

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

DATE: Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Regional District of North Okanagan offices
at 9848 Aberdeen Road, Coldstream, B.C.

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

- 1.1 Acknowledgement of First Nations Traditional Territory

We acknowledge that we work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm̓x̓wúlaʔx̓w (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honour and respect this land and the siw̓lk (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.

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 June 3, 2025 held at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen offices, 101 Martin St. Penticton, B.C.

P. 3

5. **BOARD CHAIR REMARKS**

6. **DELEGATION/PRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 OBWB Water Science Specialist, Sandra Schira, “51 Years Later: A Look Back at the 1974 Okanagan Basin Study.”

7. **STAFF REPORTS**

- 7.1 Executive Director Report P. 9
7.2 Chief Operating Officer Report P. 11
7.2.1 Watercraft Inspection Summary P. 14
7.3 Water Stewardship Director Report P. 22
7.4 Communications Manager Report P. 24
7.5 Water Science Specialist Report P. 30

8. **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 8.1 Memo from Melissa Tesche, Executive Director, re: Bank of Montreal Authorizing Resolution P. 37
8.1.1 Schedule A P. 38

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- 9.1 Letter from Lori Halls, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship regarding our letter to them asking for urgency in bringing the Wildlife Acts into force to prevent invasive mussels. P. 40
9.2 Letter to Honourable Stephen Fuhr, Member of Parliament for Kelowna informing him that the OBWB submitted two project proposals to the Canada Water Agency's EcoAction Stream 2 program, designed to enhance freshwater sustainability and innovation across Canada. P. 42

10. **NEXT MEETING**

- 10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held following our Annual Meeting on Friday, September 5, 2025, at 12 p.m. at the Mary Irwin Theatre, Rotary Centre for the Arts, 421 Cawston Ave, Kelowna, B.C.

11. **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 communications@obwb.ca for further details.*

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD June 3, 2025 AT THE OFFICES OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF THE SOUTH OKANAGAN,
101 MARTIN ST. PENTICTON, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice Chair Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sheena Spencer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C

REGRETS

Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan

STAFF

Melissa Tesche	Executive Director
James Littlely	Chief Operating Officer
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Carmen Weld	Communications Manager
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

GUESTS

Zoe Eyjolfson	Fluvial Geomorphologist at Okanagan Nation Alliance
Maddison Atwood	Assurance Manager at BDO
Lori White	Regional District Central Okanagan – Finance
Andrew Farmer	Regional District Central Okanagan – Finance

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

He respectfully acknowledged that we work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm̓x̌w̌úlaʔx̌w̌ (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honour and respect this land and the siw̌łk (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no late items presented at this meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 3, 2025, be approved."

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of May 6, 2025 held at the Capri Hotel, 1171 Harvey Ave, Kelowna, BC V1Y 6E8.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on May 6, 2025, held at the Capri Hotel, be approved."

CARRIED

5. BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

- 5.1 Chair Ireland provided an update to the board about his recent meeting with the Honourable Stephen Fuhr, Kelowna Member of Parliament. Chair Ireland addressed the lack of official representation for the Columbia Basin, and by extension the Okanagan Basin, within the Canada Water Agency's freshwater bodies of national significance. Chair Ireland also has a meeting scheduled next week with Nicole Rustad, Hon. Fuhr's Chief of Staff, to continue this discussion.

6. DELEGATION

- 6.1 Zoe Eyjolfson, Fluvial Geomorphologist at Okanagan Nation Alliance presented to the Board regarding the Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage project.

Ms. Eyjolfson, presented to the Board on the Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage project in the Penticton channel. She explained that since the early 1900s, fish passage has been blocked to Okanagan Lake, particularly after the 1928 construction of the third dam at the Penticton channel and the channelization of the Okanagan River for flood control and irrigation. The addition of drop structures for stability and the Okanagan Lake Regulation System (OLRS) to regulate flow led to significant habitat loss, reduced instream diversity, loss of riparian vegetation, and disconnection from the floodplain, causing native species to decline. The ONA's clear directive is to "put the river back, put the fish back," and they have collaborated with multiple partners, including the OBWB and the kł cp'əlk' stim' Hatchery, to achieve this.

At 10:10 a.m. Director Monteith exited the meeting.

A feasibility study determined that modifying the aging, high-risk structure within the dam itself, especially near residential areas, was impractical. This led to the proposal for the Okanagan Lake East Passage project on the east side. The project aims to provide passage for all native salmonids during all migration times, while ensuring no negative impact on the Okanagan Lake Dam, maintaining flood control and public safety.

At 10:18 a.m. Director Cumming exited the meeting.

At 10:19 a.m. Director Cumming returned to the meeting.

The new passage will feature high-flow and low-flow entrances, native vegetation, grade-level access for public safety, and visual views into the fishway. Thousands of fish are expected to be visible.

Ms. Eyjolfson answered questions from Board Directors about project progress, and confirmed a mid-July expected finish date. The Penticton Indian Band plans to host an opening celebration once the project is completed, with the date to be announced at a later time.

The Board thanked Ms. Eyjolfson for her presentation.

6.2 Maddison Atwood, CPA, on behalf of Mario Piroddi, CISA, CPA, CA, Partner, BDO; presenting on the OBWB's 2024 Audited Financial Statements.

- 6.2.1 OBWB 2024 Management Letter**
- 6.2.2 OBWB 2024 Representation Letter**
- 6.2.3 OBWB Draft 2024 Financial Statements**
- 6.2.4 OBWB Audit Final Report to the Board**

At 10:26 a.m. Director Monteith returned to the meeting.

Highlights from the presentation indicated that BDO tested the appropriateness of financial records, with nothing significant to report. Internal control matters were found to be normal. The Independent Auditor's Report was a clean audit report. Directors inquired about the materiality threshold, wondering if it was set too high. BDO clarified that while the materiality threshold is \$125,000, BDO does investigate a set percentage of randomized transactions below that threshold.

"THAT the Board Accepts the OBWB 2024 Audited Financial Statements Report."
CARRIED

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Executive Director Report – Melissa Tesche

Ms. Tesche referenced the final audited financial statements for 2024 and thanked the finance team at the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) for making the process smooth and efficient. Ms. Tesche provided Board Directors with an update on the upcoming Board meetings schedule, reminding the Board there will be no July Board Meeting, and the next scheduled meeting will be held August 5, from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the RDNO offices in Coldstream. Directors were asked to give their alternates advance notice to ensure a quorum if needed.

Ms. Tesche reported on the upcoming Budget 2026 Consultation with the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. The OBWB has been invited to present in person to the Committee on Tuesday, June 10 in Vernon. The Board is permitted to provide up to three recommendations, and will again prioritize advocating for consistent, long-term funding for the prevention of invasive zebra and quagga mussel infestations..

Finally, Ms. Tesche reported on staff attendance at the recent Canadian Water Resources Association (CWRA) National Conference in Penticton from May 25-29, 2025. Ms. Tesche, along with Ms. Schira and Dr. Jatel, attended the conference, where the theme, "Living Between Water: Connecting Water and Resilience." Ms. Schira presented on the Climate Indicator Dashboard, while Mr. Jatel gave two presentations: one on the launch of the new Shiny app for monitoring real-time environmental flows and another on the role of trust in transboundary water governance.

Ms. Tesche noted that the Okanagan and Columbia region has been left off Canada Water Agency's (CWA) list of fresh water bodies of national significance . She explained that this goes beyond regional pride, directly impacting future national funding and excluding the region from the \$650M associated with the program. Ms. Tesche stated that this will be a central federal talking point, along with the need to prevent invasive mussels, and the need for increased infrastructure funding.

Finally, Ms. Tesche noted that she has been invited to provide an OBWB presentation to the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS).

"THAT the Executive Director Report, dated May 27, 2025, be received."
CARRIED

7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel

Dr. Jatel provided an update on the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC). He highlighted that the May 6 meeting was a joint session between the OWSC and the OBWB Board of Directors, aimed at strengthening collaboration and communication. The OWSC will finalize its next two-year work plan at its upcoming June meeting.

Dr. Jatel also updated the Board on the current activities of the OWSC committees. The Water Demand and Supply Committee is advancing two key initiatives: support for the Mission Creek Raven Model and an ongoing economic analysis of agricultural water use. The Policy Committee reviewed progress on proposed updates to the Okanagan Lake Regulation System and has begun examining provincial regulations related to septic systems and managed aquifer recharge. The Committee expressed concerns about potential liability risks for local governments under the current septic system framework—particularly the lack of inspection, regulation, and professional oversight beyond the initial design phase, as well as challenges navigating the Professional Governance Act.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report, dated May 22, 2025, be received.”
CARRIED

7.3 Office and Grants Manager Report – Carolina Restrepo Tamayo

Ms. Tamayo reported to the Board with information on the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) grants. As of April, all 15 grantees from the 2025/2026 grant cycle have signed agreements and have commenced their proposed deliverables, with midterm reports due in October. From last year's cycle, 7 projects have been completed, and the remaining have received extensions. Ms. Tamayo emphasized that flexibility for this program remains an important aspect, allowing organizations to deliver outcomes while continuing to receive funding from the OBWB.

Ms. Tamayo also reported on her attendance at the Environment Funders Canada (EFC) conference in Yukon, noting that the OBWB is a member of the organization. There was an interest from a number of groups in creating a Water Funders' Collaborative within the EFC, with the goal of water funders working together to collectively advocate to the federal government.

“THAT the Office and Grants Manager Report, dated May 22, 2025, be received.”
CARRIED

7.4 Communications Manager Report – Carmen Weld

Ms. Weld spoke to the Board about ongoing Communications efforts. The Make Water Work (MWW) launch in Armstrong was a success, with FireSmart™ as an active partner and excellent collaboration from the City of Armstrong. The "Mayors' standoff" photo was a media success. Ms. Weld further reported that Osoyoos has received a public challenge from the former mayor of Armstrong.

Billboards are now posted across the Okanagan for the Don't Move a Mussel campaign, along with a responsible recreation checklist, and re-designed sandwich boards have been delivered by the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society to key locations including Okanagan yacht clubs.

Ms. Weld also informed the Board that OBWB staff will be attending the upcoming District of Peachland Open House on Wednesday, June 11, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Peachland Community Centre, located at 4450 6th Street. At this event, OBWB staff will engage with the

public on key OBWB topics of priority. Directors are invited to attend. Media monitoring data for the past month was also presented to the Board.

“THAT the Communications Manager Report dated May 22, 2025, be received.”
CARRIED.

7.5 Water Science Specialist Report – Sandra Schira

Ms. Schira provided the Okanagan weather update to Board Directors. She reported on snowmelt, presenting new graphs, and noting a slight improvement over last year, with levels having dropped but remaining within the normal range. Precipitation in spring is within normal conditions. Temperatures are within normal ranges, consistent week to week, but with recent significant spikes.

At 11:24 a.m. Director Hodge exited the meeting.

Ms. Schira further explained that the Province has presented briefings on their changes to drought communications, trying to make their classifications more consistent with drought monitoring systems in other regions. Directors discussed challenges with drought communications, sharing insights from their communities. While the entire Okanagan Valley will be assigned a regional drought level, reservoir levels and watering restrictions will vary wildly between communities from Armstrong down to Osoyoos.

At 11:28 a.m. Director Hodge returned to the meeting.

“THAT the Water Science Specialist Report dated May 20, 2025, be received.”
CARRIED.

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 There was no new and/or unfinished business at this meeting.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Letter from the Honourable Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, acknowledging the OBWB’s letter and advocacy towards keeping B.C. free of invasive mussels.

Directors inquired about the meaning of "further analysis and engagement" in the Minister's letter. Mr. Littley explained that the province will be considering different models they could use for the mandatory inspections. The Board discussed B.C.’s actions to prevent the spread of invasive mussels, noting the province seems to be lagging behind Alberta’s actions. Mr. Littley will be looking to re-convene the Okanagan Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group. Directors also suggested that Don't Move a Mussel messaging could be placed at boat launch gas stations, and staff were directed to explore this possibility.

“THAT correspondences to the OBWB, dated May 7, 2025, be received.”
CARRIED.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be on Tuesday, August 5, 2025 at 10 a.m. at the Regional District of North Okanagan office, 9848 Aberdeen Road, Coldstream, BC V1B 2K9.

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 Communications@obwb.ca for further details.

11. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 3, 2025 be adjourned at 11:51 a.m.”
CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Melissa Tesche
Date: July 27, 2025
Subject: Executive Director Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 5, 2025
Agenda No: 7.1

OBWB Advocates for Mussel Funding at Budget 2026 Consultation

James Littley appeared before the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for Budget 2026. The Jun 10, 2025 presentation asked the province to commit to annually funding the existing Invasive Mussel Defense Program at a minimum of \$5.5M/year, indexed to inflation, as well as establish a one-time \$5M emergency response and program expansion fund. Mr. Littley detailed the economic consequences of the arrival of invasive mussels, making the case that the Province of B.C. can't afford not to fund invasive mussel prevention.

OBWB Presents to Pacific Caucus July 15, 2025

I was invited to present to the federal Pacific Caucus meeting July 14-15, 2025, held in Kelowna at the Delta. Chair Blair Ireland accompanied me to the event. The 15-minute presentation covered the three main OBWB federal talking points: the looming water infrastructure costs facing communities, the threat of invasive mussels, and the need for equity in federal funding. This included a specific reference to the Canada Water Agency's funding disparity that will see less than two per cent of the total funds make it to B.C., with the Okanagan entirely excluded.

The presentation was well-received, and the table of MPs was particularly interested and engaged on the topic of preventing invasive mussels, indicating that they may move the issue up for consideration at the Western Caucus. MP Stephen Fuhr's office has since followed up, requesting more information. We have provided them with copies of our ["Preparing for Invasive Mussels: Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure."](#)

Allan Neilson of Neilson Strategies Inc., Engaged to Help with OBWB Strategic Plan

The OBWB has engaged Allan Neilson of Neilson Strategies Inc. to support the development of our new strategic plan. Mr. Neilson is Okanagan-based and has more than 25 years experience with local governments, guiding strategic planning processes and assisting decision makers with collaborative and inter-jurisdictional services.

The formal engagement process will begin in October, and the final draft of the plan is scheduled for delivery to the Board at the March 2026 OBWB meeting, with a public launch of the plan at a spring celebration of 20 years of the Water Management Program.

Strategic Plan Engagement Timeline

- October 2025 Board Meeting (Penticton) – Strategic Context Briefings
- October 2025 – Individual OBWB Board Director/Key Leader Interviews
- November 2025 Board Meeting (Online) – Insights and Alignment Session (1 hour)
- December 2025 (Kelowna) – Full Day Strategic Plan Workshop (6 hours – in lieu of Board Mtg)
- Late January 2026 – First draft of Strategic Plan circulated to Board
- February 2026 Board Meeting (Online) – Draft Review Meeting (1.5 hours)
- March 2026 Board Meeting (Online) – Final Draft submitted to Board
- April 2026 – Public Strategic Plan Launch

OBWB Water Science Specialist to Start PhD at UBC-Okanagan

Starting this fall, our own Water Science Specialist Sandra Schira will begin her PhD at UBC-Okanagan. Sandra will be joining Dr. Mathieu Bourbonnais' lab where she will be working on wildfire risk mapping. I am delighted to say that Sandra will continue to work for OBWB during her studies, although she will be dropping down to part-time status with hours variable from semester to semester as the program demands change. We wish Sandra all the best as she starts this new chapter this fall!



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: James Littley, Chief Operating Officer
Date: July 28, 2025
Subject: Chief Operating Officer Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting August 5, 2025 Agenda No: 7.2

Milfoil Control

Operations Update

This summer, we've experienced an unusually early and significant milfoil bloom in Osoyoos and Vaseux Lakes. In response to public requests, I directed our milfoil team to begin harvesting in Osoyoos Lake two weeks ahead of schedule. In the first month alone, we removed over 300 cubic yards—enough to cover a hockey rink with six inches of milfoil or fill a curling sheet nearly four feet deep.

Harvesting is also underway in Wood Lake, with operations scheduled to begin in Vaseux and Okanagan Lakes by early August.

We've once again received requests for milfoil control in Duck (Ellison) Lake. While we have assessed access options, the lake is only reachable by amphibious harvester via private property. Given the lack of public access and beaches, it remains a lower priority compared to other sites. However, we continue to explore options.

Equipment update

Our new milfoil harvester is expected to arrive in mid-August, replacing a 1978 model that has reached the end of its service life. As of July 25, the new machine is fully manufactured, painted, and in final assembly. A photo is included at the end of this memo.

Invasive Mussel Update

Update on Mandatory Inspections

Recent legislative changes enabling mandatory watercraft inspections have received Royal Assent—a major milestone after years of OBWB advocacy. On June 10, I presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, calling for funding of the provincial Invasive Mussel Defence Program, and for the establishment of a one-time \$5 million emergency response and program expansion fund. This would be a contingency fund for an initial response to invasive mussels in B.C., or could be used to expand inspections under new regulations. The next step is for the province to consult with stakeholders to determine implementation. As of now, it is unclear whether regulations will be in place for the 2026 boating season.

To support this process, Ms. Christina White and I prepared a “Menu of Options” report summarizing key elements of North American inspection programs, including:

- Agencies responsible for watercraft inspections
- Funding models
- Inspection requirements
- Proof of inspection options
- Off-hours or off-season management
- Enforcement and penalties
- Education and boater certification
- Interjurisdictional coordination and reciprocity
- Technology and innovation in monitoring
- High-risk watercraft protocols
- Community and volunteer engagement
- Program evaluation and performance metrics
- Launch access infrastructure design; and
- Integration with fisheries, parks, or tourism sectors

This report will help inform provincial decision-making. We plan to work with the Okanagan Nation Alliance and other members of the Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group to identify preferred options and build consensus for regulatory action. The report is attached.

Invasive Mussel Regional Response Plan

We are developing a Regional Invasive Mussel Response Plan—the first of its kind in B.C. In 2015, the province developed an Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) Plan outlining the actions needed to detect mussels early, and with a preliminary plan for rapid response. However, the existing EDRR does not go into regional or water-body specific detail on how to respond, potentially leading to slower response times while the information is gathered for a site-specific response after a detection.

Our regional plan will fill that gap by compiling pre-detection information for each major waterbody, including:

- Water chemistry
- Boat launch and access point locations
- Local agency and First Nation contacts
- Key community partners

The goal is to give provincial authorities and local partners a ready-to-use toolkit for day-one response. The plan will also help communities prepare in advance and assess the feasibility of response methods — including the limited effectiveness and environmental costs of chemical responses.

Once finalized, we will share this plan with other regions as a model for rapid, locally informed response.



New Aquarius Systems HM-620 Custom Plant Harvester being assembled in North Prairie, Wisconsin. Capacity 15.5 cubic yards.



WATERCRAFT INSPECTION PROGRAMS SUMMARY

A menu of options

Prepared for the Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship

Prepared by the Okanagan Basin Water Board

Christina White, Water Quality Project Manager – christina.white@obwb.ca

James Littley, Chief Operating Officer – james.littley@obwb.ca

Menu of Watercraft Inspection Program Models

This document presents a menu of existing watercraft inspection and decontamination models used across North American jurisdictions to prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species, with a focus on zebra and quagga mussels. Each section below summarizes the range of implementation models currently in use, with examples from jurisdictions noted in brackets. This format is intended to support the Province of British Columbia in designing a robust and comprehensive mandatory inspection regime for watercraft.

This document does not include recommendations.

1. Agencies Responsible for Watercraft Inspections

1.1 Provincial/State Wildlife or Environmental Agencies

Watercraft inspection programs are most commonly led by a province- or state-level agency responsible for environmental protection or wildlife management. These agencies typically operate highway-based WID (Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination) stations during the boating season.

Examples: Alberta (Environment and Protected Areas), Arizona (Game and Fish Department), Utah (Division of Wildlife Resources), Idaho (State Department of Agriculture), Oregon (Department of Fish and Wildlife), British Columbia (Invasive Mussel Defence Program).

1.2 Partnerships with Local or Regional Authorities

Local governments or regional partnerships may take on operational roles or enforce supplementary rules beyond state or provincial programs. This model enhances local control and coverage.

Examples: Montana (Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Conservation Districts), Washington (Whatcom County, City of Bellingham, & Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District), Manitoba (Rural Municipality of Prairie Lakes), California (local government-led inspections).

1.3 Federal or National Park Agencies

Federal agencies may operate their own inspection programs within parks or protected areas, which may differ from surrounding jurisdictional rules often with more strict quarantine and boating regulations.

Examples: Glacier National Park (Montana), Yellowstone National Park (Montana), Riding Mountain National Park (Manitoba), Parks Canada (various).

1.4 Authorized Private Agents and Marinas

Authorized agents, including private businesses or marina operators, may be trained and certified to conduct inspections and decontaminations. This model increases geographic reach and flexibility and is usually overseen by the AIS management team

Examples: Arizona (WIT-certified marinas and mobile agents), California (marinas operating under local rules), Utah (Clean Wake LLC operating dip tanks).

2. Funding Models

2.1 User-Pay Permit Systems

Boaters are required to purchase an AIS permit or decal to legally operate their watercraft. Fees typically support inspection operations and education programs. AIS permits are usually additional to watercraft boater registration fees.

Examples: Idaho, Utah (\$20 AIS fee residents, \$25 non-residents), Oregon (\$5–\$22 Waterway Access Permit), Manitoba (e.g., Prairie Lakes decal system), California (Quagga Sticker), Alberta (proposed watercraft permit fee).

2.2 General Government Funding

Inspection programs are supported directly through provincial, state, or federal budgets without requiring individual boater fees.

Examples: British Columbia, Alberta (current model), Montana (partial), Manitoba.

2.3 Mixed Funding Models

Combines public funds, grants, and user fees. This model is often used where higher service levels or innovation (e.g., tech tools, dip tanks) are desired.

Examples: Arizona (funded by excise taxes, state funds, and grants), Utah (user fees and federal support), Montana (permits and local partnerships), California (state grants, federal funds, fees and cannabis tax proposed).

3. Inspection Requirements

3.1 Mandatory Stop at Open Inspection Stations

All watercraft must stop at any open inspection station they encounter. This is enforced with signage and, in some cases, legal penalties for non-compliance.

Examples: BC, Alberta, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Manitoba.

3.2 Mandatory Inspection Regardless of Station Hours

Jurisdictions require watercraft to be inspected even when stations are closed. This may involve booking an appointment or self-certification.

Examples: Alberta (within 7 days of border crossing), Utah (legal responsibility to decontaminate), Arizona (Director's Orders), Montana (off-season inspections by appointment).

3.3 Mandatory Border or Zone Entry Inspection

Watercraft must be inspected upon entry into a specific region, often at a border or between watersheds.

Examples: Idaho (statewide entry checkpoints), Alberta (southern and eastern borders), Montana (Flathead Basin rules), Utah (checkpoints).

3.4 Local/Enhanced Restrictions

Specific lakes or regions may impose stricter rules such as limited access, special permits,

or moratoriums on launching.

Examples: Prairie Lakes (MB), Lake Whatcom (WA), Clear Lake (MB), Lake Tahoe (CA), Parks Canada (e.g., BC/AB moratoriums).

4. Proof of Inspection

4.1 AIS Decals or Stickers

Boaters receive decals for their watercraft after inspection or upon purchasing a permit. These must be visibly displayed and are often colour-coded by year.

Examples: Idaho, Utah, Oregon, California, Manitoba, Alberta, Lake Whatcom (WA).

4.2 Physical Seals on Boats or Trailers

Inspectors apply physical seals (e.g., wire ties) that prevent tampering and indicate a watercraft has been inspected and not launched elsewhere. These can have specific drying times indicated.

Examples: Montana, Utah, California.

4.3 Digital Receipts or Certificates

Digital records are provided upon inspection or course completion. These may include QR codes or emailed confirmations.

Examples: Utah (QR-coded certificates), California (digital receipts), Arizona.

4.4 Annual Local Permits or Hang Tags

Watercraft used in specific lakes or local programs receive unique visual tags or hang tags linked to local compliance systems.

Examples: Arizona (Lake Powell), Washington (Lake Whatcom), Manitoba (Prairie Lakes).

5. Off-Hours or Off-Season Management

5.1 24/7 Inspection Stations

Some high-traffic areas operate inspection stations around the clock during the boating season.

Examples: Montana (Ravalli), Alberta (Dunmore–East), Idaho (Twin Falls & Cotteral).

5.2 Self-Certification Programs

Boaters can complete a form or online declaration attesting that they have cleaned, drained, and dried their watercraft prior to launch when inspection stations are closed.

Examples: Washington (resident programs), California (some lakes), Alberta (Parks Canada)

5.3 Appointment-Based or Mobile Inspection Access

Off-hours or off-season inspections are available by appointment or through roving/mobile inspection units.

Examples: Montana (off-season), Arizona (by request 10 days in advance), Utah (DWR decontamination scheduling).

6. Enforcement and Penalties

6.1 Legal Penalties and Fines

Fines and legal action can be taken for failure to stop, failure to decontaminate, or other non-compliance.

Examples: Manitoba (up to \$25,000), Washington (up to \$1,000), Utah (Class B misdemeanor), Montana (felony for commercial haulers), Alberta (\$4200).

6.2 Administrative or Roadside Checkpoints

Authorities may establish mandatory roadside checkpoints to enforce AIS laws, including vehicle inspections.

Examples: Utah, Idaho, Oregon.

6.3 Physical Access Control (Launch Closures)

Access to launches may be restricted or physically blocked unless inspections are completed.

Examples: Whitefish (MT), Prairie Lakes (MB), Parks Canada.

7. Education and Boater Certification

7.1 Mandatory AIS Awareness Course

Boaters must complete a course on aquatic invasive species before launching. This may be tied to permits or discounts.

Examples: Utah (Mussel-Aware Boater Course), Washington (Lake Whatcom), California (Boater Card).

7.2 Course Completion Required for Watercraft Permit

Course completion is required to obtain the AIS decal or operating permit.

Examples: Utah (linked to AIS permit), Washington (discount incentive).

7.3 Sea Plane and Water Bomber Training Recognition

Special AIS education programs are recognized across multiple jurisdictions for aviation-related watercraft.

Examples: Washington, Oregon, Montana, Utah.

8. Interjurisdictional Coordination & Reciprocity

8.1 Cross-Jurisdiction Inspection Recognition

Some jurisdictions accept inspections from neighbouring states or provinces, provided seals are intact and conditions met.

Examples: Montana (accepts Idaho and Wyoming), Idaho (coordinates with border stations), Utah (works with Colorado River states).

8.2 Shared Databases and Notification Systems

Some programs share inspection and interception data across jurisdictions, aiding in rapid response and enforcement.

Examples: Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission supports interstate coordination (Call Before You Haul).

9. Technology & Innovation in Monitoring

9.1 AI & Camera Systems

AI-enabled cameras monitor boat ramps and record vessel information such as hull or bow numbers.

Examples: Utah (Lake Powell, AR Inspect), California (Lake Tahoe).

9.2 Digital Dashboards and Station Status Tools

Online tools allow boaters to view wait times or open station locations to improve compliance and reduce congestion.

Examples: Utah DWR dashboard, Oregon station map tools.

9.3 QR Code Integration and Digital Verification

QR codes on permits or certificates enable quick scanning and verification by enforcement officers.

Examples: Utah (AIS course and permit system), California (Quagga Sticker), Lake Tahoe Boating app.

10. High-Risk Watercraft Protocols

10.1 Commercial Hauler Rules and Penalties

Commercially transported watercraft must follow stricter rules and are often subject to heavier penalties for non-compliance.

Examples: Montana (felony penalty), Arizona and Alberta (hauler hotline programs).

10.2 High-Risk Boat Classifications

Complex vessels or boats from infested areas may require mandatory professional decontamination or extended drying times.

Examples: Utah (30-day dry time), California (Golden Mussel risk reclassification), Arizona (Lake Powell protocol).

11. Community & Volunteer Engagement

11.1 Volunteer-Operated Inspection Stations

Local volunteer groups may fund and staff their own seasonal inspections.

Examples: Montana (Swan Lakers), California (community lake watch programs).

11.2 Local Stewardship and Education Campaigns

Community-based education, signage, and outreach can boost awareness and support compliance.

Examples: Prairie Lakes (MB), Whatcom County (WA).

12. Program Evaluation & Performance Metrics

12.1 Inspection and Interception Reporting

Programs track the number of watercraft inspected, decontaminated, and intercepted with AIS.

Examples: Montana, Utah, Washington.

12.2 Compliance and Boater Survey Data

Boater awareness, compliance behaviour, and feedback may be collected through interviews or surveys.

Examples: Montana's Boater Information Gathering (BIG) project.

12.3 Adaptive Management through Performance Tracking

Programs that track outcomes over time are able to adapt more quickly to emerging threats.

Examples: Utah (dip tank effectiveness), Arizona (multi-pronged metrics).

13. Launch Access Infrastructure Design

13.1 Locked or Controlled Launch Sites

Some jurisdictions control physical access to launches by using gates or barriers. These may be locked during off-hours or restricted to users who have completed inspection or self-certification requirements.

Examples: Montana (Whitefish), Manitoba (Prairie Lakes barrier system).

13.2 Automated or Remote-Controlled Systems

Electronic or automated launch gates may be integrated with AIS compliance databases to allow or deny access based on inspection status.

Examples: Montana (City of Whitefish).

13.3 CD3 Stations and Infrastructure Enhancements

CD3 systems (Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose) offer tools like vacuums, lights, and trash bins to encourage proper decontamination. These may be located at launches or marinas.

Examples: Montana (Swan Lake Ranger District), growing use in the U.S. Midwest.

14. Integration with Fisheries, Parks, or Tourism Sectors

14.1 Coordination with Tourism and Recreation Messaging

AIS prevention messages are often integrated with broader tourism, outdoor recreation, or public safety campaigns to reach a larger audience.

Examples: Arizona and Utah incorporate Clean-Drain-Dry into visitor messaging; Montana partners with travel councils.

14.2 Park-Specific AIS Protocols

National and provincial/state parks may have their own inspection requirements that are stricter than regional norms.

Examples: Riding Mountain National Park (MB), Glacier and Yellowstone (MT), Parks Canada (BC, AB).

14.3 Alignment with Fishing, Boating, and Rental Industries

AIS requirements are often embedded into fishing license sales, boat rental agreements, and commercial operations.

Examples: Arizona (authorized agent marinas), Utah (AIS awareness tied to watercraft permit sales), Washington (local rental oversight), Montana (Angler AIS Prevention Pass (AISPP), Vessel AIS Prevention Pass & Migratory Game bird Hunter AIS Prevention Pass) .

MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Nelson Jatel
Date: July 27, 2025
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting August 5, 2025 Agenda No: 7.3

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

June OWSC Meeting Overview

The June 12, 2025 Council meeting, held at the Coast Capri Hotel, featured a panel on professional regulatory reform. Representatives from Engineers and Geoscientists BC, the College of Applied Biologists, BC Forest Professionals, and the BC Institute of Agrologists discussed new provincial rules that affect accountability for water-related professionals.

Following the panel, Council members participated in a working session to initiate development of the Term 12 work plan. Priorities and new committee structures are being finalized.

September Council Meeting Preview

The upcoming Water Stewardship Council meeting is scheduled for September 11 from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Coast Capri Hotel. This meeting will feature Dr. Cassidy Rankins who will present on new satellite remote sensing technologies that support water management. These technologies improve the quality of real-time data for decision-making on various water quality and quantity issues, including flooding and cyanobacteria blooms. Board members are encouraged to attend and participate.

Ongoing Project-Related Activities (July Highlights)

While the Council did not meet in July, several high-priority water management projects continued to advance, each offering support to local governments across the Okanagan Basin:

- **Hydrometric Monitoring Program**

This program is a foundational asset for local governments, providing real-time data that supports drought management, water licensing, and flood preparedness. The network now includes 26 OBWB-maintained flow stations and supports six federal Water Survey of Canada stations. The program is jointly governed with the Okanagan Nation Alliance through a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

- **Environmental Flow Needs (EFN) Shiny App**

Local governments rely on precise hydrologic data to inform environmental flow compliance and operational decisions. To enhance functionality, a temperature data tab is being added to the EFN Shiny App, improving the ability to communicate the hydrologic risk to the public. A preliminary planning session with Ecofish was held.

- **Wetlands Program**
Wetlands deliver ecosystem services essential to community resilience, including flood mitigation and water filtration. Phase III of the Okanagan Wetlands Strategy is progressing, with recent activities including restoration mapping, a UBC urban design charrette, and a collaborative pilot project with the Central Okanagan Land Trust.
- **Raven Hydrological Modelling**
Up-to-date watershed models help local governments prepare for climate extremes and guide infrastructure planning. Technical work continues on Mission Creek (Phase I) and in Okanagan Basin-wide (Phase II) modelling. The updated models will be made available through the Okanagan Hydrology Modelling Ecosystem (OHME) platform to promote open access and broad uptake.
- **Agricultural Irrigation Economics**
Understanding the economic impacts of irrigation investments is key to long-term regional planning. This Mitacs-supported study is generating new policy insights into future irrigation scenarios. A transition is underway as the current post-doc departs, with continuity ensured by UBCO faculty leadership.
- **2026 Environmental Flow Conference**
Planning is underway for the third Environmental Flow Needs Conference, scheduled for October 2026. This event will provide a national platform for knowledge exchange on water science and policy, directly benefiting municipal planners and water suppliers.
- **Cyanobacteria Risk Alert System**
Algal bloom risks are an urgent concern for local governments tasked with safeguarding public health and recreational water use. A grant proposal has been submitted to the federal EcoAction program to develop a real-time cyanobacteria risk alerting system, in partnership with the City of Kelowna and Westbank First Nation. The EcoAction grant program follows a structured multi-stage review process: applications are submitted by a fixed deadline (April 10, 2025 for Stream 2), then undergo administrative vetting, expert technical review, and regional program evaluation. All applicants are notified in writing following departmental review. Successful proponents enter into a Contribution Agreement negotiation phase before funding is released. If approved, this project will run through March 2027.

Summary of Meeting with the Canada Water Agency – July 17, 2025

OBWB Executive Director Melissa Tesche and I met virtually with Mark Fisher (President, CWA) and Ute Holweger (CWA) to build awareness of OBWB's expertise and highlight the region's unique water challenges. The meeting aimed to:

- Showcase OBWB's capabilities and leadership in water management;
- Emphasize the Okanagan's acute vulnerabilities to drought, wildfire, invasive species, and aging infrastructure; and
- Better understand the implications of being excluded from the list of nationally significant waterbodies.

We positioned the Okanagan as a high-impact proving ground for national climate adaptation strategies and underscored the inequity of current federal freshwater funding—over 65 per cent of which is allocated to the Great Lakes.



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Carmen Weld
Date: July 30, 2025
Subject: Communications Manager Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
July 30, 2025
Agenda No: 7.4

Make Water Work

There is just one month left until the Make Water Work Community Champion is chosen...and the battle is on!

As of July 30, 2025, Armstrong has seemingly changed the leaderboard in the less than 48 hours taking over Oliver's weeks-long lead. Armstrong is currently sitting at 124 pledges. However, Oliver and Osoyoos remain close contenders with 101 and 86 pledges respectively.

While the contest for the public runs until mid October, the Community Champion will be crowned at our Annual Meeting on Sept. 5, 2025. Will Armstrong need to bring cheese? Osoyoos bring wine? Time will tell – I encourage you to get your residents to pledge!

This year has seen record-setting pledges for the campaign so far, sitting at 490 as of July 30, 2025.

The digital and physical campaign continues with Make Water Work promoted on billboards, buses, radio, social media, KelownaNow, Castanet, YouTube, Global TV and more.

According to our contractor, our digital campaign has already had more than 1.5 million impressions, with the FireSmart™ & Make Water Work content performing best.

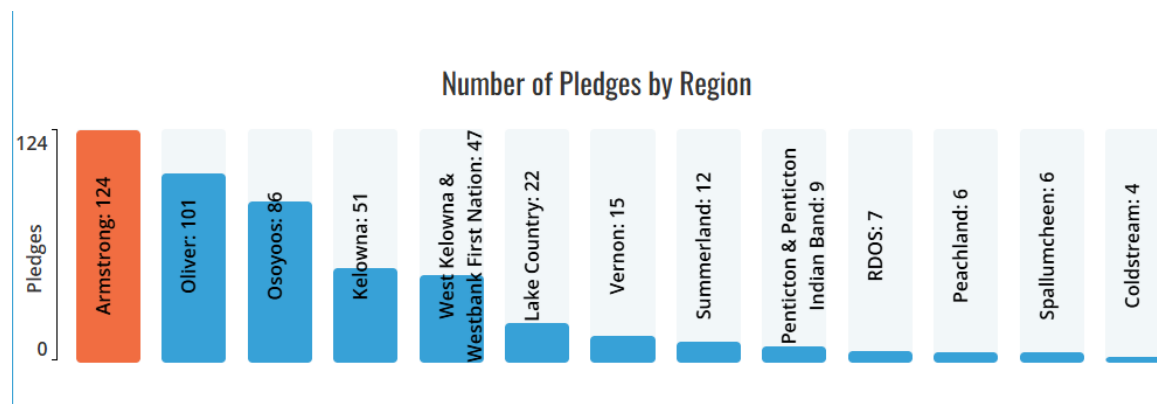


Figure.7._Pledge.totals.as.of.July.30, 2025



Social- Carousel ad 1



Social- Carousel ad 2



Social- Carousel ad 3

Figure.8._Example.of.some.social.media.ads.for.Make.Water.Work

Don't Move a Mussel

The digital and physical Don't Move a Mussel campaign continues with Don't Move a Mussel promoted on billboards, radio, social media, local media, YouTube, Global TV and more.

Our partner, the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASSIS), has had a very busy first half of the season and provided the information below as of July 25, 2025:

- Participated in more than 20 community events throughout the valley (booth display).
- Spoke with close to 900 people (adults and youth) at events, businesses and youth camps.
- Close to 500 watercraft have been surveyed with more than 1,200 interactions at 15 boat launches on five lakes.
- The Citizen Science Project is running again! This involves deployment of substrate monitors for invasive mussels at private docks up and down the valley. There was an overwhelming amount of interest this year, with twenty sites confirmed for Okanagan, Kalamalka, Wood, Skaha, and Osoyoos lakes.
 - OASSIS' media release was picked up by numerous online publications, with the Castanet article reaching more than 20,000 people.
- All boat launch and marine gas stations have been contacted and Don't Move a Mussel messaging has been delivered, if they had a place to display it.

Key communications since last report, and what's coming up

- May 26, 2025: [New Tool Helps Protect Okanagan Streams and Fish with Real-Time Science-Driven Insights!](#)
- Digital Partner Packages were created and sent out with digital assets, suggested captions and more for both the Make Water Work and Don't Move a Mussel campaigns in June.
 - Thank you to our regional partners who are actively posting and sharing this content!
- We have transitioned all OBWB Communications to Constant Contact and informed our subscribers of this change on July 10, 2025. Constant Contact allows OBWB to

deliver more engaging, visually appealing, and well-organized information directly to each inbox. With Constant Contact, you can expect:

- Improved Readability: Our messages will be easier to scan and digest, whether you're on a desktop or mobile device.
 - More Engaging Content: We'll be able to share updates, news, and resources in a more dynamic and interactive way.
- We also moved our correspondence list into Constant Contact and are looking to grow that going forward. The contact database is much easier to manage and search, and allows subscribers to unsubscribe with one click, as per Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation.
 - We have a subscription option available on the website now and often end our social media posts with that prompt.
 - We recently closed a contest for a Make Water Work rain barrel that saw 115 new subscribers.
- We launched a new condensed and formatted Drought Bulletin this season. They are sent out as conditions require. These will continue throughout the season as warranted. Each bulletin is developed with information from the weekly provincial drought call with the Thompson Okanagan Regional Technical Drought Working Group (RTDWG), as well as noting changes to watering restrictions across the Okanagan Basin.
 - June 13, 2025: [Drought Bulletin 1](#)
 - July 10, 2025: [Drought Bulletin 2](#)
 - July 17, 2025: [Drought Bulletin 3](#)
 - July 25, 2025: [Drought Bulletin 4](#)
 - Thank you to Sandra Schira for her key role in these!
 - I also want to thank all our partners for their engagement and feedback that is helping it improve this new item each week.
- The OBWB team has worked hard to complete their sections of the Annual Report. In the next few weeks, Comms will finalize the 2025 Annual Report, themed Flowing Forward, which will be printed and ready for our Annual Meeting on Sept. 5, 2025.
- The Annual Meeting invite for this event was sent out July 28, 2025.

Media Tracking

Please find monthly media tracking below, listing articles from May 23 to July 28, 2025, in reverse chronological order.

Date	Source	Headline	Link
July 25, 2025	Kelowna Capital News and 10 other Black Press publications	Protection of Okanagan lakes urged from boaters	https://www.kelownacapnews.com/opinion/protection-of-okanagan-lakes-urged-from-boaters-8147631
July 17, 2025	All For Gardening	Water-wise ways to replace turf grass in dry condition areas	https://www.allforgardening.com/1373760/water-wise-ways-to-replace-turf-grass-in-dry-condition-areas/

July 16, 2025	Penticton Herald, Kelowna Courier and their print editions	Dock owners are needed to help stop invasive mussels	https://www.pentictonherald.ca/news/article_79d26651-0a41-45f6-bb79-174fe5660fd0.html
July 16, 2025	Castanet	Water-wise ways to replace turf grass in dry condition areas	https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/561675/Water-wise-ways-to-replace-turf-grass-in-dry-condition-areas
July 15, 2025	Castanet	Province calls for more water conservation, warns of worsening drought	https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/561499/Province-calls-for-more-water-conservation-warns-of-worsening-drought
July 11, 2025	Castanet	OASISS seeking dock owners to help protect Okanagan lakes from invasive mussels	https://www.castanetkamloops.net/edition/news-story-561129-98-.htm
July 25, 2025	Kelowna Capital News and 10 other Black Press publications	Dock owners in Okanagan needed for invasive mussel monitoring	https://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/dock-owners-in-okanagan-needed-for-invasive-mussel-monitoring-8128046
July 10, 2025	Castanet	Okanagan drought level rises due to little rain, warmer-than-normal temperatures in June	https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/560939/Okanagan-drought-level-rises-due-to-little-rain-warmer-than-normal-temperatures-in-June
July 4, 2025	Castanet	How you can help protect the Okanagan from invasive mussels this summer	https://www.castanet.net/news/Think-Local/558688/How-you-can-help-protect-the-Okanagan-from-invasive-mussels-this-summer-
July 2, 2025	Castanet	Select deer-resistant plants for the Okanagan	https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/559166/Select-deer-resistant-plants-for-the-Okanagan-
June 30, 2025	Kelowna Capital News and 10 other Black Press publications	A call to action for Okanagan waterfront property owners	https://www.kelownacapnews.com/local-news/a-call-to-action-for-okanagan-waterfront-property-owners-8091427
July 26, 2025	Penticton Herald, digital and print editions	Osoyoos remembers Stu Wells	https://www.pentictonherald.ca/news/article_726051f4-1401-47cc-a0ef-ae9269cb6b7d.html
June 25, 2025	Castanet	'Stu wore many hats': Community remembers former Osoyoos mayor	https://www.castanet.net/news/Oliver-Osoyoos/558187/Stu-wore-many-hats-Community-remembers-former-Osoyoos-mayor
June 23, 2025	Vernon Morning Star and 10 other Black Press publications	Wildfire ash impacts discussed at Vernon water sustainability event	https://www.vernonmorningstar.com/local-news/wildfire-ash-impacts-discussed-at-vernon-water-sustainability-event-8087737
June 19, 2025	Castanet	Moratorium on new water connections at WFN's most-populous reserve	https://www.castanet.net/news/West-Kelowna/557199/Moratorium-

			on-new-water-connections-at-WFN-s-most-populous-reserve
June 18, 2025	Vernon Morning Star and 10 other Black Press publications	Vernon agricultural park growing nicely	https://www.vernonmorningstar.com/community/vernon-agricultural-park-growing-nicely-8077104
June 18, 2025	Castanet	Consider larger perennials for low garden maintenance	https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/556776/Consider-larger-perennials-for-low-garden-maintenance
June 18, 2025	VernonMatters	Gardeners planting in community plots, other projects underway at RDNO Agricultural Park	https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/06/18/gardeners-planting-in-community-plots-other-projects-underway-at-rdno-agricultural-park/
June 16, 2025	Castanet	Take action to Make Water Work this summer	https://www.castanet.net/news/Think-Local/556433/Take-action-to-Make-Water-Work-this-summer
June 13, 2025	Kelowna Capital News and 10 other Black Press publications	Drought dips to level 2 as Okanagan water heats up	https://www.kelownacapnews.com/local-news/dought-dips-to-level-2-as-okanagan-water-heats-up-8071516
June 5, 2025	Castanet	'Dangers are infinite': Vernon Yacht Club sponsoring traps to prevent spread of mussels	https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/554430/Dangers-are-infinite-Vernon-Yacht-Club-sponsoring-traps-to-prevent-spread-of-mussels
June 4, 2025	Castanet	Three award winning plants that will look great in your garden	https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/554136/Three-award-winning-plants-that-will-look-great-in-your-garden
June 3, 2025	KelownaNow	One Smart Yard, Big Impact: How You Can Save Water and Stay FireSmart™	https://www.kelownanow.com/news/news/Sponsored/One_Smart_Yard_Big_Impact_How_You_Can_Save_Water_and_Stay_FireSmart/
May 31, 2025	National Observer and 20+ other publications	These new MPs have climate backgrounds — will they deliver? <i>*Inaccurate article as it implies Dr. Sears was elected, but it does mention her work with the OBWB in numerous publications nation wide.*</i>	https://paherald.sk.ca/these-new-mps-have-climate-backgrounds-will-they-deliver/
May 31, 2025	Kelowna Capital News and 10 other Black Press publications	Okanagan water briefs: New app technology assists water monitoring	https://www.kelownacapnews.com/local-news/okanagan-water-briefs-new-app-technology-assists-water-monitoring-8038863
May 29, 2025	Business Examiner	Thompson Okanagan Movers & Shakers May 29, 2025	https://businessexaminer.ca/thompson-okanagan-articles/item/thompson-okanagan-movers-shakers-may-29-2025/

May 29, 2025	Castanet	Osoyoos challenged by Armstrong in Make Water Work contest	https://www.castanet.net/news/Oliver-Osoyoos/553081/Osoyoos-challenged-by-Armstrong-in-Make-Water-Work-contest
May 26, 2025	Kelowna Capital News and 10 other Black Press publications	New app to help protect aquatic ecosystems in Okanagan	https://www.kelownacapnews.com/home/new-app-to-help-protect-aquatic-ecosystems-in-okanagan-8028927
May 26, 2025	Techcouver	Okanagan Launches Real-Time Water App to Protect Aquatic Ecosystems	https://techcouver.com/2025/05/26/okanagan-launches-real-time-water-app-to-protect-aquatic-ecosystems/

The Stats: May 23 – July 28, 2025

<i>Total individual articles mentioning OBWB work, projects etc.</i>	<i>Total Reach*</i>
128	21.9M

***Total Reach** is pulled from our media monitoring service Meltwater. It's important to note that in Meltwater, "reach" is inflated as it represents the potential number of unique visitors who could have seen a specific article or piece of content. It's calculated based on the monthly unique visitors to the source publication, not the number of times the content was displayed. This metric helps organizations understand the potential audience size and reach of their content across various platforms.



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Sandra Schira, Water Science Specialist
Date: July 28, 2025
Subject: Weather Update

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
Aug. 5, 2025
Agenda No: 7.5

Temperature

Summer temperatures were variable but mainly in the warm to normal range compared to 1991-2020. Between mid-May and early July, temperatures fluctuated from extremely hot to very cold over a two-week period. Temperatures remained relatively stable for the rest of June and July, staying within the warm to normal range (Figure 1). Last year, July experienced an extreme heat spell, with the most days exceeding 35°C on record (Figure 2). This year had no extreme hot spell in July, and the number of extreme hot days was more normal around 2 - 3.

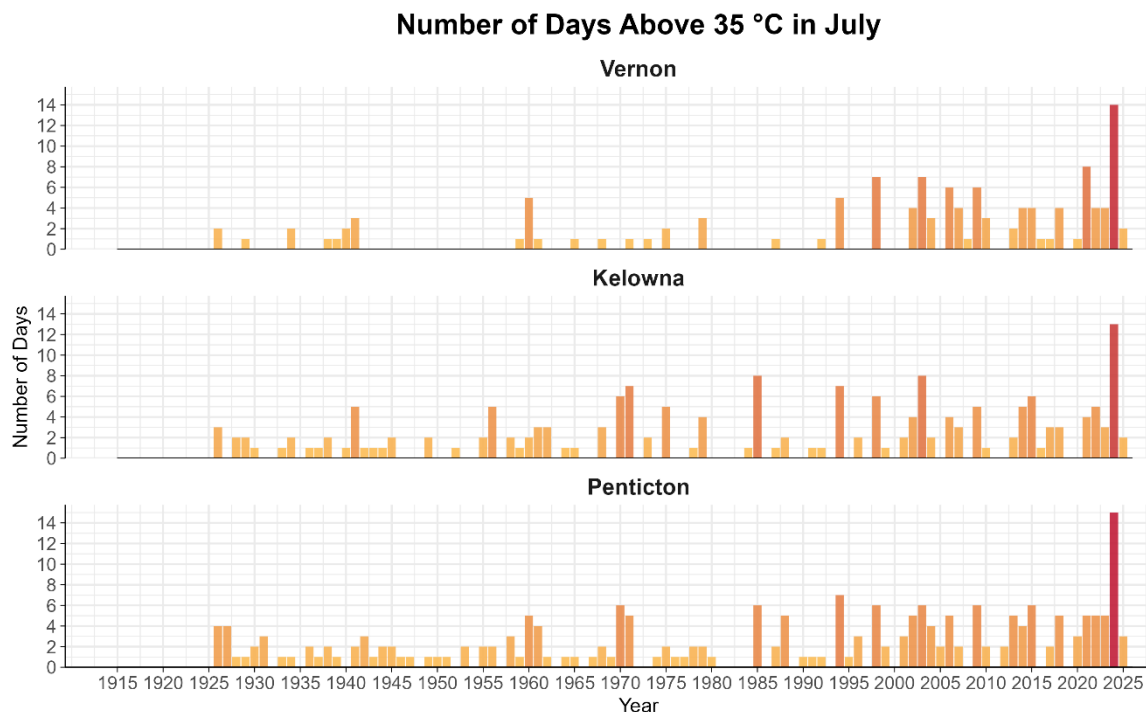
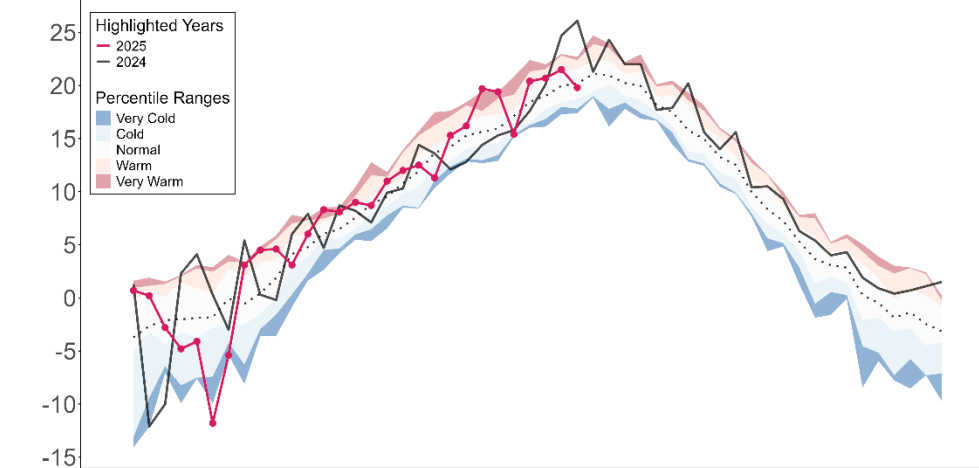
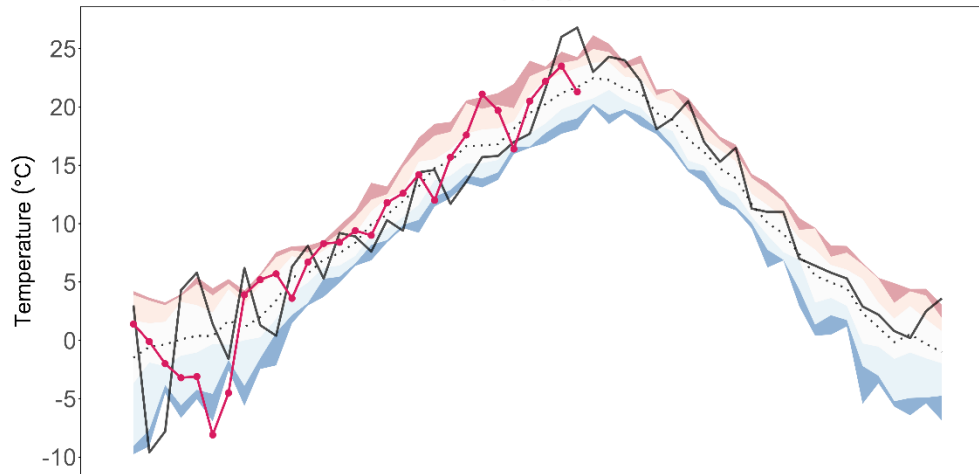


Figure 1: The number of days with a maximum temperature over 35 °C in July from 1915 to 2025. As of July 28, 2025. Data from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

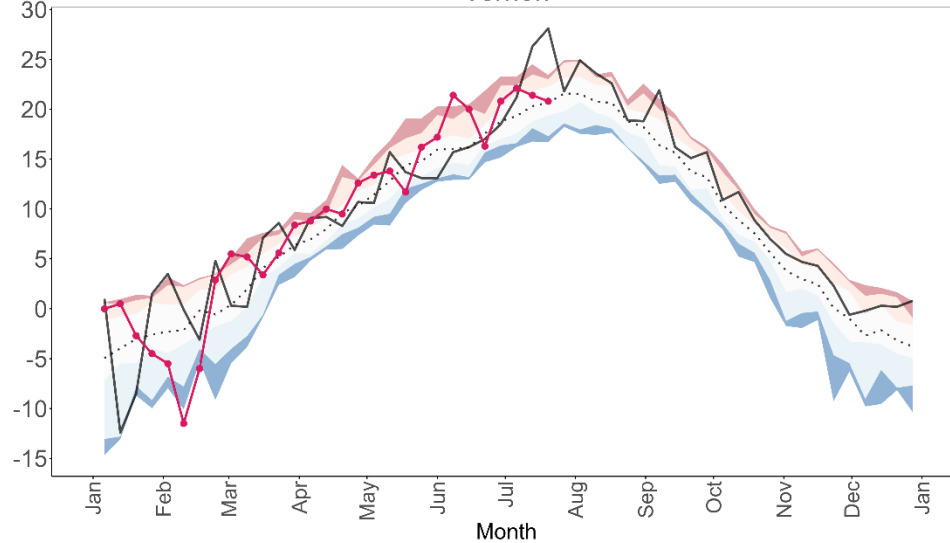
Weekly Mean Temperature vs. 1991–2020 Normal Kelowna



Penticton



Vernon



Data Source: ECCC

Figure 2: Weekly Average Temperature across the Okanagan as of July 28, 2025 compared to 2024 and then 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Precipitation

Several significant rainfall events occurred in June and July; however, the annual total precipitation remains low for the region. Across the valley, precipitation was below average in June (Figure 3). In July, Vernon and Kelowna experienced slightly above-normal precipitation, while Penticton had below-average precipitation but remained within normal variability.

June and July also had several large rain events that occurred across the valley; however, there was considerable variability in rainfall amounts. For example, on July 21, areas near Vernon received 12 mm of precipitation, while Penticton received only 1 mm. The rain was beneficial in replenishing reservoirs and preventing a severe drought in many areas.

So far, the valley has not accumulated as much rain as usual for this time of year. Total rainfall this year is below normal compared to the last 30 years, except in Kelowna, where it is close to normal (Figure 4). Cumulative precipitation is low for most regions because several months have had significantly below-average precipitation in each area - for example, January and June saw slightly below-normal precipitation that was not compensated for by the months with above normal precipitation.

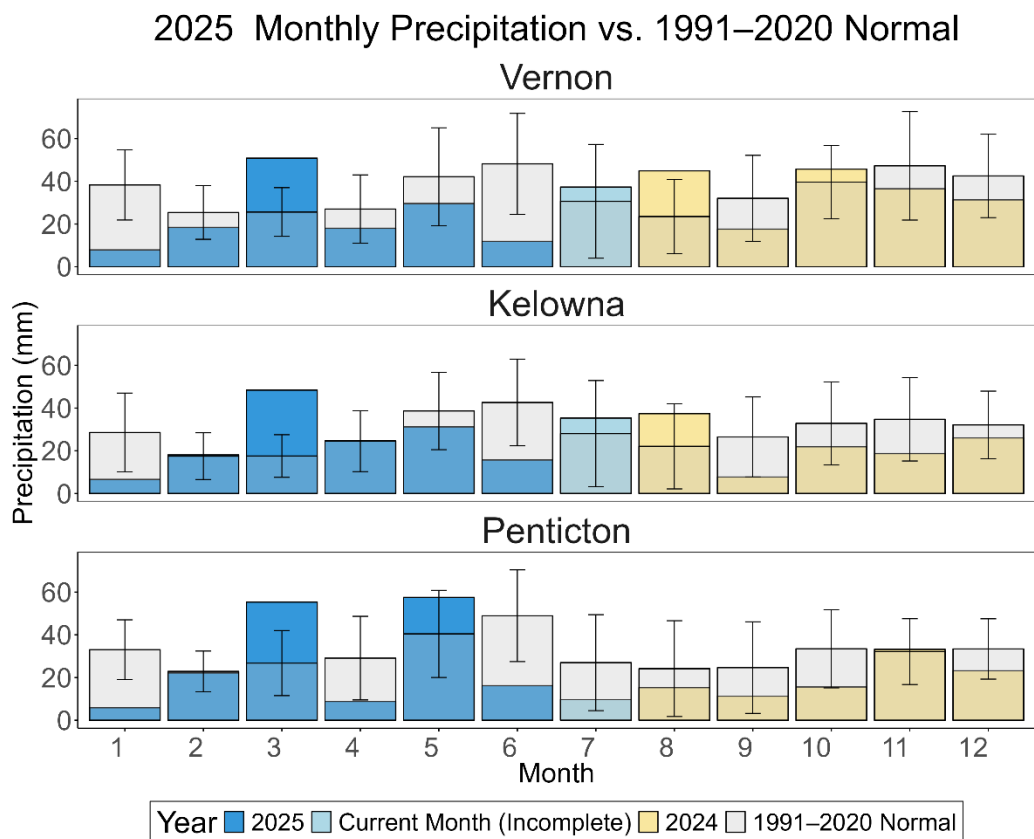


Figure 3: Monthly Precipitation in the Okanagan as of July 28, 2025. Compared to 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada

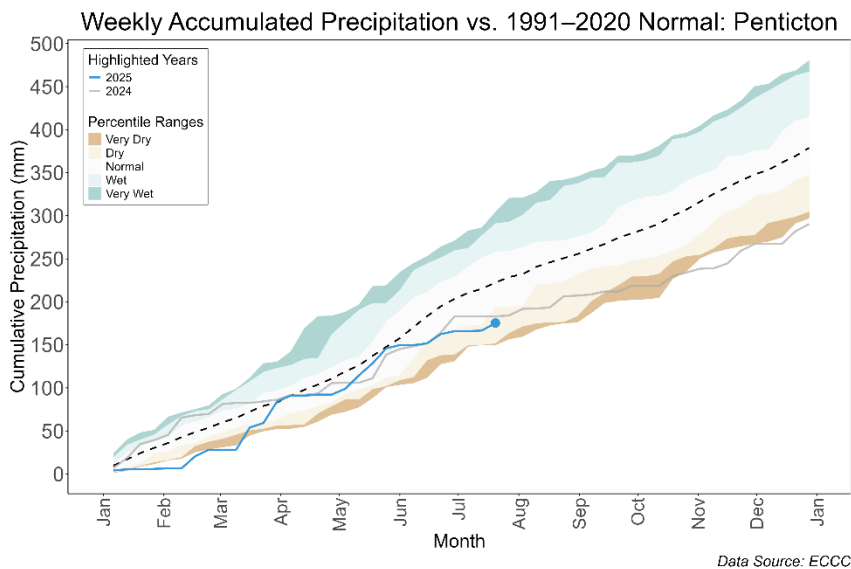
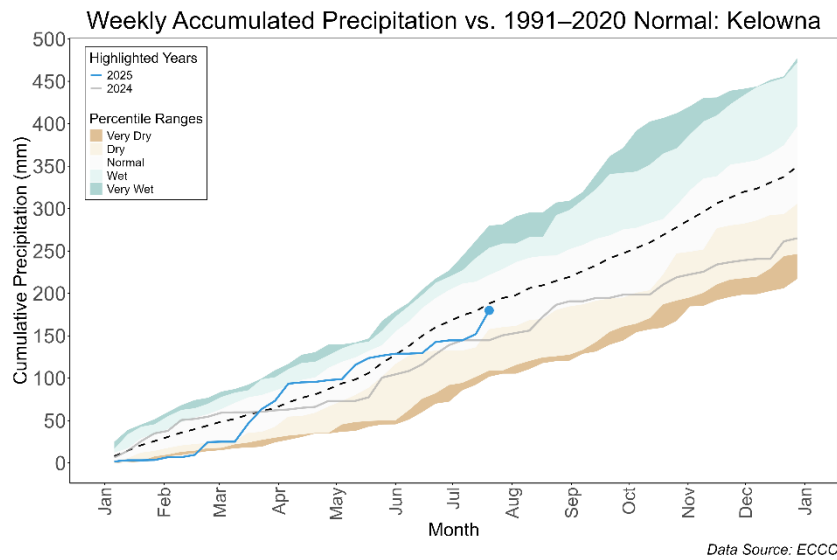
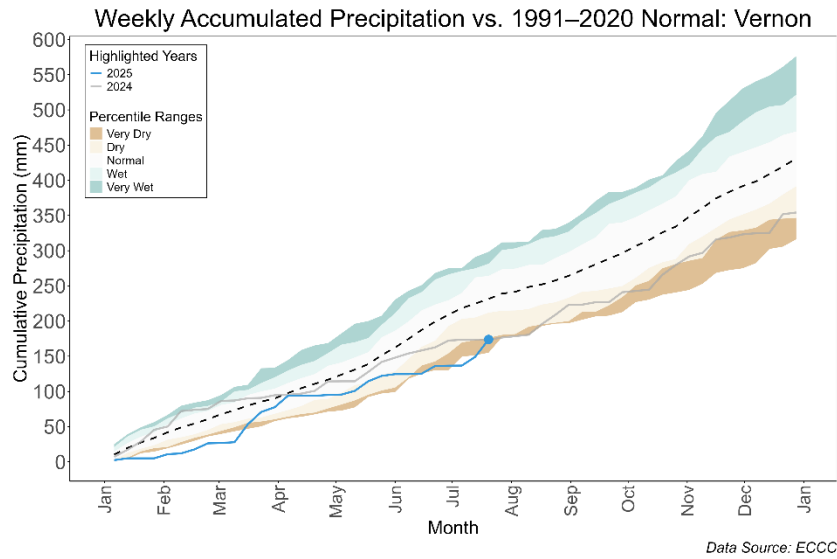


Figure 4: Cumulative weekly precipitation in the Okanagan as of July 28, 2025. Compared to the 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada

Hydrology

Streamflow was variable across the valley, but many systems are low, and water temperatures are warm. Okanagan Lake levels are low and consistent with an early and rapid melt, resulting in an early peak (Figure 5). Even with the rainfall and comparatively low temperatures, many unregulated systems are low, especially in the south. Warm waters are creating thermal barriers that make fish passage difficult. As a note, the Similkameen River is alarmingly low, with many parts of the river now setting new record-low levels.

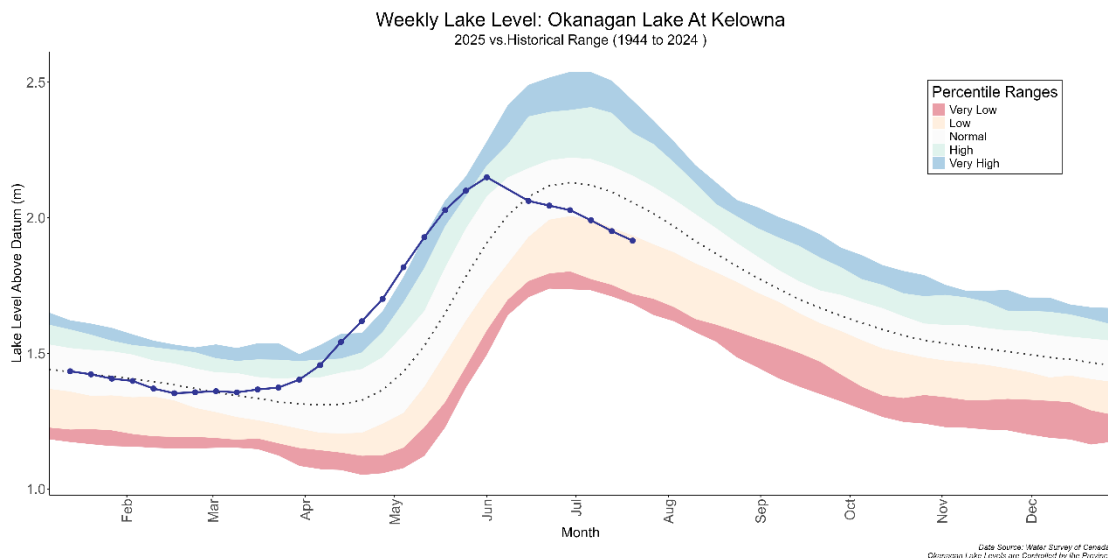


Figure 5: Weekly lake levels for Okanagan Lake at Kelowna compared to the 1944 – 2023 range as of July 28, 2025. Data is retrieved from the Water Survey of Canada.

Seasonal forecasts indicate that July through September is likely to be warm and dry. The Environment and Climate Change Canada¹ long-term seasonal forecast shows a high possibility of above normal temperatures in the Okanagan over the next three months. Precipitation, forecasts indicate below-normal precipitation is likely (Figure 5). Seasonal forecasting is highly challenging, so disagreement between models or variations from projections is not uncommon. Seasonal forecasts can be used to provide a sense of likely future conditions but should not be taken as 100 per cent certain.

¹ ECCC Seasonal forecasts. <https://climate-scenarios.canada.ca/?page=cansips-prob> (Accessed 25.07.2025)

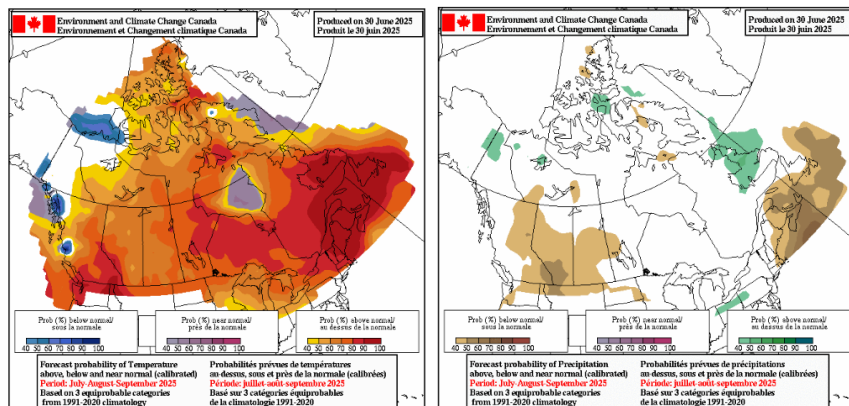


Figure 5: Three-Month Seasonal Forecast from ECCC¹ (Jul-Sept).

Drought

The valley remains in drought, even with the rain events. The low snowpack and early melt this spring, combined with the dry conditions of the last few years, means there is not a lot of moisture in many parts of the valley. The rain has helped though, and the drought is so far not as severe as it was in 2023. Water supplies in many reservoirs have remained stable. However, without prolonged and consistent rain and snow, the valley does not recharge fully leaving many water bodies in the valley low, and water temperatures high.

What kind of drought? Drought is more than a lack of rain. The science of drought is complicated because there are many types of drought, and what constitutes a drought in one location won't be the same in another.

According to the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(2018\)](#), a drought is "A period of abnormally dry weather, long enough to cause a serious hydrological imbalance." What it takes for a drought to occur isn't universal; it varies by location – much like what a Canadian considers "cold" differs from someone in Spain! That's why experts develop specific drought thresholds tailored to each area.

Scientists also classify drought into four types:



Meteorological: When there is less precipitation than usual for an extended period of time.



Hydrological: Low lakes, streams, reservoirs, and aquifers for an extended period of time.



Agricultural/Soil Moisture: The soil is so dry that plants are wilting and can't get enough water to grow for an extended period of time.



Societal/Socioeconomic: When the impacts of the other three types of drought impact the supply of critical human resources, such as agriculture.

These four types of droughts often co-occur but may also occur independently. Therefore, it is possible to be in a state of drought even with consistent rain, or not need watering restrictions even if it has not rained, depending on the source of the water.

Currently, across the Okanagan, different combinations of these four types of drought are happening in different places. In many parts of the Valley, the water supplies in the reservoirs are relatively stable. However, some streams and lakes are low and too hot. In some places, the rain seeped directly into the soil to replenish it and did not flow into streams, in others rain flowed into streams and the soil remains dry. The amount of rain also varied, but rainfall has been lower than normal this year for much of the region. With all this variability, the impacts of drought are also different across the Valley. In some cases, the drought is due to a spatial mismatch between water sources and water demands.

Impacts of a drought depend on the frequency, duration, and severity of the drought. For example, mild but long-term drought will have different impacts than many short but extremely intense droughts in quick succession. How well the system can recover once the drought is over also plays an important role. As a result, maintaining and building drought resilience in the valley is important, especially as summer continues, fish start returning, and farmers are getting ready to harvest their crops.



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Melissa Tesche
Date: July 29, 2025
Subject: **Bank of Montreal Authorization Resolution**

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 5, 2025
Agenda No: 8.1

Background

The OBWB will be following the footsteps of RDCO and OKSIR and transitioning our purchasing cards to the Bank of Montreal (BMO), joining their 'Province of B.C. Broader Public Sector Consortium' agreement. The main reason for the switch is to be able to use BMO's online platform that streamlines the financial administration including collection of receipts and coding of expenses, which will save several hours of staff time each month.

OBWB is already an authorized user of Corporate Supply Arrangements that are available to the broader public service. For the OBWB to enter into the agreement with BMO, they require an authorizing resolution of our Board of Directors. Schedule A, the required resolution, is attached to this memo.

Recommended Motion:

"THAT the OBWB Board of Directors enter into a credit card agreement with the Bank of Montreal and hereby pass the required Authorizing Resolution naming the OBWB Executive Director as the authorized signing authority for this agreement and any future modifications to this agreement, as outlined in Schedule A."

SCHEDULE "A"

Authorizing Resolutions

**RESOLUTION OF THE DIRECTORS
OF
OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD**

(the "Corporation")

WHEREAS the Corporation has the power and capacity to borrow money upon the credit of the Corporation and to mortgage and charge all or any of the real and personal property of the Corporation;

AND WHEREAS it is in the best interest of the Corporation to enter into an arrangement with Bank of Montreal ("**BMO**") to provide the Corporation with credit by way of a corporate credit card account (an "**Account**");

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Corporation is hereby authorized to enter into an arrangement with BMO to provide the Corporation with credit by way of an Account, under which arrangement the Corporation may request that BMO issue cards on the Account, and the Corporation will be responsible for the payment of all amounts (including fees and interest) charged to the Account, the whole substantially on the terms and conditions set out in the draft corporate card agreement (the "**Agreement**") submitted to, and hereby approved by, the directors;
2. THAT (*select one*):

☒ the person with the title of: Executive Director _____ is

☐ any one of the following persons with the titles of: _____ is

☐ any two of the following persons with the titles of: _____ are

hereby authorized to sign the Agreement with BMO substantially on the terms and conditions of the draft thereof approved by the directors, with such changes or modifications as the persons so signing may in their sole discretion deem appropriate, and to sign from time to time such other documents, agreements, amendments to, and restatements of, the Agreement and to do such other things they in their sole discretion deem appropriate or advisable in connection with, or to give effect to, such Agreement and the program contemplated thereunder.

3. The execution and delivery of any other agreements, instruments or documents ancillary or incidental to the documents referred to in this resolution which may have been executed or delivered prior to the enactment of this resolution, regardless of the officer or other employee of the Corporation who executed such agreement, instrument or document, and regardless of any informality in such execution or delivery, are hereby ratified, approved and confirmed in all respects.



Reference: 45860

June 5, 2025

VIA EMAIL: carmen.weld@obwb.ca

Blair Ireland, Chair
Okanagan Basin Water Board
1450 KLO Road
Kelowna, British Columbia
V1W 3Z4

Dear Blair Ireland:

Thank you for your letter on May 9th 2025, regarding the urgency of bringing *Wildlife Act* amendments into force to prevent invasive mussels. The British Columbia (B.C.) government remains committed to preventing invasive mussels from establishing in B.C., through the ongoing delivery of the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP).

We appreciate hearing your support for the proposed amendments to the *Wildlife Act* and I am pleased to provide some additional information regarding proposed timelines and existing measures that are in place for the 2025 boating season.

For this year, the Invasive Mussel Defence Program is planning for 50 inspectors to operate at six watercraft inspection stations and two roving inspection crews. Watercraft inspection stations are located at key entry points into the province along the Alberta and US–Canada Border. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) inspector training took place in early May and all watercraft inspection stations are now operational.

Currently, it is mandatory for anyone transporting a boat in B.C. to stop at an open watercraft inspection station along their travel route. This applies to all types of watercrafts including sailboats, motorboats, car toppers, kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards. The requirement to stop at open watercraft inspection stations is currently enforced under a broader fail to stop section under the *Wildlife Act*.

In 2024, a General Order was issued under the *Animal Health Act* that prohibits anyone from transporting a boat in B.C. overland with the drainage plug in place. There is no end date on this General Order, so the existing “Pull the Plug” requirement remains in place for the 2025 boating season.

Page 1 of 2

Blair Ireland, Chair

The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) is working towards bringing the recent *Wildlife Act* amendments for “Pull the Plug” requirement and mandatory stops at open watercraft inspection stations into effect for the 2025 summer boating season. These amendments will clarify and strengthen authorities needed for officers to enforce the existing Invasive Mussel Defence Program.

The amendments will also enable mandatory inspection of watercraft entering B.C. from another jurisdiction prior to launch. This authority will be brought into force through regulations following further analysis and engagement.

The proposed amendments to the *Wildlife Act* will provide long-term solutions to prevent the spread of invasive mussels and other AIS as well as improve operational efficiency by aligning these provisions with WLRS’s mandate.

Again, thank you for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Halls". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lori Halls
Deputy Minister



July 7, 2025

The Honourable Stephen Fuhr
Member of Parliament for Kelowna
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6
Stephen.Fuhr@parl.gc.ca

RE: Support for OBWB EcoAction Stream 2 Applications – 2025/2026

Dear Mr. Fuhr,

On behalf of the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), I am pleased to share that we have submitted two project proposals to the Canada Water Agency's EcoAction Stream 2 program, designed to enhance freshwater sustainability and innovation across Canada.

The two initiatives we are championing with regional and national partners are:

1. Collaborative Monitoring and Early-Warning System for Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)
In partnership with the City of Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, and Interior and First Nations Health Authorities, this project will develop a real-time monitoring and predictive system to manage increasing occurrences of cyanobacteria in Okanagan Lake. These blooms pose a threat to drinking water safety, public health, tourism, and ecosystem health. This initiative builds local capacity, integrates Indigenous knowledge systems, and provides early-warning tools to mitigate risks to our water supplies.
2. Innovating Hydrometric Monitoring: A Scalable, Community-Driven Approach
In collaboration with Foresight Canada, this project will pilot cost-effective and scalable hydrometric monitoring systems to address critical gaps in freshwater data. By integrating AI, camera-based river gauges, and open-source platforms, the project will enable more informed water management decisions across the Okanagan and establish a replicable model that other regions in Canada can adopt.

Both projects align strongly with the Government of Canada's priorities on freshwater protection, climate resilience, reconciliation, and community capacity-building. We're tackling water stress with smart, science-driven solutions that work for communities like ours and can be adopted across the country.

As our federal representative, we kindly request your support in advocating for the approval and funding of these two vital projects. These initiatives will significantly enhance our capacity to respond to climate impacts and bolster regional and national water stewardship.

Thank you for your continued support of freshwater sustainability and the Okanagan region. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss the proposals in further detail, I would be happy to connect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blair Ireland", with a stylized, cursive script.

Blair Ireland
Chair, Okanagan Basin Water Board

The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) is a partnership of the three regional districts of the Okanagan Basin, serving an area with 11 municipalities, five First Nation bands, and more than 390,000 people. Our board includes mayors and other elected officials from Armstrong in the north to Osoyoos in the south, and additional board directors from the Okanagan Nation Alliance, the Water Supply Association of B.C., and the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council. Our mandate is to protect and enhance the quality of life in the Okanagan through sustainable water management. For more than 50 years the board's central responsibilities include reducing water pollution from all sources, and supporting long-term water supply for people, agriculture, and the environment.