GUESTS**

Simone Runyan	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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**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
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist

**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.

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

Dr. Sears welcomed directors re-appointed for 2023.

Directors appointed to the board:

From **Regional District of North Okanagan**

Mayor Victor Cumming  
Director Rick Fairbairn  
Mayor Christine Fraser  
Alternates – Bob Fleming, Shirley Fowler

**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 Jeremy Fyke  
Alternate – Vice-chair Sheena Spencer

Dr. Sears requested nominations for chair. Dir. Cumming nominated Dir. Ireland. Dir. Ireland accepted the nomination. Dir. McKortoff was also nominated but declined. There being no other nominations, Dir. Ireland was elected chair.

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

**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 Feb.6, 2024 be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 5, 2023, held online.

***“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Dec. 5, 2023, held online, be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**6. STAFF PRESENTATION**

Ms. Schira, OBWB’s Water Science Specialist presented an update on the Okanagan Climate Indicators project. The project looks at temperature, precipitation, streamflow and lake flow data during various seasons in the last 30 to 100 years.

In analyzing the data, Ms. Schira noted a clear pattern shows that Kelowna, Vernon (measured at Coldstream Ranch), and Penticton are warming. Research shows that the baseline period, 1951-1980, was colder in the valley, and the trend from 1991-2020 shows that there is a marked shift

to warmer temperatures with the number of days over 30 degrees increasing and the days under 0 degrees dropping. The growing season is also longer by about 2 weeks, added Ms. Schira. Cold days still occur, but less frequently.

Dir. Lezard entered the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

If we compare precipitation between the baseline period (1951-1980) to what we have experienced since then, the 1980s and 1990s were wetter, but since then we have seen a drying trend, especially in the last three years, Ms. Schira said. Precipitation is known to be more erratic.

In response to questions, Ms. Schira explained that temperature changes are an easier indicator to show change, whereas precipitation is more difficult since there are other factors that may be influencing patterns. However, being able to look at the two factors together helps create a clearer picture. This is consistent with indications that increasing temperatures are causing more extreme weather events, the total amount of precipitation is decreasing, and winter precipitation that used to fall as snow is beginning to fall as rain.

Dr. Sears added that the Okanagan has long depended on snowpack melting slowly and filling up Okanagan Lake, making it easier to ensure supply throughout the growing season. Liquid water is harder to hold. Ultimately, she said, communities will need to plan for more floods and droughts.

In the case of Mission Creek, Ms. Schira added, freshet is coming earlier. Historically, freshet would begin around May 24, but this has shifted in the last few years to mid to early May. Recognizing what is happening and what flows are required for ecosystem health and fish can help water managers prepare. Okanagan Lake freshet is also occurring earlier, which again has implications for management, she noted.

## 7. **STAFF REPORTS**

### 7.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears gave the board an update on local water supply conditions, noting that although Okanagan Lake was low during the fall and through winter, it is now almost normal for this time of year. However, this is due to melting snow and rainfall which means there is less snow on the hills. The Brenda Mines snow pillow is a concern, she added, noting that it is currently sitting near its minimum range.

In response to questions, Dr. Sears noted that water supply deficits depend on when irrigation starts and when water managers have to rely on their reservoirs to feed demand.

***“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Jan. 31, 2024, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

### 7.2 Deputy Administrator Report

Mr. Littley told the board that correspondence was sent from the OBWB to the federal government requesting an increase in funding to the Province of B.C.’s Invasive Mussel Defence Program. A submission was also sent to the B.C. government’s Wildlife Act Review, requesting that pull-the-plug legislation be introduced.

There was some discussion among board members about what they were hearing from various electeds on the issue, including that MP Dick Cannings had offered to follow-up with the OBWB’s request to the federal government.

B.C. Green Party House Leader Adam Olsen also said he would follow up. There was also discussion about additional ways to bring awareness to the issue. Dr. Sears said that staff would look at options and that the March 8 Invasive Mussel Working Group may also have some ideas.

Mr. Littley reported that the milfoil control program is mostly on track, but there have been some issues with equipment breakdowns and low lake levels. Work is also continuing on a new permitting process with the province to allow more flexibility with the program while considering habitat and species concerns.

***“THAT the Deputy Administrator Report, dated Jan. 31, 2024, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

### 7.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel gave an update on the previous month's Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting and a presentation from the Province of B.C.'s James Telford, Assistant Water Manager and Senior Authorizations Specialist, and Nicole Pyett, Manager of Resource Management. The two presented on the provincial government's response to last year's drought and lessons learned. At the next meeting, City of Kelowna's Rod McLean and District of Lake Country's Kyle Wilkie will be presenting on local government watershed security planning. Ms. Schira will also be presenting on the OBWB's climate indicators project.

Work on the upcoming Environmental Flows (EF) conference is continuing. Board directors are encouraged to attend, Dr. Jatel added. On Feb. 1, the OBWB teamed up with the BC Institute of Agrologists to host a webinar on integrating agrology and watershed governance. All proceeds are going to the EF conference.

The board was told that the Okanagan Hydrometric Monitoring Program's technical advisory committee will be meeting in mid-February to determine plans for the coming year. The committee includes staff from OBWB, Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)'s Fisheries Department, federal and provincial government.

Dr. Jatel noted a workshop held in January for Teck Cominco and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. ONA staff and others involved in the Okanagan's environmental flow needs work presented on the local project and Teck and DFO staff shared their efforts.

Dir. Fyke, OWSC chair, added that the council has a committee looking at developing a proposal to update the OBWB's water supply and demand data project. Other committees are looking at the economics of agriculture irrigation, as well as educational materials for ag water users. Dir. Lezard asked whether Okanagan Nation's water rights and B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act will be considered as part of this work. Dir. Fyke responded that, yes, he would raise this at the council.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Jan. 31, 2024, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

### 7.4 Office and Grants Manager Report

Ms. Restrepo Tamayo told the board that the call for applications to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program closes Feb. 23 and the OBWB's website has been updated to accept applications online.

Work on the upcoming EF conference is continuing and 120 people have now registered. There is room for 200, Ms. Restrepo Tamayo added, noting that the planning committee has also nearly reached its fundraising goal. Discounts are available for various attendees. More information can be found at <https://environmentalflores2024.ca/>.

***“THAT the Office and Grants Manager’s Report, dated Jan. 31, 2024, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

#### 7.5 Water Science Specialist Report

Ms. Schira provided an update on climate change indicators for last year noting very dry conditions and one of the hottest years on record for Kelowna, Vernon and Penticton, and a longer than normal growing season. The warming trend is consistent across the valley and across all seasons. And, the trends are in line with what was seen globally, Schira added.

***“THAT the Water Science Specialist’s Report, dated Jan. 29, 2024, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

#### 7.6 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson presented some of the results from a water survey of Okanagan residents conducted in December, noting 90% of respondents said they conserve water. Awareness for the OBWB’s outreach and education program, Okanagan WaterWise, increased from 37% in 2020 to 46% in 2023. Awareness regarding invasive mussels among respondents was 86%. Top water-related issues of concern that were identified include forest fires, ensuring enough water for fish and other ecosystems needs, and water shortages, Ms. Jackson added.

It was noted that although 31% of respondents said they own a watercraft, local residents share a much larger portion of the burden – compared to those who merely come to the Okanagan to recreate - should mussels arrive in the Okanagan.

The survey results will help inform OBWB efforts to engage Okanagan residents on local water issues.

***“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Jan. 31, 2024, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

### 8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Letters from OBWB to federal government re: invasive mussel program funding, letter from B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) Nathan Cullen to OBWB, Westbank First Nation and City of West Kelowna re: invasive mussels, and letter from Mins. Cullen and Heyman to OBWB re: B.C. Wildlife Act review

***“THAT the letters from B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) Nathan Cullen to OBWB, Westbank First Nation and City of West Kelowna re: invasive mussels, and letter from Min. Cullen and B.C. Environment and Climate Change Strategy Min. George Heyman to OBWB re: B.C. Wildlife Act review be received.”***

**CARRIED**

### 9. NEXT MEETING

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 10 a.m., online.

10. ADJOURNMENT

*"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 5, 2024 be adjourned at 12:22 p.m."*

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director



## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 5.1

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Anna Warwick Sears  
Date: February 28, 2024  
Subject: Executive Director Report

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### **Annual Audit**

Our auditors at BDO have shared the attached slides to inform the board of their preparations for the 2024 annual audit. This team has been working with us for many years, and we don't expect anything out of the ordinary to arise this year. The auditors will present the final 2024 audit for the board's approval and adoption at our June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, and then the financial statements will be included in our annual report.

### **Strategic Planning**

The current OBWB strategic plan expires at the end of 2024, and I'm beginning to think about the process for board, staff, and council input for the 2025-2029 strategic plan. Part of this will be to look at the tracking measures we have been following for the past four years—what seems to be working, and where we might change. At this stage, I'd like to hear comments from the board about best practices they recommend for the process.

### **Staff Service Recognitions**

It has been brought to my attention that the OBWB has never formally done an employee recognition for years of service with the organization. Following the practice of the RDCO, and other nearby local governments, we will begin a regular process to recognize staff after they have completed 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30-year milestones. Currently, our longest-serving employee, Pat Field, has been with the OBWB for more than 32 years. I will work on organizing an opportunity for a formal recognition in the near future when all the staff being honoured can be present.

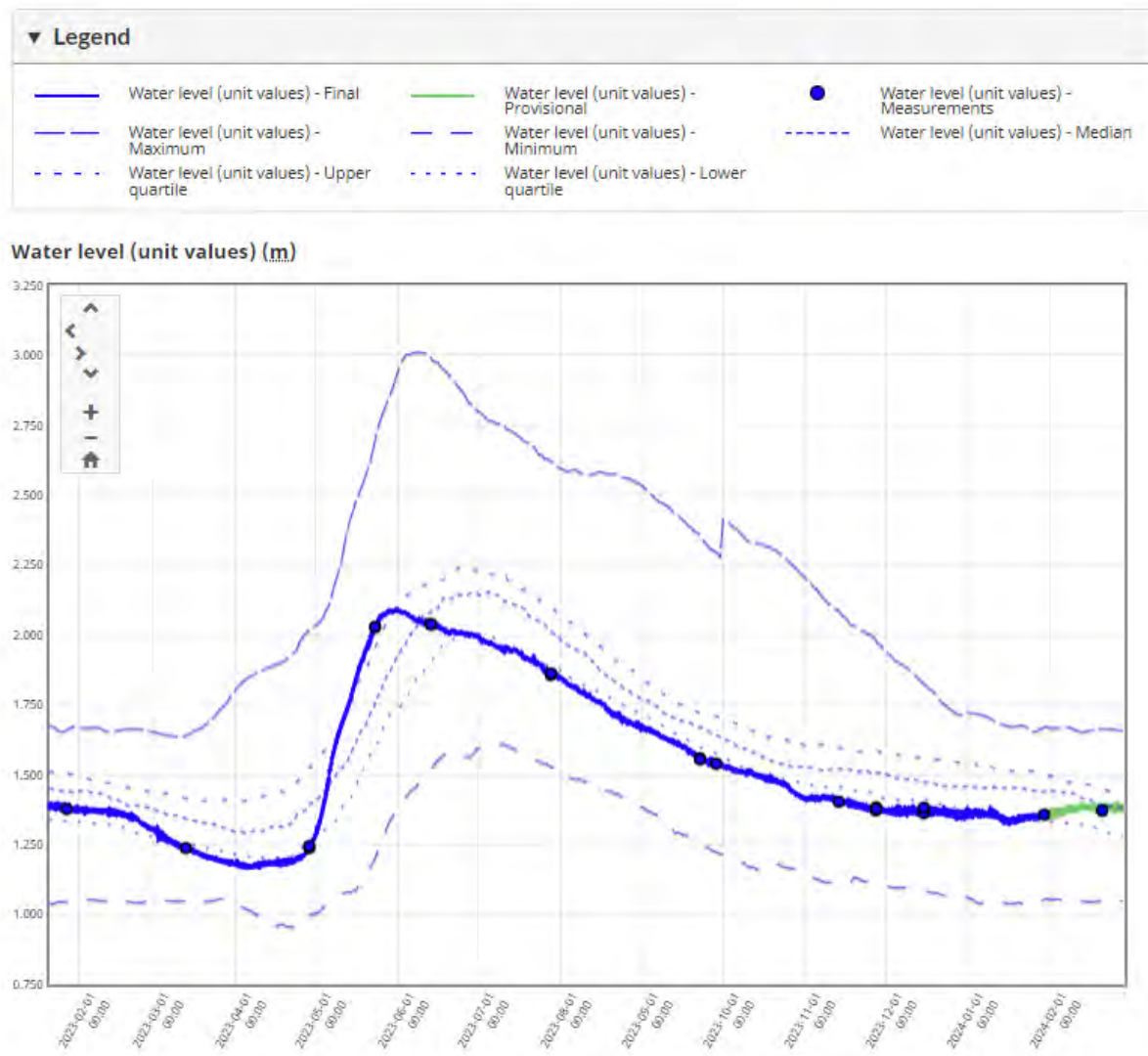
### **Weather Report**

El Niño is continuing, but is likely (79%) to transition to neutral conditions in April – June. The U.S. National Weather Service continues to forecast warmer-and-drier-than-normal conditions through the summer of 2024.



Okanagan Lake has recovered to seasonal levels (50<sup>th</sup> percentile), but there are some concerns that it may not reach full pool this summer, depending on precipitation levels for the remainder of the spring.

### Okanagan Lake level, February 28, 2024



The B.C. River Forecast Centre's March 1st Snow and Water Supply Bulletin is scheduled to be released on Friday, March 8, 2024. The bulletin offers a more detailed and comprehensive summary of the March 1st snowpack statistics and includes approximately 115 manual snow survey measurements (for the entirety of B.C.). The official snow basin indices are calculated within the bulletin. As of February 26, Okanagan automated snow pillows remain at below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for their historical records.

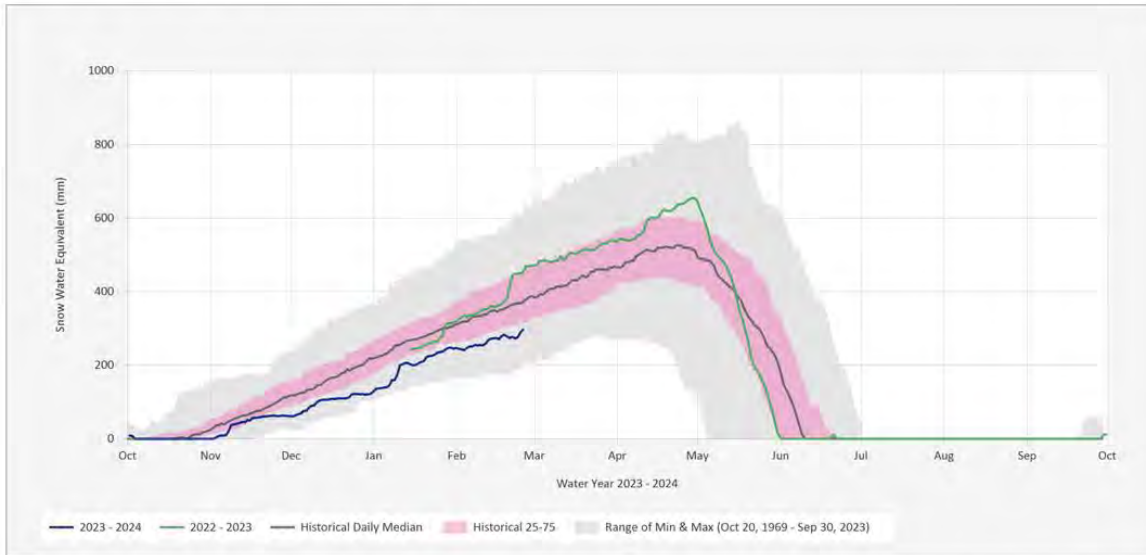
Mission Creek Snow Pillow: 1780 m elevation (records began in 1969)

On February 22, at 75% of normal, and below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for occurrence probability.

Automated Snow Weather Station Graph  
Snow.2F05P Automated Snow Weather Station Graph

Feb 26, 2024 | 1 of 1

Source Data: SWDaily@2F05P  
Location: Mission Creek, Latitude: 49.94467, Longitude: -118.9497, Elevation: : 1780 m



Statistics are based on the period of record prior to the current Water Year

Data last appended: February 25, 2024 16:00 UTC+00:00

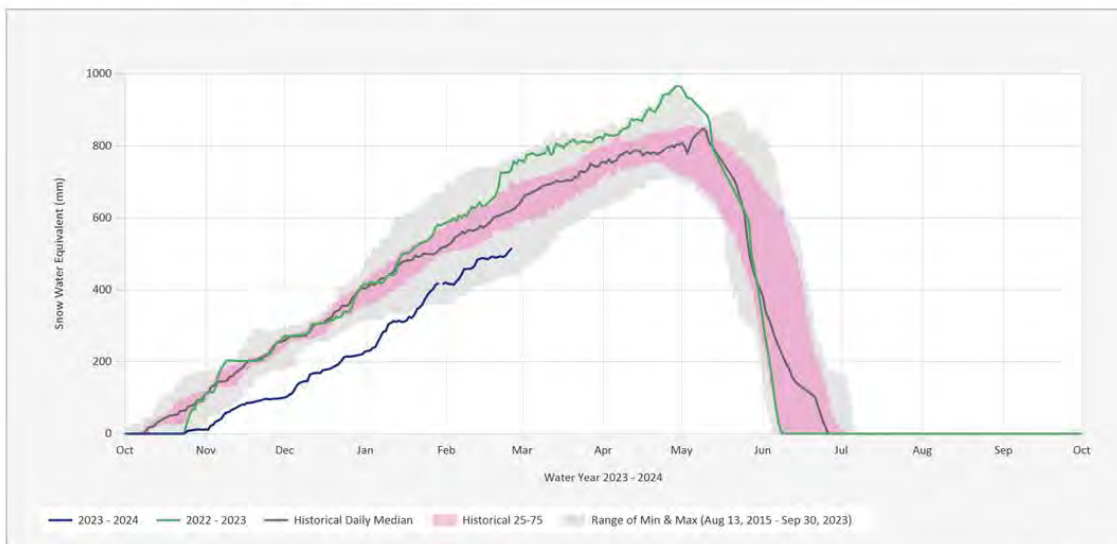
Silver Star snow pillow: 1840 m elevation (records began in 2015)

On February 22, at 81% of normal, and below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for occurrence probability.

Automated Snow Weather Station Graph  
Snow.2F10P Automated Snow Weather Station Graph

Feb 26, 2024 | 1 of 1

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

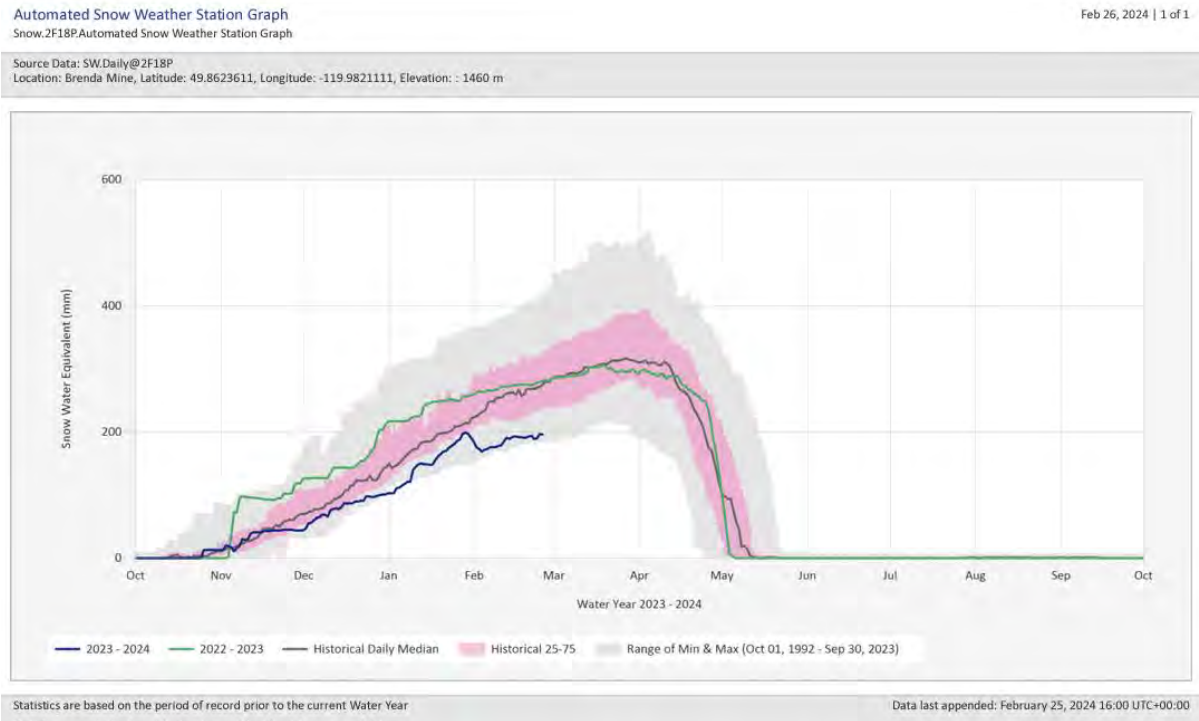


Statistics are based on the period of record prior to the current Water Year

Data last appended: February 25, 2024 16:00 UTC+00:00

Brenda Mines snow pillow: 1460 m elevation (records began in 1992)

On February 22, at 70% of normal, and well below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for occurrence probability.



Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 5.1.1

# Okanagan Basin Water Board

Audit planning communication to the Board of Directors for the year ended March 31, 2024

START

**BDO**

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## To the Board of Directors of Okanagan Basin Water Board

We are pleased to provide you with this planning communication to highlight and explain key issues which we believe to be relevant to the audit of Okanagan Basin Water Board (the "Board") financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2024.

The enclosed planning communication includes our approach to your audit, the significant risks we have identified and the terms of our engagement. At the year-end meeting, we will provide you with a copy of our draft audit opinion and discuss the nature, extent and results of our audit work. We will also communicate any significant internal control deficiencies identified during our audit and reconfirm our independence.

Our audit and therefore this communication will not necessarily identify all matters that may be of interest to the Board of Directors in fulfilling its responsibilities. This communication has been prepared solely for the use of the Board of Directors and should not be distributed without our prior consent. Consequently, we accept no responsibility to a third party that uses this communication.

We look forward to completing our draft audit report opinion and discussing our conclusions with you. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours truly,

BDO Canada LLP  
January 24, 2024

For the year ended March 31, 2024

**BDO**

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- 9 Recommended resources
- 10 Appendices

### Audit at a glance

LEAD  
PARTNER  
ON YOUR  
AUDIT

Markus Schrott, CPA, CA

E: mschrott@bdo.ca

T: (250) 275-8852

START  
DATE

November 2023

END DATE

June 2024



## Your dedicated BDO audit team

Markus Schrott, CPA, CA  
Engagement Partner

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Manager

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Reign Dalmacio  
Audit Staff

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E: rdalmacio@bdo.ca

### Our independence



We have complied with relevant ethical requirements and are not aware of any relationships between Okanagan Basin Water Board and our Firm that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence.





## Audit timeline



BDO'S DIGITAL AUDIT SUITE

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We use our APT Next Gen software and documentation tool to save time, streamline processes, and go paperless with your audit.

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## Auditor's responsibilities: financial statements

We are responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management, with oversight by those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities. The scope of our work, as confirmed in our engagement letter attached as Appendix A to this letter, is set out below:

### Year-End Audit Work

- ▶ Work with management towards the timely issuance of the financial statements.
- ▶ Provide timely and constructive management letters. This will include deficiencies in internal control identified during our audit.
- ▶ Present significant findings to the Board of Directors including key audit and accounting issues, any significant deficiencies in internal control and any other significant matters arising from our work.



We are required to obtain an understanding of the system of internal control in place in order to consider the adequacy of these controls as a basis for the preparation of the financial statements, to determine whether adequate accounting records have been maintained and to assess the adequacy of these controls and records as a basis upon which to design and undertake our audit testing.

We are required to report to you in writing about any significant deficiencies in internal control that we have identified during the audit.





## Auditor's responsibilities: fraud

We are responsible for planning and performing the audit to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatements, whether caused by error or fraud, by:

- ▶ Identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- ▶ Obtaining sufficient and appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses; and
- ▶ Responding appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

The likelihood of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than the likelihood of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from error because fraud may involve collusion as well as sophisticated and carefully organized schemes designed to conceal it.

### Behind the audit report



Learn how we audit your financial statements

[SEE OUR PROCESS](#)



## Auditor's responsibilities: fraud

Throughout our planning process, we performed risk assessment procedures and related activities to obtain an understanding of the Board and its environment, including the Board's internal control, to obtain information for use in identifying the risks of material misstatement due to fraud and made inquiries of management regarding:

- ▶ Management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud, including the nature, extent and frequency of such assessments;
- ▶ Management's process for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the Board, including any specific risks of fraud that management has identified or that have been brought to its attention, or classes of transactions, account balances, or disclosures for which a risk of fraud is likely to exist;
- ▶ Management's communication, if any, to those charged with governance regarding its processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in Okanagan Basin Water Board; and
- ▶ Management's communication, if any, to employees regarding its view on business practices and ethical behavior.

We are not currently aware of any fraud affecting the Board. If you are aware of any instances of actual, suspected, or alleged fraud, please let us know.





## Significant risks and planned responses

We have identified the following significant risks that require special audit consideration. These risks were identified based on our knowledge of the Board, our past experience, and input from management and the Board of Directors. Please review these significant risks and let us know your thoughts on these or any other areas of concern.

Financial statement areas	Risks noted	Audit approach
Management Override of Internal Controls	Per Canadian Audit Standard 240.32, irrespective of our assessment of the risk of management override of controls, audit procedures must be performed to address the risk.	Review of transactions recorded in various ledgers for unusual or non-recurring adjustments not addressed by other audit procedures.



## Materiality

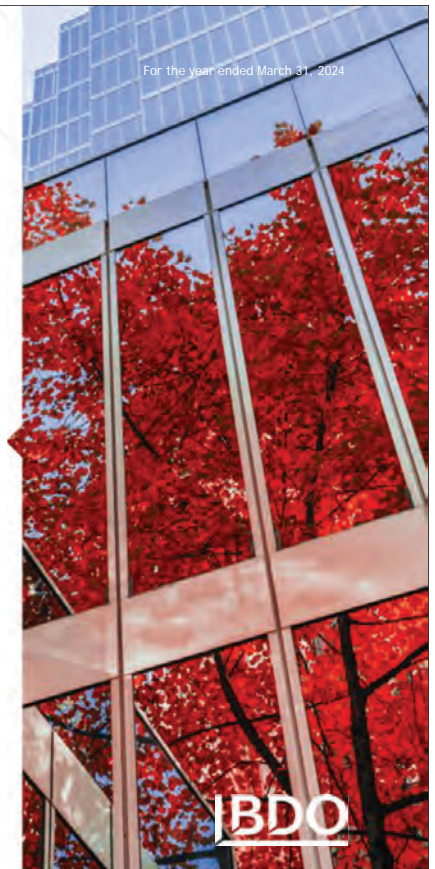
We determined preliminary materiality to be \$127,000, based on 3% of a three-year average of revenue.

Misstatements are considered to be material if they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users based on the financial statements.

Our materiality calculation is based on the Board's preliminary results. If actual results change significantly, we will communicate those changes to the Board of Directors as part of our year-end communication.

We will communicate all corrected and uncorrected misstatements identified during our audit to the Board of Directors, other than those which we determine to be "clearly trivial."

We encourage management to correct any misstatements identified throughout the audit process.



## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 5.2

To: OBWB Directors  
From: James Littley  
Date: February 26, 2024  
Subject: Deputy Administrator Report

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### Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group

On March 8 we will host the inaugural meeting of the Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group. OBWB is facilitating this initiative as an opportunity to engage representatives from Okanagan First Nations, local governments, chambers of commerce, tourism associations, marinas and yacht clubs, and industries working in and around the water, to gather and discuss: 1) how to prevent invasive mussels from entering the province; 2) how to stop the spread between watersheds if they arrive in our province; and 3) what it will mean to live with them should they arrive in the Okanagan-Interior. We currently have almost 90 registered participants representing the Thompson Okanagan, Shuswap, and Columbia regions.

### Updated Mussel Vulnerability Maps

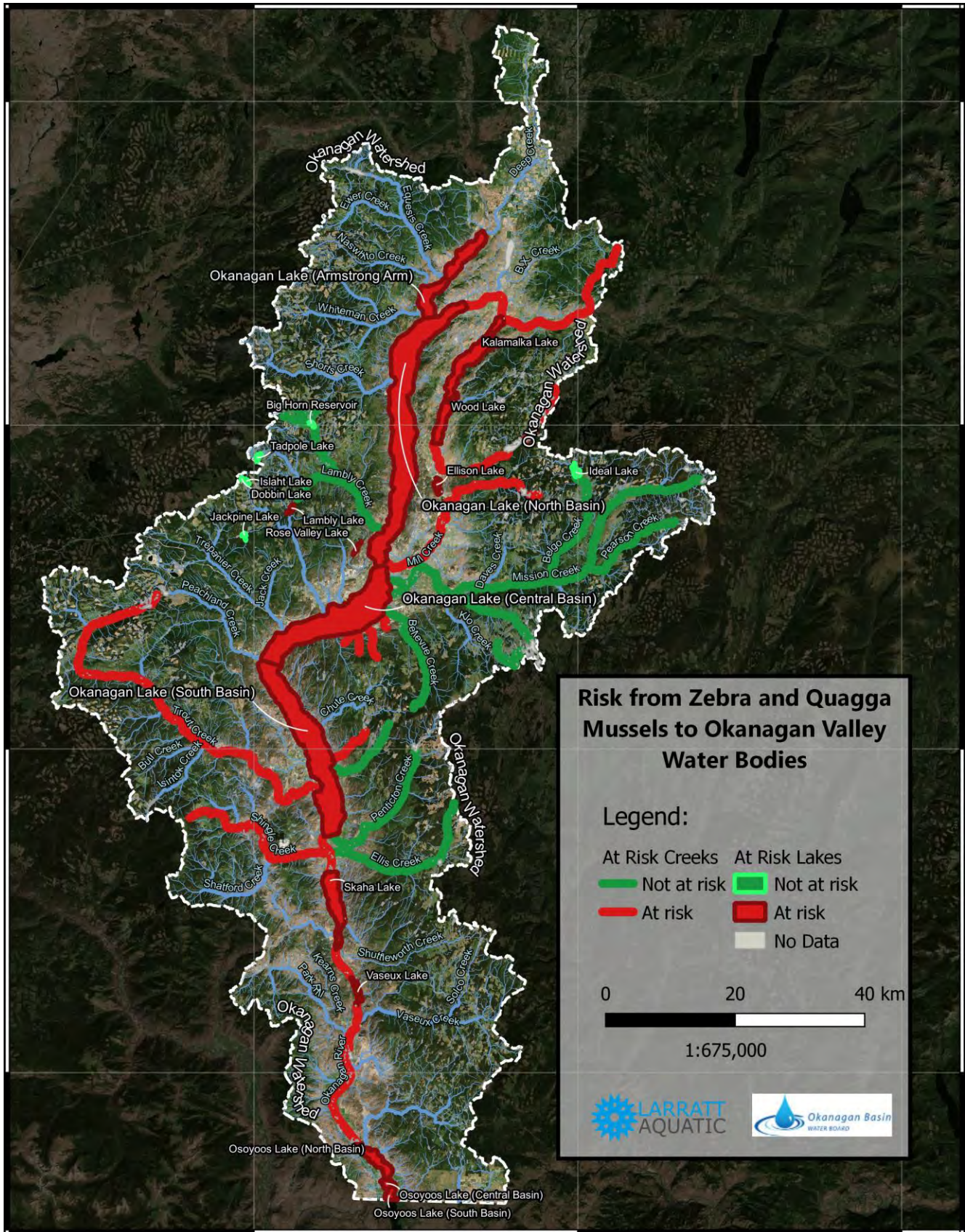
Based on the latest work from our upcoming document *"Preparing for Invasive Mussels: Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure,"* Larratt Aquatic Consultants has produced an updated mussel vulnerability map, including Okanagan lakes and streams, showing those that are at risk, and those that are not at risk based on water chemistry. The updated map can be used to direct resources to at risk areas, and to prepare infrastructure in at-risk water. The updated map is attached to this memo.

### Milfoil Control Program

Milfoil rototilling is proceeding in Wood Lake and Okanagan Lake. We may not complete all portions of Kal Beach this year due to drought conditions and the need to protect the Greater Vernon Water (GVW) intake in Kalamalka Lake from sediment. We are working closely with GVW to ensure we can control milfoil without risking drinking water quality at their intake. We will also be moving a machine to Osoyoos Lake in the coming weeks to complete work there.

We have received confirmation that our new amphibious milfoil harvester is currently in transit, scheduled to arrive at the Port of Montreal in early March, and should be delivered to Vernon by the end of the month. We will inspect the new machine upon arrival and expect to release payment to the manufacturer shortly after.







## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 5.3

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Nelson R. Jatel  
Date: February 27, 2024  
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

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### Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Our February 8 council meeting featured a panel, followed by a presentation, discussing pivotal aspects of climate change. This session complemented our ongoing commitment to enhancing watershed security and adapting to climate challenges through informed strategies and collaborative efforts.

#### **Highlights of the February Council Meeting:**

- **Watershed Security Panel Discussion:** A panel, including key local government figures, offered invaluable insights into watershed security. The panel consisted of **Kiel Wilkie**, Utilities Manager at the District of Lake Country, **Rod Maclean**, Manager of Utility Planning at the City of Kelowna, and **Zee Marcolin**, General Manager of Utilities RDNO,
- **Introduction of new OBWB Climate Indicators Project:** OBWB Water Science Specialist **Sandra Schira** presented on new climate indicators. This discussion underscored the critical role of local governance in addressing climate change impacts on water resources. These indicators enhance our understanding and response to climate variability and its effects on our water systems.

#### **March Water Stewardship Council Meeting Cancelled:**

The regularly scheduled March Water Stewardship Council meeting is cancelled due to the OBWB co-hosting the Environmental Flow Conference, March 13 – 15, with the Canadian Water Resources Association. This conference is a significant event, bringing together experts and stakeholders from around the globe to discuss environmental flow needs and strategies in the context of global climate change challenges. Our next council meeting is scheduled for April 11.

### Environmental Flow Conference Attendance Options for Board Members

The Environmental Flow Conference presents a unique opportunity for board members to engage in cutting-edge research and policy discussions. Given the relevance of this event to our mission, the OBWB encourages board member participation. The conference will cover crucial topics related to environmental flow science, policy implications, and integrating these flows within sustainable water management practices. For additional information about the conference, visit [www.environmentalflows2024.ca](http://www.environmentalflows2024.ca).

### Okanagan Hydrometric (Stream Flow) Monitoring

The Okanagan Hydrometric Program has continued monitoring stream flow and water levels, ensuring the credibility and reliability of our data. The semi-annual Technical Advisory Committee meeting was held on February 16th, underscoring our collaborative approach to water resource management. The workshop concluded with Elinor McGrath's presentation on the implementation phase of the

Okanagan EFN project, emphasizing its integration within Syilx communities for improved water planning and management.

#### **Irrigation/Mitacs project**

In our ongoing effort to enhance water management strategies in the Okanagan, the collaborative Irrigation/Mitacs project is aimed at scrutinizing the economics of irrigation within the valley. This endeavour, employing both cost-benefit and economic impact analyses through an innovative participatory process, intends to describe the financial aspects of irrigation practices. Given the Okanagan's semi-arid climate, water is a critical resource, with agriculture heavily reliant on efficient water management. The project will explore how climate change might alter agricultural practices and the need for water management infrastructure adjustments to optimize these evolving opportunities. Understanding the economic impacts of investments in water infrastructure is crucial for informed decision-making about future investments, ensuring the sustainable development of the valley's agricultural sector and its financial activities. This project includes several Okanagan partners. The search for a post-doc to complete this work continues, and the project team, led by Dr. **John Janmaat**, is on the third set of candidate interviews. It has been difficult to fill this position in the current job market.

## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2023  
Agenda No: 5.4

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Carolina Restrepo Tamayo  
Date: February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Subject: Office and Grants Manager Report

---

### Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program:

The call for applications for the 2024/2025 WCQI Grant program closed 4 p.m., Friday, Feb. 23. The program provides funds to Okanagan local governments, improvement districts, Okanagan First Nations communities, and non-profit organizations for projects that conserve and protect water, based on the recognition that we are all part of: "One valley. One water." In March, OBWB staff will review the applications and make funding recommendations, based on the scoring criteria established and approved by the board. The recommendations will be sent to the Board of Directors for discussion at the April board meeting. Total funding available is \$350,000. Awarded projects will be announced April 3. Here is some "at a glance" information about the proposals received this year.





### Environmental Flows Conference

I have continued working closely with Nelson, Sandra, and the conference organizing committee on planning and fundraising for the upcoming “Environmental Flows 2024 Conference – siwłk<sup>w</sup> (Water) For All – Co-creating Futures,” scheduled for March 13- 15. The event is only two weeks away and we have accomplished our fundraising and attendance goals. Currently, we have 152 registrants. We expect a final number close to 170.

We have secured more than 30 experts to present. The conference will address key themes, focusing on the current understanding of environmental flows in B.C. and recent related work in the Okanagan, Canada, and the U.S.

Board members have several options for participating in the conference:

1. **Reception and Conference Welcome (Tuesday, March 12):**
  - An opportunity to experience the opening of the conference – this event helps set the stage for the proceeding three days of conference activities and welcomes participants to the Syilx territory.
2. **Wednesday Evening Reception (5 - 6 p.m.):**
  - A relaxed environment for informal discussions and networking with other conference attendees.
3. **Thursday Gala Dinner (starting at 6 p.m.):**
  - One of the conference's highlights, featuring our keynote speaker and a formal dinner. The reception starts at 6 pm, followed by dinner.
4. **Full Conference Participation:**
  - This option allows board members to attend all sessions and activities throughout the conference. It's an immersive experience, ideal for those looking to engage fully with the topics of environmental flow science and policy and network extensively.

Important notes:

- **Assigned Seating:** Please note that there is assigned seating at this conference, and no drop-in option is available. This requires prior planning and confirmation of attendance.
- **Encouragement to Participate:** The OBWB highly encourages board members to participate in this conference. The issues discussed are integral to our region's environmental and water management challenges.
- **Further Information:** For more details or to confirm your participation, please get in touch with Carolina at (250) 469-6264 or [Carolina.restrepo@obwb.ca](mailto:Carolina.restrepo@obwb.ca).



## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 5.5

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Corinne Jackson  
Date: February 28, 2024  
Subject: Communications Director Report

### Make Water Work 2023 Wrap-Up Report

A wrap-up report for our outdoor water conservation campaign will be sent as a separate attachment due to its size. However, I have provided a few highlights below.

- We held our first in-person **launch** since May 2019 (when we pivoted to online due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The launch was held May 18 amid record-breaking temperatures and smoky skies with an early start to the fire season – a foreshadowing of the hot, dry season ahead. A number of media outlets covered the event.
- We welcomed **new partners**, Wild Bloom Nursery in Kelowna and Kel-Lake Garden Centre, joining with seven other garden centres in the valley promoting the Make Water Work Plant Collection.
- A **refreshed website** with bright, fun creative, replicated on other outreach materials.
- Make Water Work (MWW) advertising throughout the Okanagan valley, with **billboards**, ads on **Castanet, Facebook and Instagram, YouTube** and **websites** of interest to our target audience, **radio** ads, PSAs on **Global Okanagan** as well as ads during the Morning News, in-show trivia segments and more.
- New this year was **wrapped vehicles**, promoting the conservation message. (A sample image is provided below.)



Left: The Make Water Work message on a wrapped vehicle seen in Kelowna.

- **Make Water Work Plant Collection updated to emphasize native plants**, adding the nsyilxcən name for the plants, and posted to website.

- A **digital kit** for local government/water utility and business partners, including the Plant Collection List, Tips sheet, social media graphics and text. We also provided MWW branded **gardening gloves** and **bookmarks** with MWW conservation tips, MWW Plant Collection and contest information.



Social media samples: Image 1 part of the Make Water Work (MWW) Tips series; Image 2 part of the MWW Plant Collection series; Image 3 part of the MWW Pledge series.

- MWW **plant stakes**, bookmarks and **plant lists** were distributed to garden centre and irrigation partners.
- We partnered with Okanagan Xeriscape Association to do **onsite outreach** at garden centre partners, at events, and more.
- A **contest** for two \$500 WaterWise yard upgrades.
- There was also extensive media coverage on the drought that extended into early 2024 due to the continuing dry conditions. Staff continued to message out on water conservation during this time.

With local government contributions between \$1,500 and \$3,000, matched by the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program, the campaign cost \$52,670. With another \$25,200 provided in-kind by various partners, we delivered a campaign worth \$77,867.

We will be sending out our annual offer of matching funds to Okanagan local governments and utilities in the next few days, inviting participation in the 2024 MWW program.

### Other communications

We have been helping the B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship and local governments promote a series of community workshops "**Decoding Drought**," aimed at answering questions ahead of what may be another dry summer. Topics include: types of drought; the connection between ground and surface water; the science behind drought declarations; roles and responsibilities between water utilities/licencees and the province for drought response; regulations and penalties. For the Okanagan, a meeting was held in Oliver on Feb. 23. Another meeting is set for Lake Country on March 9. Please see posters attached at the end of my memo. In addition, provincial staff asked for locally-relevant water conservation materials. We provided Make Water Work handouts for residential conservation and created a piece promoting our information for agricultural water users. A copy of this is also attached to this memo.

We are once again selling **rain barrels** (at-cost), partnering with the Regional District of Central Okanagan's Waste Reduction Office, which is selling composters. The items are available by pre-sale, March 1-31 while supplies last. Only 250 rain barrels will be available with a limit of two per household. Details can be found at [rdco.com/compostersale](https://rdco.com/compostersale). A news release went out with more information which can be found at <https://www.rdco.com/en/news/boost-your-soil-save-water.aspx>.

Ongoing communications support has been provided on the **invasive mussels** issue this month, including: a Water Board [news release](#) issued Feb. 16 in response to a federal invasive mussel funding announcement; a Thompson-Okanagan [chamber news release](#); and invasive mussel resolutions to the Southern Interior Local Government Association (see agenda items 7.7 and 7.8 in correspondence). Staff have also been responding to a number of media inquiries, as well as local government and business inquiries, looking for ways to assist on the issue. And, we will also be supporting the Invasive Mussel Working Group meeting on March 8.

We have also been providing a variety of communications support to the upcoming **Environmental Flows Conference**, March 13-15.

Given how busy March is, we have decided to not hold a **U.N. World Water Day** event this year. However, we encourage directors to participate in the Okanagan Nation Alliance's event on March 22 down at City Park in Kelowna at 2 p.m. More information can be found at <https://www.syilx.org/events/water-forum/>. A poster is also attached at the end of my memo.

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

Our communications department is testing a couple of systems for media monitoring with the intention of providing a more robust, but less time-consuming, chronicling of OBWB coverage. In the meantime, please find a few highlights from this past month, below.

- Jan. 30        "[B.C. Wildlife Federation raises alarm over de-funding invasive mussel surveillance](#)," *The Trail Times*, *Rossland News*
- Feb. 2        "[Column: Okanagan water board need not be lone voice on invasive mussel threat](#)," *Kelowna Capital News*, *Summerland Review*, *Vernon Morning Star*, *The Golden Star*, *Lake Country Calendar*, *WestK News*, *Eagle Valley news*, *Penticton Western News*, *Similkameen Spotlight*, *Salmon Arm observer*, *Keremeos Review*, *Revelstoke Review*
- Feb. 8        "[BC under threat from invasive mussels as provincial funding scales back](#)," *Penticton Herald*, *Waterloo Region Record*, *Chek News*, *Yahoo News.com*
- Feb. 13        "[Okanagan chambers of commerce call for ban on out-of-province boats](#)," *Global Okanagan*
- Feb. 14        "[Column - Gardening with nature: Sustainable gardening can help save the planet](#)," *Castanet.net*
- Feb. 16        "[Federal invasive mussel response 'falls far short', says Okanagan Water Board](#)," *KelownaNow.com*

### **Recent Presentations**

- Feb. 1        "Okanagan Water" webinar to the BC Institute of Agrologists (BCIA) – Nelson Jatel
- Feb. 10        "Invasive species" to Let's Talk Science – James Littlely
- Feb. 12        "Invasive mussels" to Westbank First Nation – James Littlely and Anna Warwick Sears
- Feb. 15        "Fire, Water, Weeds and Everything in Between," BCIA AGM Panel Discussion – Nelson Jatel
- Feb. 28        "An update on Okanagan water issues" to Economic Development Commission board – James Littlely and Anna Warwick Sears

### **Upcoming Presentations**

- April 22        "Water Conservation in the Okanagan" to Kelowna Yacht Club – Corinne Jackson
- May 16        "River Film screening and water conservation" to First Things First Okanagan – Anna Warwick Sears and Corinne Jackson



# Decoding Drought Engagement Sessions

## Keremeos

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**

Victory Hall

427 Crowsnest Highway, Keremeos, B.C.

## Oliver

**Friday, February 23, 2024, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**

Oliver Recreation Centre

6359 Park Drive, Oliver, B.C.

## Cawston

**Thursday, March 7, 2024, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**

Cawston Community Hall

2119 Main St, Cawston, B.C.

## Princeton

**Tuesday, March 12, 2024, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**

Princeton Legion

170 Bridge St, Princeton, B.C.

AGRICULTURAL DROUGHT SUPPORTS | 2024 CONDITIONS |  
DISCUSSION | SCIENCE | DROUGHT RESPONSE ACTIONS



For more information, contact Shelley Fiorito, RDOS Project  
Coordinator at 250-490-4110



# Decoding Drought Management Engagement Sessions

## Westwold, B.C.

**Tuesday, February 27, 2024, from 6:00pm to 8:00 pm**

Westwold Hall, HWY 97, Westwold Hall, Thompson-Nicola, B.C.

## Salmon Arm/Falkland, B.C.

**Wednesday, February 28, 2024, from 6:00pm to 8:00 pm**

Silver Creek Hall, 3048 Hornsberger Road, Salmon Arm, B.C.

## Lake Country, B.C.

**Saturday, March 9, 2024, from 9:30am to 11:30 am**

Beasley Hall, 3450 Woodsdale Road, Lake Country, B.C.

## Lumby, B.C.

**Thursday, April 11, 2024, from 6:00pm to 8:00 pm**

White Valley Community Hall, 2250 Shields Avenue, Lumby, B.C.

## Topics

**AGRICULTURAL DROUGHT SUPPORTS | 2024 CONDITIONS  
DISCUSSION | SCIENCE | DROUGHT RESPONSE ACTIONS**

For information, contact:

**[events02@vgnresources.ca](mailto:events02@vgnresources.ca) or call 1-877-906-1131**

Booking support provided by VGN Resources Group. Logistical support provided by VGN Resources Group and other project partners

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/decoding-drought-management-engagement-session-north-okanagan-region-tickets-836121009447?aff=oddtcreator>



# Resources for Agricultural Water Users in the Okanagan

**Find tools and information about increasing your water-use efficiency and responding to drought, developed especially for you.**

Good water management is the first step in ensuring a lasting water supply in your area throughout the growing season. Applying the right amount of water at the right time will help maximize your crop yield.

## Benefits of Good Water Management



### For your Farm:

- ◆ Reduce unnecessary water use by knowing your crops irrigation requirements and **save water to be used later in the irrigation season.**
- ◆ **Reduce leaching of nutrients** so that they remain available for your plants throughout the growing season.
- ◆ **Maximize crop yield** and reduce the risk of disease and pests.



### For the Environment:

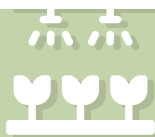
- ◆ **Save water for other needs** such as fish, wildlife and domestic users.
- ◆ **Reduce surface water contamination** through runoff as a result of over-irrigation.
- ◆ **Reduce leaching of nutrients** into groundwater.



**Click here to find information on...**

#### Irrigation System Efficiency

- Learn how to minimize water loss
- Assess and improve your irrigation system
- Agricultural Irrigation Scheduling Calculator



#### Responding to Drought

- Local vs provincial drought responses
- Drought management resources by commodity



#### Resources by Commodity

- Orchards
- Vineyards
- Forage crops
- Livestock
- General water saving tips



#### Frequently Asked Questions





# World Water Day

📍 2 PM | March 22, 2024  
Kelowna City Park, near  
the Basketball Courts

[REGISTER  
NOW ON  
OUR  
WEBSITE](#)

## putaʔəntm iʔ siwʔkʷ Honouring the Water

The Syilx Nation would like to invite you to join us for a ceremony to honour and pray for siwʔkʷ (water) in the territory.

- Ceremony will commence at 2 pm. Please arrive 15 mins prior to the ceremony.
- Dress accordingly for the weather as the ceremony will proceed through all conditions.
- Please bring a lawn chair to sit on if needed.
- Please bring 250ml mason jar with lid.
- **Register on our website if you wish to join us!**

### For more information:

Raven Mikuletic, Communications Coordinator

[rmikuletic@syilx.org](mailto:rmikuletic@syilx.org)

250-707-0095 ext. 121

[www.okanagannation.com](http://www.okanagannation.com)

Join us in celebrating World Water Day by taking part and learning how the Syilx Nation honours siwʔkʷ as a living relative and how we can all be səxʷtxətnitkʷ (water protectors).

**CEREMONY IS FREE AND REGISTRATION IS OPEN TO EVERYONE.**





February 6, 2024

Honourable Diane Lebouthillier  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
200 Kent St Station 15N100  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6

Via e-mail: [DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Re: Prevention of Invasive Mussel Introduction to B.C.**

way',

On behalf of Westbank First Nation, Chief & Council supports Okanagan Basin Water Board and their ongoing concerns about the potential introductions of invasive mussels into Okanagan lakes and streams. After spending decades restoring these systems and their salmon, an infestation would be devastating and undermine a great deal of recovery work. We call on the B.C. and federal government to defend water throughout our traditional syilx / Okanagan territory through the following calls to action.

**Actions to be taken immediately by the Province of B.C.:**

1. Introduce a temporary moratorium on out-of-province watercraft entering B.C., until the full status of the infestation in the Columbia Basin is assessed, and until the effectiveness of the chemical and biocontrol treatments in Idaho is known.
2. Introduce "pull-the-plug" legislation to be in effect prior to the 2024 boating season, and before the moratorium is lifted, requiring all watercraft owners to remove drain plugs prior to vessels being transported on public roads.
3. Ask Canada's Minister for Public Safety to issue direction for all watercraft entering Canada at all border crossings, from Saskatchewan to B.C., to be inspected prior to allowing entry.
4. Commit funding to the Invasive Mussel Defence Program of no less than \$4 million per year (all sources), indexed to inflation for at least 10 years going forward.

Following these immediate actions, we call on the province to fill the following gaps in the current inspection and prevention system, and in planning for response and long-term mitigation:

5. Enhance funding to recruit and retain B.C. Conservation Officers, Auxiliary Conservation Officers, and other Invasive Mussel Defence Program staff as needed to 2019 levels (64 inspectors).
6. Update the provincial Early Detection, Rapid Response plan, including a round of consultation with partner organizations prior to finalization.

7. Lead a planning process to create long-term response, containment, and control plans in regions at high risk of introduction and vulnerable to infestation, including the Okanagan, Shuswap, and Kootenay Regions.
8. Promote infrastructure vulnerability assessments by utilities, local jurisdictions, and private entities.

Finally, we call on the province to reconsider our previous call to action to require inspection for all watercraft entering B.C., both at federal and provincial borders.

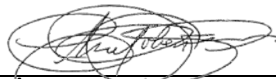
**Actions to be taken immediately by the Government of Canada:**

1. We ask that the Minister of Public Safety issue immediate direction to all Canada Border Service Agency locations between Saskatchewan and the Pacific that all watercraft entering Canada in that region be inspected for invasive mussels following provincial protocols.
2. We have asked the Government of B.C. to issue a temporary moratorium on out-of-province boats until the full extent of the infestation is known, and until the success of chemical treatments in Idaho is determined. And so, we also ask that the federal government use its authority to support any such temporary moratorium.


We hope that you respond appropriately to these calls to action, as they are crucial to the longevity and prosperity of our Okanagan water systems and habitats.

Sincerely,

**WESTBANK FIRST NATION CHIEF & COUNCIL**



ȳilmixʷm Robert Louie



səxʷkʷinaʔmam Andrea Alexander



səxʷkʷinaʔmam Jordan Coble



səxʷkʷinaʔmam Angie Derrickson



səxʷkʷinaʔmam Sara Tronson

February 13, 2024

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 7.2

The Hon. Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Transport, Canada [pablo.rodriguez@parl.gc.ca](mailto:pablo.rodriguez@parl.gc.ca)  
The Hon. Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, B.C.  
[WLRs.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:WLRs.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Cullen:

Chambers of Commerce throughout the Thompson Okanagan today express concern around the threat of invasive mussels to our freshwater lakes and river system in British Columbia. Together, we call for an immediate temporary moratorium on out-of-province watercraft to prevent the introduction of invasive mussels into B.C. In doing so, we join the Okanagan Basin Water Board and some of our tourism associations.

We have learned that the federal government may be cutting funds to the mussel inspection program in B.C. Invasive mussels were verified in 2023 in Idaho, an 11-hour drive from B.C.'s borders. While B.C. provincial staff and Conservation Officers do good work through the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP), serious gaps remain. Only a complete moratorium prior to establishing and maintaining round-the-clock monitoring will protect the fresh waters of our still mussel-free province from this invasive scourge.

The IMDP budget has been severely cut in recent years, representing a significant risk to much of the province, including the Thompson Okanagan.

Between May and December 2023, the IMDP intercepted 155 watercraft entering B.C. that were identified as high-risk for the mussels; 14 were confirmed to be carrying the mussels. At least a third of these were heading to the Okanagan-Thompson-Nicola.

We support the OBWB's following four requested actions to be taken by the Province of B.C.:

1. Introduce a temporary moratorium on out-of-province watercraft entering B.C.
2. Introduce "pull-the-plug" (on bilgewater) legislation to be in effect prior to the 2024 boating season
3. Ask Canada's Minister for Public Safety to issue direction for all watercraft entering Canada at all border crossings to be inspected prior to allowing entry.
4. Commit funding to the Invasive Mussel Defence Program of no less than \$4 million per year

We further support four "fill the gaps" actions to follow those above:

1. Enhance funding to recruit and retain Invasive Mussel Defence Program staff to 2019 levels
2. Update the provincial Early Detection, Rapid Response plan



**Kelowna Chamber of Commerce**  
544 Harvey Ave  
Kelowna BC, V1Y 6C9

250 861 3627  
[hello@kelownachamber.org](mailto:hello@kelownachamber.org)  
[kelownachamber.org](http://kelownachamber.org)



*Growing the people who power the Okanagan.*

3. Lead a planning process to create long-term response, containment, and control
4. Promote vulnerability assessments by utilities, local jurisdictions, and private entities

B.C.'s IMDP is currently under the jurisdiction of the B.C. Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship.

The stunning natural beauty of Okanagan Lake provides a visual pleasure for the senses and a source of water to surrounding populations. Multiple freshwater bodies of water throughout the Thompson Okanagan from the border to the Shuswap require the protection of elected officials and residents. This is our obligation to the future.

We call on you both to take immediate action on the requests we are making today.

Dan Price, Chair  
Kelowna Chamber of Commerce

Bryan Fitzpatrick, President  
Greater Westside Board of Trade

Nicole Clark, President  
Penticton & Wine Country Chamber of Commerce

Curtis Urlacher, President  
Peachland Chamber of Commerce

Cathy Piva, President  
Kamloops & District Chamber of Commerce

Ryan Duffy, President  
South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce



**Kelowna Chamber of Commerce**  
544 Harvey Ave  
Kelowna BC, V1Y 6C9

Page 2 of 3  
250 861 3627  
hello@kelownachamber.org  
**kelownachamber.org**

Government of Canada

Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc

[ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@ps-sp.gc.ca](mailto:ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@ps-sp.gc.ca)

Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard Diane Lebouthillier [DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Members of Parliament Dan Albas [dan.albas@parl.gc.ca](mailto:dan.albas@parl.gc.ca), Tracy Gray [Tracy.Gray@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Tracy.Gray@parl.gc.ca), Richard Cannings [richard.cannings@parl.gc.ca](mailto:richard.cannings@parl.gc.ca), Mel Arnold [mel.arnold@parl.gc.ca](mailto:mel.arnold@parl.gc.ca)

Province of B.C.

Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy George Heyman [ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation Josie Osborne [josie.osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:josie.osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture MLA Kelly Greene [Kelly.Greene.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Kelly.Greene.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Parliamentary Secretary for Watershed Restoration MLA Fin Donnelly [fin.donnelly.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:fin.donnelly.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

MLAs Dan Ashton [Dan.Ashton.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Dan.Ashton.MLA@leg.bc.ca), Ben Stewart [Ben.Stewart.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Ben.Stewart.MLA@leg.bc.ca), Renee Merrifield [Renee.Merrifield.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Renee.Merrifield.MLA@leg.bc.ca), Norm Letnick [Norm.Letnick.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Norm.Letnick.MLA@leg.bc.ca), Harwinder Sandhu [harwinder.sandhu.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:harwinder.sandhu.MLA@leg.bc.ca), Greg Kylo [Greg.Kylo.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Greg.Kylo.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Municipal Governments

Mayor Tom Dyas, Kelowna [tdyas@kelowna.ca](mailto:tdyas@kelowna.ca)

Mayor Gord Milsom, West Kelowna [gord.milsom@westkelownacity.ca](mailto:gord.milsom@westkelownacity.ca)

Mayor Victor Cumming, Vernon [mayor@vernon.ca](mailto:mayor@vernon.ca)

Mayor Blair Ireland, Lake Country [ireland@lakecountry.bc.ca](mailto:ireland@lakecountry.bc.ca)

Mayor Julius Bloomfield, Penticton [julius.bloomfield@penticton.ca](mailto:julius.bloomfield@penticton.ca)

Mayor Doug Holmes, Summerland [dholmes@summerland.ca](mailto:dholmes@summerland.ca)

Mayor Patrick Van Minsel, Peachland [mayorvanminsel@peachland.ca](mailto:mayorvanminsel@peachland.ca)

Mayor Sue McKortoff, Osoyoos [smckortoff@osoyoos.ca](mailto:smckortoff@osoyoos.ca)

Sylix Territory

Robert Louie, Chief, Westbank First Nation [rlouie@wfn.ca](mailto:rlouie@wfn.ca)

Regional Districts

Loyal Wooldridge, Chair, Central Okanagan Regional District [lwooldridge@kelowna.ca](mailto:lwooldridge@kelowna.ca)

Barbara Roden, Chair, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, [broden@ashcroftbc.ca](mailto:broden@ashcroftbc.ca)

Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District, Mark Pendergraft, Chair [info@rdos.bc.ca](mailto:info@rdos.bc.ca)

North Okanagan Regional District, Shirley Fowler, Chair [sfowler@cityoffarmstrong.bc.ca](mailto:sfowler@cityoffarmstrong.bc.ca)

Lisanne Ballantyne, CEO, Tourism Kelowna [lisanne@tourismkelowna.com](mailto:lisanne@tourismkelowna.com)

Ellen Walker-Matthews, CEO, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association [ceo@totabc.com](mailto:ceo@totabc.com)

Derek Gratz, Chair, Kelowna Chamber Policy Advisory Committee; Associate Director, UBC University-Industry Liaison [derek.gratz@ubc.ca](mailto:derek.gratz@ubc.ca)

Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director, Okanagan Basin Water Board [anna.warwick.sears@obwb.ca](mailto:anna.warwick.sears@obwb.ca)



**District of Sicamous**

446 Main Street  
PO Box 219  
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February 16, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
[pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)

The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, M.P.  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
[DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfp-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfp-mpo.gc.ca)

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, M.P.  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
[ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca](mailto:ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca)

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, M.P.  
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs  
[ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@ps-sp.gc.ca](mailto:ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@ps-sp.gc.ca)

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting

March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 7.3

**Re: Funding for B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defence Program**

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Dear Ministers,

District of Sicamous council is seriously concerned to hear that the federal funding for British Columbia's Invasive Mussel Defence Program could be reduced or cancelled this year.

Recently, the presence of quagga mussels was confirmed in Snake River, Idaho, which is less than a one day drive to the B.C. and Alberta borders. This issue needs to be taken seriously by all levels of government.

Council urges the federal government to continue supporting measures that promote awareness and support the prevention of invasive species as the threat of zebra and quagga mussels continues to increase.

Should invasive mussels reach B.C. waters, it is expected to cost the Province more than \$129 million annually to manage the negative impacts. This infestation will be nearly impossible to eradicate once established in our waterways and will have detrimental impacts for our ecosystems, infrastructure and economies. Damage to sensitive freshwater ecosystems, obstructed water intake channels and spoiled beaches would take years to restore.

Council echoes the call for immediate, long-term federal funding assistance for B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defence Program.

Yours sincerely,

Mayor Colleen Anderson  
**DISTRICT OF SICAMOUS**

cc: The Honourable David Eby, M.L.A. Premier of British Columbia  
Clifford Small, M.P., Shadow Minister for Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
G rard Deltell, M.P., Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change  
Raquel Dancho, M.P., Shadow Minister for Public Safety  
Mel Arnold, M.P. (North-Okanagan Shuswap)  
Greg Kylo, M.L.A. (Shuswap)  
Columbia Shuswap Regional District Board  
Okanagan Basin Water Board

Encl: Okanagan Basin Water Board Letter (January 18, 2024)



Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2  
[pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)

January 18, 2024

Honourable Diane Lebouthillier  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
200 Kent St Station 15N100  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6  
[DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Honourable Steven Guilbeault  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Fontaine Building 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
200 Sacré-Coeur Blvd  
Gatineau QC K1A 0H3  
[ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca](mailto:ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca)

Honourable Dominic LeBlanc  
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs  
269 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P8  
[ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@ps-sp.gc.ca](mailto:ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@ps-sp.gc.ca)

**Re: CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PREVENT INVASIVE MUSSEL INTRODUCTION TO B.C.**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Ministers,

It has come to our attention that federal funding to support B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defence Program may be reduced or cancelled this year, and further, that other funding partners are citing a lack of federal leadership as justification to cancel or reduce their funding. This is just as the threat of invasive mussels has dramatically increased, with a confirmed infestation in the transboundary Columbia Basin. In addition to the actions we called for in [our letter](#), dated Oct. 18, 2023 and which included a temporary moratorium on boats coming into B.C., we are calling for immediate, long-term federal funding assistance for the Province of B.C. to support invasive zebra and quagga mussels prevention efforts. The Government of Canada should provide funds to at least match provincial government efforts across the West, or plan for significant higher management costs in the near future.

In September, Idaho announced that quagga mussels had been found in the state's Snake River, a tributary of the Columbia River, less than a day's drive to the border of B.C. and Alberta. Idaho's pre-planned rapid response was to spread more than 116,000 litres of toxic copper chelate into Snake River, killing almost





seven tonnes of fish, and poisoning a 26 km stretch of the river. Wholesale killing of fish, invertebrates, amphibians, and plants in the river was considered better than letting these mussels take hold. We won't know until this coming spring if the treatment has worked. Also in September, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) declared zebra mussels were discovered in New Brunswick. And then in November, Parks Canada declared zebra mussels had spread another 100km west to Clear Lake in Manitoba's Riding Mountain National Park.

DFO has a mandate to sustainably manage fisheries, work with Indigenous communities to enable their continued prosperity from fish, ensure aquatic ecosystems are protected from negative impacts, and protect the environment when emergencies arise. If invasive mussels arrive in B.C., they will severely impact Pacific salmon by depleting the food web in their spawning and rearing habitats in the Fraser and Columbia River systems. First Nations in B.C. have spent decades restoring these systems and their salmon populations, and an infestation will undermine the recovery of these fisheries. Knock-on effects will be seen in marine environments, where reductions in Pacific salmon populations will reduce a key food source for Orcas and other marine species. Protecting B.C.'s freshwaters from invasive mussels is squarely within the mandate of DFO.

The Canada Border Services Agency also has a responsibility to enforce the prohibition against importation of invasive mussels under the federal Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations. While we applaud the work of border service officers to intercept infested watercraft at many land crossings, CBSA is not fulfilling its responsibility for enforcement. Instead, it relies on provincial inspectors to follow up and decontaminate high-risk watercraft once they are identified.

The new Canada Water Agency has a mandate to improve freshwater management in Canada by providing leadership, effective federal collaboration, and improved coordination and collaboration with provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples to proactively address national and regional transboundary freshwater challenges and opportunities. Invasive mussels represent one of the biggest national and regional transboundary threats, yet none of the [\\$750 million](#) allocated to the Canada Water Agency addresses this threat. The Great Lakes region alone will receive more than \$420 million in funding over 10 years to deal with issues such as algae blooms which have been exacerbated by invasive mussels. It would take only \$4 million/year allocated to B.C. invasive mussel inspections to protect the Canadian Columbia Basin, the Fraser Basin, Peace Region, and other major western river systems. The Province of B.C. already allocates over \$1 million/year to this program, but without federal and other partner funding, these efforts will likely fail.

In addition to the threat to Pacific salmon, these mussels are known to stimulate toxic algae blooms, killing migratory birds and contaminating drinking water. They hurt local economies, requiring ongoing maintenance to remove them from in-water infrastructure such as bridges and docks, as well as water systems used to deliver water for agriculture, domestic, industrial, and commercial use. And of course, they degrade the quality of the shoreline environment for human enjoyment.

We view it as unacceptable and unjustifiable, given all the resources and responsibilities of the federal government and your departments, that no federal funding has been allocated to protect freshwater ecosystems from the extreme threat of invasive mussels in Western Canada. Protecting the west from these



mussels is of national importance, and it will take federal leadership to meet this inter-provincial and transboundary threat.

Understanding that protection of freshwater ecosystems and prevention of invasive species falls within federal mandates, regulations, and laws, we hope your departments will work together to find the resources to properly support western provinces in this important work. This is truly a case where a small investment now will prevent massive costs for years to come.

Yours truly,

Sue McKortoff, Chair  
Okanagan Basin Water Board

CC:

- British Columbia MPs
- British Columbia MLAs
- British Columbia Assembly of First Nations
- Okanagan Nation Alliance, Chiefs Executive Council
- Okanagan First Nations Chiefs and Councils
- B.C. Local Government Chairs and Mayors
- Pacific NorthWest Economic Region: Matt Morrison, Chief Executive Officer
- Invasive Species Council of B.C.: Gail Wallin, Executive Director
- B.C. Chambers of Commerce
- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
- Union of BC Municipalities
- Shuswap Watershed Council
- Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society

February 20, 2024

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 7.4

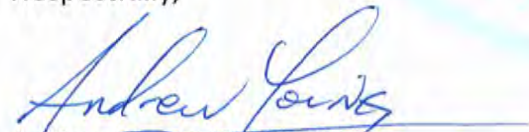
To whom it may concern:

A letter from the Okanagan Basin Water Board was received on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 and the following resolution was adopted.

***"BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the District of Invermere endorses the letter from the Okanagan Basin Water Board outlining the concerns of the lack of funding to assist with B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defence Program to support invasive zebra and quagga mussel prevention efforts."*

If you have any questions concerning this letter of support, please contact me directly at [cao@invermere.net](mailto:cao@invermere.net).

Respectfully,



Andrew Young MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer  
District of Invermere

cc: Okanagan Basin Water Board

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard  
Ottawa, ON  
Sent by e-mail to [DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc  
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Ottawa, ON  
Sent by e-mail to [IGA.Minister-Ministre.AIG@pco-bcp.gc.ca](mailto:IGA.Minister-Ministre.AIG@pco-bcp.gc.ca)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez  
Minister of Transport  
Ottawa, ON  
Sent by e-mail to [TC.MinisterofTransport-MinistredesTransports.TC@tc.gc.ca](mailto:TC.MinisterofTransport-MinistredesTransports.TC@tc.gc.ca)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Ottawa, ON  
Sent by e-mail to [ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca](mailto:ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca)

22 February 2024

**Re: Renewed call for immediate action to prevent invasive mussel introduction to British Columbia**

Dear Ministers,

We are writing to renew our calls to action conveyed to you in our [November 28<sup>th</sup> 2023 letter](#) and to express support for a similar letter sent to you by the [Okanagan Basin Water Board on January 18<sup>th</sup> 2024](#) regarding urgent, immediate action needed by the Federal Government to prevent the spread of invasive Zebra and Quagga mussels into British Columbia. We have not yet received a reply to our letter. On February 14<sup>th</sup> 2024, the [Government of Canada announced investments](#) for the prevention of invasive Zebra and Quagga mussels in the West. While these are welcome announcements – including \$540,000 for the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation over 2023-2025 and \$90,000 for two new decontamination trailers for the Province of BC – we remain deeply concerned that there are still significant gaps in the British Columbia Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP).

Invasive mussels are touted as one of the most destructive invasive species ever to have invaded North American fresh waters<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, a new report from the Province of BC<sup>2</sup> estimates an annual cost

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<sup>1</sup> 2019 Spring Reports of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the Parliament of Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Potential Economic Impact of Zebra and Quagga Mussels in BC. May 2023. Available online:  
[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/invasive-species/invasive-mussels/zqm\\_economic\\_report\\_2023\\_05\\_26\\_final.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/invasive-species/invasive-mussels/zqm_economic_report_2023_05_26_final.pdf).



of \$64 – 129 million in BC to deal with invasive mussel infestations. The ecological and economic impacts will be staggering for British Columbia. Greater priority must be given to prevention.

The BC IMDP includes the operation of watercraft inspection stations which are absolutely critical to prevent the spread of invasive mussels to BC because watercraft are the primary vector. More funding specifically allocated to watercraft inspection stations will better protect BC from invasive mussels.

Early detection monitoring has indicated that BC waters remain free of invasive mussels. However, that could change in a matter of a day or two if a traveller with infested watercraft or gear were to arrive in BC without having been inspected and launch into a lake, thus starting a new, irreversible infestation of mussels. This scenario is entirely plausible since watercraft inspection stations are not open 365 days a year, nor are they located on all entry-points to BC, and invasive mussels are known to survive out-of-water for up to 30 days. An infested watercraft could depart Manitoba, Ontario, Idaho or another infested jurisdiction today and be in BC, unchecked, tomorrow.

Ministers, we are calling for immediate, long-term federal funding assistance for the Province of BC to support invasive mussel prevention. We are urging you to work with the BC Ministry of Water, Land & Resource Stewardship and the BC Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy to provide federal funding for the BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program such that permanent watercraft inspection stations can be established at all entry-points into BC and be open 24 hours/day and 365 days/year. This will address significant gaps in the program and prevent the entry of an unchecked watercraft into BC.

We are also re-iterating our call-to-action in our November 28<sup>th</sup> letter asking that you issue immediate direction to all Canada Border Service Agency locations in Western Canada that all watercraft entering Canada in that region be inspected for invasive mussels following Provincial protocols.

Ministers, given the proximity of invasive mussels to BC, the devastating and costly impacts of a new infestation, and a lack of sufficient prevention measures, the time to act is now. Your departments have the mandate to protect fresh water, prevent invasive species, and manage sustainable fisheries. We are urging the Government of Canada to make greater investments in watercraft inspection to defend BC's waters against invasive mussels. If nothing is done, it is only a matter of time until we face an irreversible, ecologically disruptive and economically crippling invasion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Simpson'.

Jay Simpson  
Chair, Shuswap Watershed Council  
Director, Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area 'F' North Shuswap  
250 517-9578 | [jsimpson@csrd.bc.ca](mailto:jsimpson@csrd.bc.ca)





CC:

- Shuswap / Okanagan / Thompson / Kootenay / Columbia MPs: Mel Arnold, Dan Albas, Frank Caputo, Tracy Gray, Rob Morrison, Richard Cannings
- Shuswap MLA: Greg Kylo
- Columbia Shuswap Regional District Chair: Kevin Flynn
- Thompson-Nicola Regional District Chair: Barbara Roden
- Regional District of North Okanagan Chair: Kevin Acton
- Secwepemc Kukpi7s: Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief (Adams Lake Indian Band), James Tomma (Skwlax te Secwepemculecw), Irvine Wai (Neskonlith), and Megan Nicholas, Executive Secretary (Splatsin te Secwepemc)
- Shuswap Mayors: Alan Harrison (Salmon Arm), Colleen Anderson (Sicamous), David Lepsoe (Chase)
- Okanagan Basin Water Board Chair: Blair Ireland
- Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society
- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
- Shuswap Chambers of Commerce: Salmon Arm, Sicamous, South Shuswap, North Shuswap
- Shuswap Waterfront Owners Association.



## About the Shuswap Watershed Council

The Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC) was established in 2014 as a watershed-based partnership of several organizations with an interest or responsibility for protecting water quality. There are up to 22 members that represent three regional districts, two municipalities, the Secwepemc Nation, three Provincial government agencies, and Shuswap communities. The SWC is a collaborative, non-regulatory group that focuses on strategic initiatives to protect, maintain, and enhance water quality and promote safe recreation in the Shuswap. The SWC works alongside organizations that have regulatory roles in managing the Shuswap watershed, complementing their work and carefully avoiding duplication.



Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 5, 2024  
Agenda No: 7.6

**FEB 22 2024**

Sue McKortoff  
Chair  
Okanagan Basin Water Board  
smckortoff@osoyoos.ca

Dear Sue McKortoff:

On behalf of the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I am responding to your letter of January 18, 2024, concerning funding to address invasive mussels in British Columbia.

The matter you raise falls under the purview of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, to which I note your letter is also addressed.

Please accept my best regards.

Sincerely,

Lisa St-Amour  
Acting Manager  
Departmental Correspondence Unit

### **Federal Funding for B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defence Program**

WHEREAS invasive mussels represent one of the biggest national and regional transboundary threats to our waterways;

AND WHEREAS the threat of invasive mussels has dramatically increased with Idaho announcing quagga mussels were detected in the Snake River, a tributary of the Columbia River and less than a day's drive to the B.C. and Alberta borders;

AND WHEREAS none of the \$750 million allocated to the Canada Water Agency addresses this threat or supports existing gaps in B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defence Program, including the need for additional watercraft inspection stations;

AND WHEREAS the Province of B.C. allocates over \$1 million a year to the Invasive Mussel Defence Program, and it would only take \$4 million a year to protect the Canadian Columbia Basin, the Fraser Basin, Peace Region and other major western river systems;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities and Federation of Canadian Municipalities lobby the Government of Canada to protect our waterways by allocating and matching the provincial funding for B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defence Program.

## DRAFT RESOLUTION

Re: Invasive Quagga and Zebra Mussels in the Okanagan Valley

WHEREAS Okanagan Lake is at very high risk for infestation of invasive mussels, particularly following the discovery of quagga mussels in a tributary of the Columbia River in Idaho;

AND WHEREAS an infestation of invasive mussels would cause significant economic and environmental losses, with economic losses alone estimated at \$64 million to \$129 million annually across the Province;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province of British Columbia take action on the Okanagan Basin Water Board's recommendations to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship for invasive mussel prevention, dated September 25, 2023, including requesting the federal government enhance inspections, increasing funding and staffing for the Invasive Mussel Defence Program, introducing "pull-the-plug" legislation, and updating the provincial Early Detection, Rapid Response plan;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province of British Columbia work with the federal government to increase long-term funding and support to prevent invasive mussels from entering waterways in British Columbia.

### BACKGROUND:

In September 2023, following news of quagga mussels being found in Idaho within an 11-hour drive of Osoyoos, the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) provided recommendations to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship for mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery related to the high risk of invasive mussel infestation in the Okanagan watershed. These recommendations are to:

1. Ask the federal Minister of Public Safety to have the Canada Border Services Agency stop and inspect ALL watercraft coming to B.C. from the U.S., consistently at ALL border crossings from Saskatchewan to B.C.
2. Consider a temporary moratorium on out-of-province boats until the full status of the infestation of the Columbia Basin is assessed.
3. Commit funding of at least \$4 million per year for the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP), indexed to inflation, for at least 10 years.
4. Enhance funding to recruit and retain B.C. Conservation Officers, Auxiliary Conservation Officers, and other IMDP staff as needed to 2019 levels (64 inspectors).
5. Introduce "pull-the-plug" legislation to be in effect prior to the 2024 boating season.
6. Promote vulnerability assessments by utilities, local jurisdictions, and private entities.
7. Update the provincial Early Detection, Rapid Response plan, including a round of consultation with partner organizations prior to finalization.



8. Lead a planning process to create long-term response, containment, and control plans in regions at high risk of introduction and vulnerable to infestation, including the Okanagan, Shuswap, and Kootenay Regions.

Long-term implications of and costs associated with invasive mussel infestations are outlined in the Ministry's report from May 2023: [Potential Economic Impact of Zebra and Quagga Mussels in B.C.](#)

Date: February 26, 2024