

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

DATE: Tuesday, May 7, 2024

TIME: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

PLACE: Kelowna Yacht Club
1370 Water St #1, Kelowna, B.C.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1.1 Acknowledgement of First Nations Traditional Territory

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

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 April 2, 2024 held at the Regional District of North Okanagan (page 1)

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Executive Director Report (page 6)

5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report (page 8)

5.3 Water Science Specialist Report (page 11)

5.4 Communications Director Report (page 14)

6. CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 Letter from Conservative Party of Canada MPs, cc'd to OBWB, re: invasive mussels (page 16)

6.2 Letter from Regional District Central Okanagan, cc'd to OBWB, re: invasive mussels (page 19)

7. NEXT MEETING

7.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will on Tuesday, June 4, 2024 at 10 a.m. at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

8. 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 an online meeting, please contact our Communications Director Corinne Jackson at 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 APRIL 2, 2024, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN
9848 ABERDEEN RD., COLDSTREAM, B.C.**

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 Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

REGRETS

Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
---------------------	--------------------------------

GUESTS

Kandis Lipsett	B.C. Environmental Emergency Program
----------------	--------------------------------------

STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
James Littley	Deputy Administrator
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

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

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

6.5.1 Late item added to the Communications Director Report.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 2, 2024 be approved as amended."

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 5, 2024, held online.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on March 5, 2024, held online, be approved.”

CARRIED

5. DELEGATION

Kandis Lipsett, Senior Environmental Emergency Response Officer with B.C. Environmental Emergency Program (EEP), presented to the board in response to director inquiries about the Nov. 17, 2023 Coquihalla Connector truck fire.

Ms. Lipsett presented on the provincial EEP, including new program regulations, legislative authority, and the province’s response model to environmental spills.

Following the presentation, directors provided feedback on local perspectives following environmental spill incidents.

Ms. Lipsett was thanked for her presentation and she exited the meeting.

6. STAFF REPORTS

6.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears outlined a new staff service recognition program. Since this was the OBWB’s first formal recognition, it was determined that long-term employees would be acknowledged for the actual length of service and, from hereon, employees would be recognized on a regular basis as they reached various milestones. Certificates were then handed out to employees Pat Field (32 years), Anna Warwick Sears (17 years), Nelson Jatel (16 years), Corinne Jackson (14 years), James Littlely (13 years), Dave Hoogendoorn (8 years), and Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo (5 years).

The board also heard that Dr. Sears would be attending the International Joint Commission’s semi-annual meeting in Washington D.C., April 8-11 as a representative to its International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control. One of the topics of discussion will be the potential transition of the Osoyoos board into a Watershed Board with a more inclusive mandate. There will also be presentations from other IJC boards, and a workshop on Indigenous collaboration. Dr. Sears will be a panelist at a Women in International Water Diplomacy workshop sponsored by the IJC.

Dr. Sears also announced that she would be presenting to the House of Commons’ Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on April 18 as part of a panel of witnesses testifying about freshwater.

The board also heard about the newly released provincial Flood Strategy.

Finally, Dr. Sears provided the board with an update on Okanagan snowpacks, noting that current snow levels are below the 25th percentile for their historical records. While the public may notice lake levels are still high, Dr. Sears pointed out that this is due to provincial dam operators holding back water in anticipation of drought conditions.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated March 27, 2024, be received.”

CARRIED

6.2 Deputy Administrator Report

Mr. Littlely provided a summary of the March 8 inaugural Invasive Mussel Working Group meeting,

noting over 100 people attended from across the Interior, including First Nations, local government staff and electeds, provincial staff, marina operators, chambers, lakefront stratas, Rotary Club members, BC Wildlife Federation, invasive species societies and more. Feedback from the meeting was sombre but positive, with several groups highly engaged on actions for moving forward. Mr. Littley also noted the number of invites to present on the invasive mussel issue to local governments and other organizations in the last few months, suggesting growing interest in the topic.

Mr. Littley spoke to his recent attendance at the Western Aquatic Plant Management Society's annual conference in Nevada and discussions with manufacturers of a milfoil harvester and a lake aerator. Following the conference, he visited Lake Mead and the lake's permanent invasive mussel decontamination station.

"THAT the Deputy Administrator Report, dated March 27, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel reported that the March Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting was cancelled due to the Environmental Flows: Siwłk^w (Water) for All Conference held in Kelowna, March 13-15, adding that a summary report is being developed.

The next OWSC meeting will be held April 11 and include presentations from Ute Holweger and Meghan Sullivan from the Canada Water Agency.

As OWSC chair, Dir. Fyke provided a brief update on the various council committees and noted that the Building Ethical Space for Water Stewardship Committee (BESWSC) will be chaired by Sheena Spencer. This committee will explore collaborative water governance with the intention of laying the groundwork for meaningful collaboration with Indigenous governments. The main task of the BESWSC includes improving education and understanding around Indigenous issues and creating a resource kit for water in the Okanagan. Delivery of this resource kit is expected in the spring of 2025.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated March 27, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

6.4 Office and Grants Manager Report

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo provided a brief report to directors, noting the value of First Nations attendance and voices at the Environmental Flows Conference. Tamayo also noted the attendance of Grand Chief Stewart Phillip as keynote speaker and thanked all involved in making the conference a success.

"THAT the Office and Grants Manager's Report, dated March 26, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

6.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Burnett gave an update on Ms. Jackson's behalf, noting the partnerships listed in her memo for the upcoming 2024 Make Water Work campaign, encouraging outdoor water conservation spring through fall. It was noted that the Make Water Work Plant Collection is being revised to promote FireSmart plants that are also WaterWise.

The Don't Move A Mussel (DMM) wrap-up report was also provided. Highlights included the use of several tools to get the mussel message out, including billboards, ads on Facebook and Instagram, radio, ads on Castanet, YouTube, and on Google (i.e. if someone looked up key words such as water skiing, fishing, inspection stations, invasive mussels, they would be delivered a DMM ad). In all, the campaign delivered 6.1 million impressions (i.e. the number of times an ad has been seen).

Funds were also provided to the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society to do additional DMM outreach at boat launches, and partners like Kelowna Yacht Club, Dockside Marine and others helped promote the message on their social media and web pages.

The board heard that the campaign cost \$43,186 and with \$24,500 provided in-kind, OkWaterWise delivered a campaign worth \$67,751. And, as noted at the February board meeting, a mail-in survey of Okanagan residents conducted for the OBWB found: recognition for invasive mussels was at 86% (95% of boat owners), and 64% for the Don't Move A Mussel campaign (77% among boat owners). In reviewing the survey and previous ones in 2014 and 2020, awareness for Don't Move A Mussel has gone from 47% in 2014 (one year after the campaign launched) to 64% in 2023.

It was noted that Ms. Jackson has already had meetings with partners to discuss both the DMM and Make Water Work conservation campaign for 2024.

"THAT the Communications Director's Report, dated Feb. 28, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

7. IN-CAMERA

6.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(m) and 90(1)(c) of the Community Charter)

The board exited the in-camera session at 1:30 p.m. to rise and report.

8. RISE AND REPORT

"THAT the OBWB approve the 2024 grant funding as presented; AND THAT the OBWB rise and report the 2024 grant funding as approved."
CARRIED

9. CORRESPONDENCE

"THAT the letters from District of Coldstream to federal government, cc'd to OBWB regarding invasive mussels, and that the letter from B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to the OBWB regarding the Water Board's invasive mussel vulnerability guide be received."

CARRIED

10. NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be an abbreviated meeting on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 9 a.m. at the Kelowna Yacht Club, followed by a joint Board-Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting.

11. ADJOURNMENT

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 2, 2024 be adjourned at 1:35 p.m."
CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
May 7, 2024
Agenda No: 5.1

To: OBWB Directors
From: Anna Warwick Sears
Date: April 30, 2024
Subject: **Executive Director Report**

Joint Board/Council Meeting

The OBWB's regular meeting will be shorter than normal this month, to give more time for the annual joint meeting of the OBWB and the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council. I have asked staff to limit their reports, and the board will receive full reports at the June 4th meeting.

Annual Audit

Our auditors are completing the 2024 OBWB audit. Their report will be presented at next month's board meeting, held in Penticton.

Watershed Security Fund letter

In 2023, the Province of B.C. established a Watershed Security Fund ([website link here](#)), investing an initial \$100 million. This fund is structured like an endowment, where the monies are invested, and revenue from it is distributed to watershed projects around B.C. At its current investment level, the fund is only expected to generate \$3 million - \$5 million a year, which is far short of what is needed for restoration and maintenance of our primary water source areas. I recommend that the OBWB send a letter to B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship Nathan Cullen, reminding him of the high costs and the needs of Okanagan communities, and urge the government to either increase the endowment or create an alternative funding source.

International Joint Commission Semi-Annual Meeting

From April 8 – 11, I attended the semi-annual meeting of the International Joint Commission (IJC), as a member of the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control. There were presentations from IJC boards located along the entire U.S./Canada boundary, from B.C. to New Brunswick. Our Osoyoos Board reported on the current drought conditions, some of the most extreme in many years. In response to these conditions, Osoyoos Lake will be held a foot higher than normal, to store water to meet license obligations. The Commissioners had many questions about the drought. There was also interest in the fact that the Osoyoos Board has asked the Washington Department of Ecology, which operates Zosel Dam, to use our [Mussel Vulnerability Assessment Guide](#) as they complete a series of upgrades this year. The upgrades are an opportunity to make the dam more resilient to invasive mussels, should they arrive in the system. Other highlights were attending a workshop on Indigenous collaboration, and participating on the panel for Women in Water Diplomacy, along with women from the U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Security Council, and the North American Youth Parliament for Water.

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development – Freshwater study

On April 18, I had the opportunity to present (on Zoom) to a House of Commons committee studying Canadian freshwater issues. I chose to focus on two local priorities that need much more federal involvement:

- That the Government of Canada further invest in local government flood, drought, and wildfire mitigation efforts to prevent further damage from extreme weather; and
- That the Government of Canada provide equivalent resources for water and aquatic invasive species management to Western Canada as it does to Eastern Canada.

What these issues have in common, is that federal investment now will drastically reduce future costs and future suffering in the future. Although I was only given five minutes to present, there was an extended Q & A. The committee was made up of Liberal, Conservative, NDP, and Bloc Quebecois MPs which seemed to prompt some partisan comments. However, there were good questions and I had time to elaborate on the urgency of our issues. Our briefing note is posted [here](#), and the video of the presentation and Q & A will be posted on our YouTube channel.

Weather Report

Sandra Schira, our Water Science Specialist, will be giving the weather report for this month, which is to say, the drought report.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
May 7, 2024
Agenda No: 5.2

To: OBWB Directors
From: Nelson R. Jatel
Date: April 30, 2024
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC - technical advisory body to the OBWB)

April 14 Meeting Summary:

Our Council meeting covered the status of Okanagan's water resources and included a special virtual presentation by representatives from the newly established Canadian Water Agency (CWA).

Okanagan Water Supply Update:

A presentation provided an overview of the Okanagan water supply's current state and trends, addressing critical concerns and potential strategies for what is trending to be a dry year.

Introduction to the Canadian Water Agency:

We welcomed **Ute Holweger**, Senior Advisor for Water Strategies at CWA, and **Meghan Sullivan**, Acting Director of External and Indigenous Affairs for the CWA Transition Team. They outlined the agency's mission to enhance freshwater management across Canada through federal collaborations and partnerships with provinces, territories, and Indigenous communities.

The CWA, an evolving part of Environment and Climate Change Canada, champions federal freshwater initiatives. The 2023 budget outlined plans for its establishment as an independent entity. Key goals include improving freshwater outcomes, restoring and safeguarding significant water bodies, and enhancing water quality. Regional Freshwater Ecosystem Initiatives target nationally substantial areas, including the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg, and the Fraser River, but do not include the Okanagan or the greater Columbia Basin. The agency's headquarters are in Winnipeg and there are regional offices nationwide.

This session provided valuable insights into national efforts and local impacts concerning water management.

Upcoming Joint Board - Council Meeting – May 7th:

The annual joint Board and Council meeting offers an opportunity to discuss crucial issues in water management across the valley. Established in 2006, the Council provides technical advice to the Board.

The meeting offers an opportunity for the Council's four subcommittees (Supply and Demand, Policy, Water Quality and Health, and Building Ethical Space for Water Stewardship) to present on their activities and explain contemporary challenges. Key topics include managing invasive aquatic species,

improving sockeye salmon habitats, adapting to climate change and its impact on water supply, and enhancing environmental flows.

The meeting's agenda will foster dialogue between the Council and the Board, allowing us to align strategies, coordinate initiatives, and promote sustainable water management. This collaborative effort aims to address the Okanagan's immediate and long-term challenges, ensuring healthy water systems for the region's future.

Okanagan Water Supply Webinar

On April 12, we held an online session to discuss factors influencing the Okanagan water system, making it an essential event for water management, environmental sustainability, and community planning. Participants were provided insights into current and forecasted water conditions to help manage water resources considering current and future challenges, particularly in a potential drought year.

The webinar provided information on:

1. **Reservoir Levels:**

We heard the current state of reservoirs and future projections, highlighting their role in maintaining water availability. Reservoir levels were reported low to normal in the North and Central Okanagan.

2. **Snowpack Conditions:**

Presentations delved into the snowpack's impact on water availability, revealing an early melt due to unseasonably warm weather. An early rise in water levels was observed in most Okanagan creeks, with water levels rising three to four weeks earlier than historical averages, emphasizing the need for adaptive management strategies. (See Figure 1).

3. **Groundwater Resources:**

Insights into groundwater levels and sustainability were provided, emphasizing the importance of managing these resources for long-term viability. Groundwater levels were reported normal in most Okanagan aquifers.

4. **Weather Forecasts:**

Forecasts and their implications for the Okanagan's water supply were discussed, highlighting potential challenges for the year ahead. The weather forecast was for warmer than normal conditions in the near to medium-term forecast.

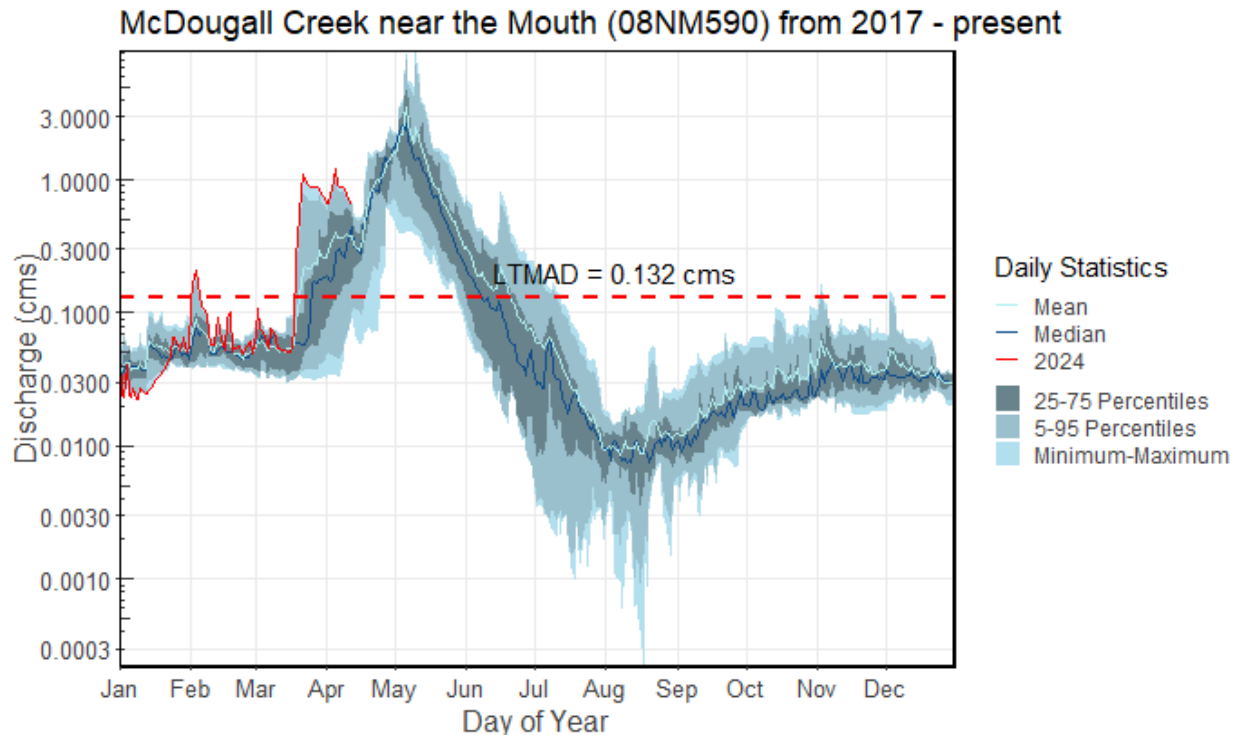


Figure 1 Early Rise in Water Levels Observed Due to Unseasonably Warm Weather. Occurring Three to Four Weeks Early (Source: George Wang, ONA-FD).

Raven modelling workshop

An Okanagan Raven Model Workshop was held on April 17 at the Capri Hotel and via Zoom, and focused on updating the Okanagan water supply and demand models and their application to the Okanagan Lake Regulation System, and other local needs. Presentations covered updates to models for hydrological simulations, including integrating climate data and recalibrating low-flow simulations. Discussions addressed downscaling new climate projections, calibrating models for various lake systems, and assessing environmental flows. Key topics included fisheries management, habitat restoration opportunities, and potential applications in modelling species' life stages. The workshop concluded with planning next steps, such as integrating environmental flow needs and critical flows into the Raven models and coordinating future modelling efforts.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
May 7, 2024
Agenda No: 5.3

To: OBWB Directors
From: Sandra Schira
Date: April 30, 2024
Subject: Water Science Specialist Report

Spring Drought Conditions

The Okanagan spent more than half of 2023 in drought. Despite the recent rain, there is significant concern that the drought will continue into this summer. The provincial snowpack is at the lowest level seen since at least 1970, and we are unlikely to see significant recovery from the 2023 drought. The average snowpack in the Okanagan as of April 22nd was 39% (Table 1) of normal; a value of 50% would mean that the snowpack is at half of what is expected at this time of year compared to historical values (River Forecast Centre, 2024). Brenda Mine was at 0%, making it the earliest on record (starting in 1992) that the site has been snow-free (Figure 1). The data also show there was only minimal snowfall accumulation in April, and most sites have been trending downward as the melt begins. Typically, by April 1, the Okanagan has gotten most of its snow for the winter.

Table 1 April 2024 Okanagan Snow Pillow Data, Expressed as Percent of Long-Term Median (River Forecast Centre, 2024).

Station	01-Apr	08-Apr	15-Apr	22-Apr
Trout Creek West	52%	63%	49%	40%
Mission Creek	84%	80%	78%	79%
Greyback Reservoir	65%	59%	33%	19%
Whiterocks Mountain	57%	54%	50%	44%
Silver Star Mountain	84%	82%	83%	86%
Brenda Mine	56%	41%	13%	0%
Oyama Lake	64%	41%	1%	7%
AVERAGE	66%	60%	44%	39%

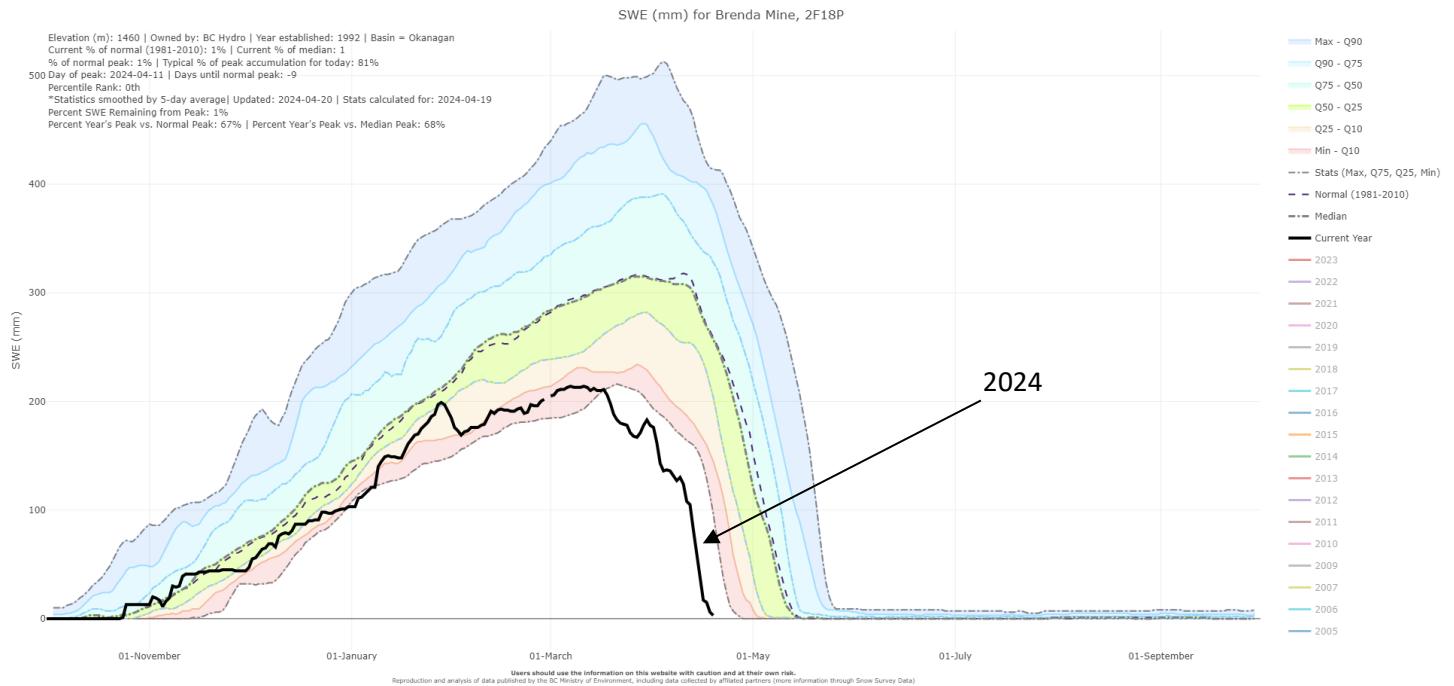


Figure 1 Brenda Mines Snow Pillow as of April 22, 2024 (River Forecast Centre).

Not only are snow levels currently low, at no point over the winter was the average snow pillow for the Okanagan at or above normal (River Forecast Centre, 2024). The snow pillow measurement for Mission Creek, the largest tributary to Okanagan Lake, was around 80% to 60% of normal through the winter (Figure 2). The snow levels are not just low, but the melt is occurring several weeks earlier than normal. This plays an important role in the timing of water availability for both humans and ecosystems.

Another important source of water for the Okanagan is rainfall in the early summer. If significant rain comes during that period, drought conditions may be avoided for summer 2024. In recent years, however, the Okanagan has had less rain than normal, both annually and in the summers. This means that the Okanagan is already quite dry and current, long-range forecasts do not predict a cool, wet summer. It will take a long and significant period of rainfall to avoid the continuation of the 2023 drought into summer 2024.

Conditions in the Okanagan are, and will continue to be, variable in different areas of the region. Ms. Jackson is working on the launch of the board's annual Make Water Work outdoor residential conservation campaign which will encourage residents to check with their local water provider for up-to-date water restrictions.

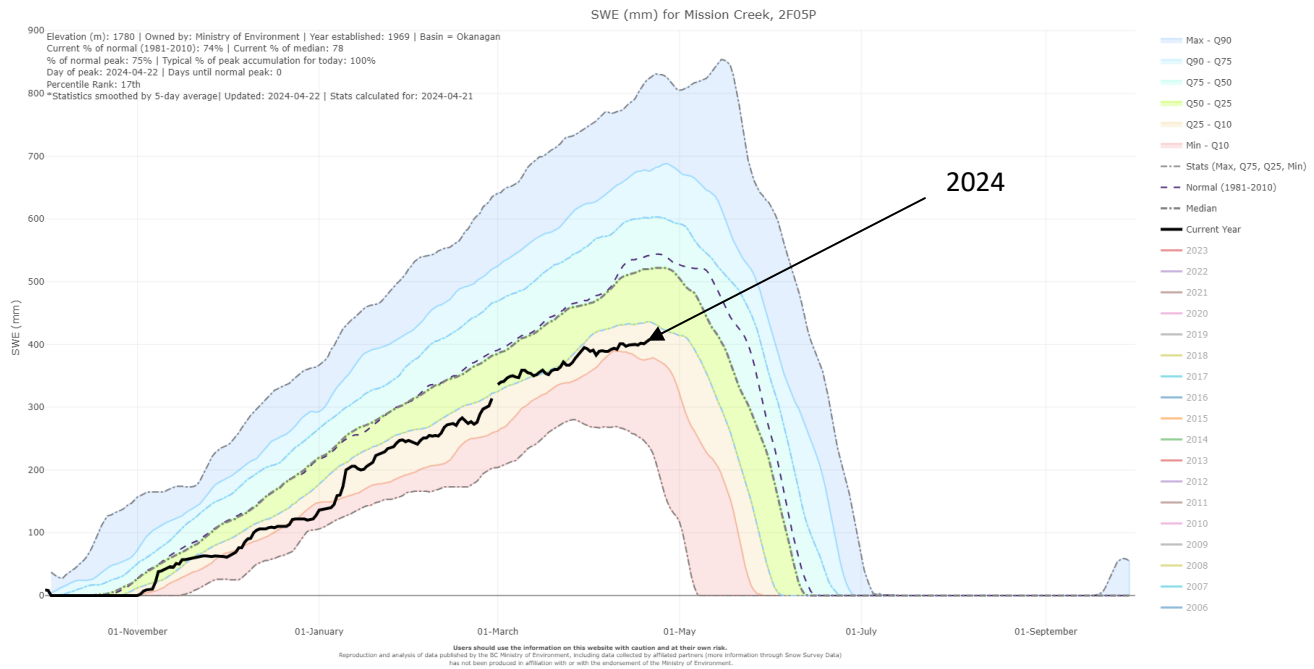


Figure 2 Mission Creek Snow Pillow as of April 22, 2024 (River Forecast Centre).

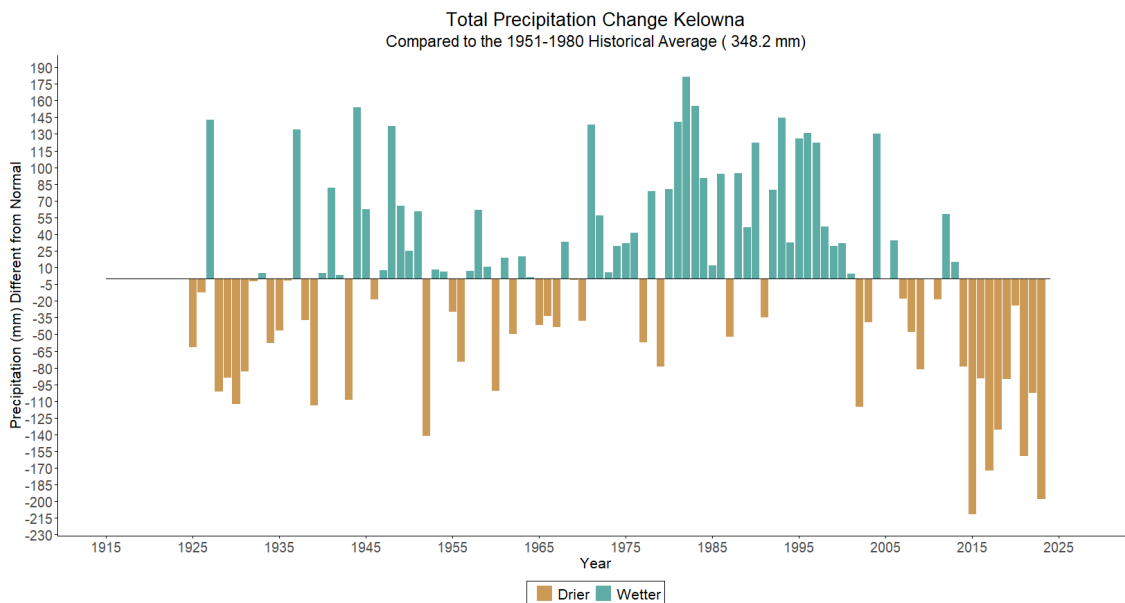


Figure 3 Historical Precipitation Anomaly (mm) Kelowna. Years are Compared to the 1951-1980 Average; green Years are Wetter, and Brown are Drier. Data is from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Reference

River Forecast Centre. (2024). *Snow Conditions and Water Supply Bulletin*. Government of B.C. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/drought-flooding-dikes-dams/river-forecast-centre/snow-survey-water-supply-bulletin>. Accessed: 23.04.2024.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
May 7, 2024
Agenda No: 5.4

To: OBWB Directors
From: Corinne Jackson
Date: April 30, 2024
Subject: Communications Director Report

Make Water Work 2024

Plans are well underway for our annual, valley-wide outdoor residential water conservation campaign, Make Water Work. I am finalizing details regarding date, time and location for our launch in mid-May and am working with the theme “learning from wildfire.” (I’ll have more information at the meeting.)

Another message we are working to develop, with help from local fire departments and water purveyors, is about water use during the wildfire season in a drought year. For example, one issue is the practice of turning on sprinklers and leaving them running if told to evacuate due to fire. This can especially be a concern during water shortages. In some situations, running sprinklers can also impact water pressure for effective firefighting. In talking with some fire department staff last year, we were told that it is fine to put sprinklers on the roof, or leave a sprinkler kit at the end of the driveway, but to leave it for the fire dept. to turn on if they need to. As noted here, we will be working to develop appropriate messaging.

We are also finalizing a new contract with the Okanagan Xeriscape Association to help us with outreach for Make Water Work (MWW) this year and are working with Habit Communications to help with the development of new materials for both MWW and Don’t Move A Mussel.

Other communications

Communications support has been provided to a number of projects this month, including the writing and sending of a news release on April 17 regarding the launch of the “[Preparing for Invasive Mussels: Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure](#),” guide. The guide is also posted on both the OBWB website’s “[Library](#)” page and the Don’t Move A Mussel website’s “[Resources](#)” page.

A news release was also sent April 25 regarding the awarding of the OBWB’s Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants. It can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2hfnndz7>.

I also worked with B.C. provincial staff and provided a response from the board regarding an Invasive Mussel Defence Program funding announcement for 2024. The province was scheduled to release the announcement this afternoon and it should be available here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/>.

A video of Dr. Sears’ April 18 presentation to the House of Commons’ Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development has been uploaded to our YouTube channel and can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/Ofb8JKIdbUI?si=dhzMiSyRHvgvu35s>. The full meeting, including a Q&A, can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/3hzjnzzj>.

We have also been gathering materials for a number of outreach events, including a series of open houses put on by the Regional District of Central Okanagan, May 6-8. There is a lot of interest in both water conservation and invasive mussel materials.

Recent Presentations

April 18 “Testimony on Freshwater” to Parliamentary Committee on Freshwater – Anna Warwick
Sears
April 19 “Mussel Vulnerability Guide” to BC Water Supply Association – James Littlely
April 22 “Helping Okanagan Residents Save Water in Canada’s Most Water-Stressed Region” to
Kelowna Yacht Club – Corinne Jackson

Upcoming Presentations

May 16 “River Film screening and water conservation” to First Things First Okanagan – Corinne
Jackson
May 21 “Invasive Mussels” to Downtown Rotary Club – James Littlely



Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A2
Via email : pm@pm.gc.ca

April 3, 2024

Prime Minister,

We are concerned regarding the inaction of your government to address the threats posed by aquatic invasive species (AIS), particularly zebra and quagga mussels (ZQM), to the aquatic habitats and ecosystems of Canada.

Harms inflicted by AIS on aquatic resources and communities where ZQM have taken hold are well documented. In Western Canada, the threat of this invading species will affect wild fish populations like Pacific salmon, lake trout, rainbow trout, and kokanee salmon, and ZQM stimulate toxic algae blooms that kill migratory birds and contaminate drinking water.

Your inaction also hurts our local economies. Ongoing maintenance to remove ZQM from in-water infrastructure continues to cost Canadians and this invading species is degrading the quality of shoreline environments for human enjoyment. In the Great Lakes region alone, the annual cost of managing these invasive mussels exceeds \$500 million per year.

ZQM continue to move westward across Canada and north from the United States, encroaching ever closer to Western Canadian waters. If you continue to turn a blind eye to these ongoing failures, Western Canada will soon face an irreversible invasion of ZQM that will permanently damage more ecosystems and economies beyond the Great Lakes.

Your Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has a mandate to sustainably manage fisheries and ensure aquatic ecosystems are protected from harms such as those caused by ZQM. The Public Safety Minister through the Canada Border Services Agency is mandated to ensure invasive mussels are not imported into Canada. Despite these responsibilities for protecting Canada's freshwaters from invasive mussels, your ministers continue to fail to deliver their mandates.

This has been confirmed by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD) in a 2019 report which shows your ministers have neglected our front-line enforcement officers and failed to take proper steps to stop the spread of invasive species.

Since 2016, common sense Conservatives have repeatedly pleaded for your government to prevent the spread of ZQM. We have joined voices with conservation organizations, municipalities, and water management agencies, but you and your ministers have ignored them, and the problem faced by our communities.

We call on your government to finally prioritize resources and initiate urgent, immediate actions necessary to prevent permanent ecological and economic damages that will be inflicted if your government continues in its failure to provide the leadership required to protect our waters.

Now is the time for focused and effective leadership and actions to protect our waters.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mel Arnold, M.P.
North Okanagan-
Shuswap



Marc Dalton, M.P.
Pitt Meadows—Maple
Ridge



Len Webber, M.P.
Calgary Confederation



Kevin Waugh, M.P.
Saskatoon-Grasswood



Larry Maguire, M.P.
Brandon-Souris



Martin Shields, M.P.
Bow River



Hon. Don Plett
Senator for Manitoba



Hon. Ed Fast, PC, KC, MP
Abbotsford



Hon. Tim Uppal, M.P.
Edmonton Mill Woods



Blaine Calkins, M.P.
Red Deer-Lacombe



Dan Albas, M.P.
Central Okanagan-
Similkameen- Nicola



Rob Morrison, M.P.
Kootenay-Columbia



Tracy Gray, M.P.
Kelowna- Lake Country



John Barlow, M.P.
Foothills



Brad Redekopp, M.P.
Saskatoon West



Stephanie Kusie, M.P.
Calgary Midnapore



Glen Motz, M.P.
Medicine Hat- Cardston-
Warner



Dan Mazier, M.P.
Dauphin-Swan River-
Neepawa



Warren Steinley, M.P.
Regina-Lewvan



Tako Van Popta, M.P.
Langley-Aldergrove



Earl Dreeshen, M.P.
Red Deer-Mountain View



Gary Vidal, M.P.
Desnethé-Missinippi-
Churchill River



James Bezan, M.P.
Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman



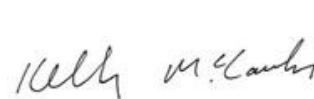
Rachael Thomas, M.P.
Lethbridge



Kelly Block, M.P.
Carlton Trail- Eagle Creek



Laila Goodridge, M.P.
Fort McMurray- Cold
Lake



Kelly McCauley, M.P.
Edmonton West



Cathay Wagantall M.P.
Yorkton-Melville



Gerald Soroka, M.P.
Yellowhead



Michael Kram, M.P.
Regina- Wascana



Ted Falk, M.P.
Provencher



Dane Lloyd, M.P.
Sturgeon River- Parkland



Damien Kurek, M.P.
Battle River- Crowfoot



Ziad Aboultaif, M.P.
Edmonton Manning



Greg McLean, M.P.
Calgary Centre



Ron Liepert, M.P.
Calgary Signal Hill



Mike Lake, M.P.
Edmonton- Wetaskiwin



Shuvaloy Majumdar, M.P.
Calgary Heritage



Garnett Genuis, M.P.
Sherwood Park-
Fort Saskatchewan



Rosemarie Falk, M.P.
Battlefords- Lloydminster



Branden Leslie, M.P.
Portage-Lisgar



Arnold Viersen, M.P.
Peace River- Westlock



Michael Cooper, M.P.
St. Albert- Edmonton

Robert Kitchen, M.P.
Souris—Moose
Mountain

Cc: Hon. George Heyman, British Columbia Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Hon. Rebecca Schulz, Alberta Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
Hon. RJ Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Hon. Christine Tell, Saskatchewan Minister of Environment
Hon. Jamie Moses, Manitoba Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources
Union of BC Municipalities
Okanagan Basin Water Board
Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society
Shuswap Watershed Council
Fraser Basin Council
Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society
B.C. Wildlife Federation
Association of Alberta Municipalities
Rural Municipalities of Alberta
Alberta Invasive Species Council
Alberta Irrigation Districts Association
Canadian Prairie Chapter Irrigation Association
Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association
Saskatchewan Invasive Species Council
Association of Manitoba Municipalities
Invasive Species Council of Manitoba
Electricity Canada



Office of the Chair
1450 K.L.O. Road
Kelowna, B.C. V1W 3Z4
Telephone: (250) 469-6220
Chair@rdco.com
rdco.com

Honourable Nathan Cullen
Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
PO Box 9012 Stn Prov. Govt.
Victoria, BC V8M 9L6
WLRS.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
May 7, 2024
Agenda No: 6.2

Honourable George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
PO Box 9047 Stn Prov Gov
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

April 15, 2024

Re: Urgent Funding and Support for Invasive Mussel Defence Program

Dear Minister Cullen and Minister Heyman,

We are writing to implore you to focus your attention on a critical matter concerning the protection of our waterways and natural resources. As you are aware, invasive mussels pose a significant threat to our ecosystems, recreational activities, and local economies in the Okanagan. The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy have vital roles in safeguarding our province against this threat.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan and our partner members including the City of Kelowna, City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland, District of Lake Country and Westbank First Nation request that you to take immediate action to combat the mussels by bolstering the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP). Under the jurisdiction of WLRS, the **Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP)** plays a pivotal role in preventing the spread of invasive mussels to our region.

We urgently request the following actions:

1. **Sustained Funding:** We ask the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to commit funding to the IMDP of no less than \$4 million per year, drawing from all available sources. This funding should be indexed to inflation and sustained for at least 10 years. Adequate financial support is essential to maintain the program's effectiveness.
2. **Staffing Levels:** We ask the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to actively recruit and retain B.C. Conservation Officers, Auxiliary Conservation Officers, and other necessary staff. We propose restoring staffing levels to those observed

in 2019 (a total of 64 inspectors). Sufficient personnel are crucial for the successful implementation of the IMDP.

3. **Develop Long-Term Regional Strategies:** High-risk regions, including the Okanagan, Shuswap, and Kootenay, require comprehensive long-term response, containment, and control plans. We urge that your Ministries drive the creation of these strategies to prevent infestations and protect our vulnerable ecosystems.

With your support, we can protect our water bodies and preserve the natural and economic benefits they provide in our communities. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your support in securing the necessary resources for effective invasive mussel defense.

Yours sincerely,



Loyal Wooldridge
Chairperson



Tom Dyas
City of Kelowna Mayor



Gord Milsom
City of West Kelowna Mayor



Patrick Van Minsel
District of Peachland Mayor



Blair Ireland
District of Lake Country Mayor



Robert Louie
Westbank First Nation Chief

CC Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director, Okanagan Basin Water Board