

## Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



**Okanagan Basin**  
WATER BOARD

**DATE:** Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026

**TIME:** 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** ONLINE

### 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 siw̓lk̓ (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.*

### 2. ELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

### 3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

### 4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommendation:

*THAT the agenda of the meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 3, 2026 be approved.*

### 5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

#### 5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 4, 2025 held online.

Recommendation:

*THAT the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 4, 2025 held online be approved.*

P. 4

### 6. BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

### 7. DIRECTOR REPORT

#### 7.1 Report from Director Bob Fleming regarding the OBWB-funded Hogg's Gulch Restoration Project.

### 8. DELEGATION

#### 8.1 Lisa Scott – Executive Director, Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society

### 9. STAFF REPORTS

#### 9.1 Executive Director Report

P. 8

##### 9.1.1 siw̓lk̓ Water & Climate Forum information poster

P. 11

##### 9.1.2 Finalized 2026 Meeting Schedule

P. 12

Recommendation:

*THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Jan. 26, 2026, be received.*

#### 9.2 Chief Operating Officer Report

P. 13

Recommendation:

*THAT the Chief Operating Officer Report, dated Jan. 27, 2026, be received.*

- 9.3 Water Stewardship Director Report P. 16
- Recommendation:  
*THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Jan. 26, 2026, be received.*
- 9.4 Communications Manager Report P. 18
- Recommendation:  
*THAT the Communications Manager's Report, dated Jan. 27, 2026, be received.*
- 9.5 Water Science Specialist Report P. 24
- Recommendation:  
*THAT the Water Science Specialist's report dated Jan. 26, 2026, be received.*
10. **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
11. **CORRESPONDENCE**
- 11.1 Letter to The Hon. Randene Neill Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship regarding the OBWB's grave concerns with Bill M 216 – 2025, Professional Reliance Act dated Nov. 14, 2025. P. 28
- 11.2 Response from the Hon. Randene Neill Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship acknowledging receipt of OBWB's letter on Bill M 216 – 2025, Professional Reliance Act dated Dec. 17, 2025. P. 30
- 11.3 Letter to The Hon. Randene Neill Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship regarding the OBWB Provincial Government Calls to Action for Invasive Mussel Prevention dated Nov. 27, 2025. P. 31
- 11.4 Response from the office of the Hon. Randene Neill Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship regarding the OBWB Calls to Action for Invasive Mussel Prevention dated Jan.6, 2026. P. 33
- 11.5 Letter to the Hon. Joanne Thompson, P.C., M.P. Minister of Fisheries, and The Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P. regarding the OBWB Federal Government Calls to Action for Invasive Mussel Prevention dated Nov. 27, 2025. P. 36
- 11.6 Response from the office of Hon. Joanne Thompson, P.C., M.P. Minister of Fisheries regarding the OBWB Calls to Action for Invasive Mussel Prevention dated Jan.13, 2026. P. 38
- 11.7 Letter from Mel Arnold, M.P. Kamloops- Shuswap- Central Rockies, Associate Shadow Minister for Fisheries, to Kaili Levesque Associate Deputy Minister Fisheries and Oceans Canada bringing attention to the OBWB Federal Government Calls to Action for Invasive Mussel Prevention dated Dec. 4, 2025. P. 41
- 11.8 Email from the Regional District Central Okanagan regarding the 2026 Okanagan Basin Water Board Appointment of Members dated Nov. 6, 2025. P. 44
- 11.9 Letter from the Regional District North Okanagan regarding the 2026 Okanagan Basin Water Board Appointment of Members dated Dec. 22, 2025. P. 45

- 11.10 Email from the Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen regarding the 2026 Okanagan Basin Water Board Appointment of Members dated Jan. 27, 2026.

P. 47

Recommendation:

*THAT correspondences to and from the OBWB, dated Nov. 14 through Jan. 13, 2026, be received.*

12. **NEXT MEETING**

- 12.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., online

13. **ADJOURNMENT**

Recommendation:

*THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 3, 2026 be adjourned at \_\_\_\_.*

\* **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](mailto:communications@obwb.ca) for further details.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD TUESDAY, NOV. 4, 2025 ONLINE.

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**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 Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Alternate Director Kevin Kraft	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 (OWSC)
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance

**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
Christina White	Water Quality Project Manager
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10:42 a.m.

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

**2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

No late items.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 4, 2025 be approved.”*

**CARRIED**

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- 4.1** Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 7, 2025 held

at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen at 101 Martin St., Penticton, B.C.

***“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 7, 2025, held at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**5. BOARD CHAIR REMARKS**

No chair remarks.

**6. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION**

No delegation.

**7. STAFF REPORTS**

**7.1 Executive Director Report – Melissa Tesche**

Ms. Tesche updated the Board about the ongoing strategic planning process, highlighting the ongoing one-on-one interviews with Directors and confirming the in-person strategic planning session scheduled for Dec. 2, 2025 at the Kelowna Yacht Club.

Ms. Tesche, on behalf of Chief Operating Officer James Littlely, provided an update on the upcoming second annual Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group meeting. The meeting will be cohosted by OBWB and Okanagan Nation Alliance. The session will bring together key partners and interested groups to build consensus on mandatory watercraft inspections and explore prevention strategies used in other jurisdictions.

Ms. Tesche also briefed the Board on the BC Watershed Security Coalition’s recent report, *Modernizing Industrial Water Rates in BC*, noting the report proposes a new provincial revenue stream that could be used to fund water and watershed projects in the province. Directors discussed the report’s findings.

Finally, Ms. Tesche reported on her recent attendance at an informal meeting of involved International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control meeting, alongside retired OBWB Executive Director and current IOLBOC member, Dr. Anna Warwick Sears.

***“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Oct. 30, 2025, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

**7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel**

Dr. Jatel provided an update to the Board about the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC), including a recent presentation on remote sensing technologies. Dr. Jatel also shared the news of a \$200K federal Environment and Climate Change Canada EcoAction Stream 2 grant awarded to the City of Kelowna. The funds will support a project to improve regional monitoring of harmful blue-green algal blooms, and both OBWB and Westbank First Nation are partners on the project. This project is important to ongoing efforts to monitor drinking water quality in the Okanagan, as some Okanagan local governments have been reporting blue-green algae blooms outside of expected seasons.

Dr. Jatel noted that the project partners would be presenting on the project at the upcoming OWSC meeting, to be held on Nov. 13, 2025.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated Oct. 28, 2025, be received.”***

**CARRIED.**

**7.3 Communications Manager Report – Carmen Weld**

Ms. Weld reported on the successful conclusion of the Make Water Work campaign, noting that individual prize winners were now being contacted. Ms. Weld also shared outreach results from the Don't Move a Mussel program and previewed upcoming winter social media initiatives focused on water education and engagement. Ms. Weld discussed the final Drought Bulletins of the season and highlighted Mr. Littlely's recent interviews on AM1150 and CBC.

***"THAT the Communication Manager's Report, dated Oct. 27, 2025, be received."***  
**CARRIED.**

**7.4 Water Science Specialist Report – Sandra Schira**

Ms. Schira presented to the Board about fall weather and hydrology conditions in the Okanagan, noting cool October temperatures, below-average precipitation, and continued low streamflows as the region heads into winter. She reported on forecasted La Niña conditions and there was discussion on the potential impact to winter water supply.

***"THAT the Water Science Specialist's Report, dated Oct. 27, 2025, be received."***  
**CARRIED.**

**7.5 Office and Grant Manager Report – Carolina Restrepo Tamayo**

Ms. Restrepo Tamayo updated the Board on preparations for the 2026–27 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement grant cycle, presenting the proposed scoring criteria and annual theme of "Innovation in Water Supply, Quality, and Quantity" for board approval.

Director Tim Lezard entered the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

***"THAT the process and scoring criteria for the grant competition be approved as outlined;***

***And***

***THAT for the 2026-2027 WCQI grant competition, up to 10 bonus points will be awarded for projects in any category related to Innovation in Water Supply, Quality, and Quantity."***  
**CARRIED**

***"THAT the Water Science Specialist's Report, dated Oct. 28, 2025, be received."***  
**CARRIED.**

**8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS****8.1 Draft Budget for Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2027**

8.1.1 DRAFT Regional District Provisional Assessments

8.1.2 DRAFT OBWB Segmented Budget for the Year Ending March 31, 2027

The Board was presented with the draft 2026–27 budget for review. Ms. Tesche noted differences in presentation between this year's budget and previous year's budget. The Board Directors discussed the proposed budget.

***"THAT the OBWB adopt the 2026-27 budget as presented."***  
**CARRIED.**

**8.2 DRAFT 2026 Meeting Schedule**

The Board was presented with the proposed 2026 meeting schedule, which was built to accommodate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the OBWB's Water Management Program in June and the upcoming municipal election in October. The Board requested a tentative December 2026 meeting be added to the schedule, noting the meeting would only proceed if all three regional districts have determined their OBWB appointees before that date.

***"THAT the OBWB adopt the 2026-27 Meeting Schedule as amended."***

**CARRIED**

**9. CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence.

**10. IN-CAMERA**

No in-camera session held.

**11. NEXT MEETING**

**11.1** The regular December meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board has been cancelled in lieu of the Strategic Planning workshop to be held on Dec. 2, 2025, at the Kelowna Yacht Club, 1370 Water St., Kelowna, B.C.

**11.2** The next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026, and will be held online.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

***"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 4, 2025 be adjourned at 12:14 p.m."***

**CARRIED**

***\*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](mailto:Communications@OBWB.ca) for further details.*

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Blair Ireland, OBWB Chairperson

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Melissa Tesche, OBWB Executive Director



## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Melissa Tesche  
Date: Jan. 26, 2026  
Subject: Executive Director's Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Feb. 3, 2026  
Agenda No: 9.1

### Election of 2026 Chair and Vice-Chair

The first item on the agenda is the election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026. Please reach out to your fellow directors to discuss nominations before the meeting. We will have a digital ballot process if there is more than one nomination for either position. For 2026, Directors and Alternates are:

**Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO):** Director Brian Guy, Director Rick Fairbairn, Director Bob Fleming (alternates: Victor Cumming, Christine Fraser, and Shirley Fowler).

**Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO):** Director Blair Ireland, Director Ron Cannan, Director Kevin Kraft (alternate: Patrick Van Minsel).

**Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS):** Director Sue McKortoff, Director Doug Holmes, Director Subrina Monteith (alternates: Adrienne Fedrigo, Matt Taylor).

**Water Management Appointments:** Director Tim Lezard – Okanagan Nation Alliance (alternate: TBD), Director Sheena Spencer – Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, Director Bob Hrasko – Water Supply Association of BC (alternate: James Kay).

### First Draft of OBWB Strategic Plan to be Circulated End of February

Thank you to the Board for an engaging strategic planning workshop, held on Dec 2, 2025. Mr. Neilson has completed a report on the workshop to ensure that director contributions are captured. Staff have been working on the first draft of the plan, and in consultation with Chair Ireland, have pushed the delivery of the draft to the end of February.

### OBWB Receives \$13K Grant to Support Required Crane Certification for Milfoil Crew

The OBWB milfoil crew has successfully achieved their crane training and rigging certification in time for the 2026 season. The OBWB milfoil program uses a crane truck for various operations at the works yard and while launching and retrieving our equipment. Operation of the crane requires that our crew are certified in both operation and rigging

every 10 years. Thanks to Ms. Carolina Restrepo Tamayo, OBWB was able to secure a \$13k training grant and 65% of the training cost was recovered.

#### **Financial Year-End Preparations and Audit Planning Underway**

OBWB's financial year ends March 31, 2026. BDO Canada LLP will be completing the audit for 2025-26, under the last year of the current audit services agreement. I am working with the new RDCO finance team to prepare for our year end and plan for the audit process. A representative from BDO will present the OBWB audited financials at the June board meeting. Please note the June meeting will be held on Friday, Jun 5, 2026, in conjunction with the Water Management Program's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

#### **OBWB's Water Management Program Turns 20 This Year, Anniversary Celebration Planned for Friday, Jun 5, 2026.**

Planning is underway for the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Water Management Program, scheduled for Friday, June 5, 2026 in Kelowna. This special milestone celebration will replace our Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is typically held in early September. A Save the Date notice will be sent out in February. Further details on the program, venue, and invitations will follow as planning continues.

#### **Collaborative Leadership Table (CLT) and the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Co-Host siw̓kʷ Water and Climate Forum, March 23-24, 2026**

Mr. James Littlely and I were invited to attend the Nov. 21, 2025 CLT meeting held in Keremeos. The meeting helped set the stage for the upcoming siw̓kʷ Water and Climate Forum. Hosted jointly by the ONA and the CLT, forum participants will help shape a 250-year responsibility plan for water. I have attached more information on the event, scheduled for March 23-24, 2026 at the Delta Grand in Kelowna. OBWB Directors are encouraged to attend, and Directors who wish to attend but who are not members of the CLT can register through OBWB staff. The next CLT meeting is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 20, 2026.

#### **OBWB Staff Meet with Senior WLRS Staff to Discuss Drought Communications**

Dr. Nelson Jatel, Ms. Sandra Schira, and I met with senior staff from WLRS to further elaborate on our concerns with the province's new regional drought index that was launched without consultation last year—as system that attempts to separate drought from water scarcity. While we commended the local staff from the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship for their hard work during the system's rollout, we have identified several areas for improvement. Our feedback focused on development and rollout process of the new system, as well as a number of the technical challenges that come with trying to reduce the Okanagan's complex, heterogeneous conditions into a single metric. Further, we highlighted the communication issues that arise when provincial indices do not match on-the-ground conditions but get picked up in the media, potentially undermining local watering restrictions.

## **Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants Program Update**

The call for proposals for the 2026 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) Grant Program closes on Friday, Feb. 20, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.. Each year, the OBWB approves the theme of the program and the scoring criteria for potential projects. The theme for this year is “Innovation in Water Supply, Quality, and Quantity”—hoping to encourage creative, science-based solutions for emerging water challenges in the Okanagan. In March, the evaluation committee will review and score the proposals and prepare funding recommendations. The recommendations will be presented to the OBWB Board at the April board meeting. Based on the significant volume of inquiries received since the call for proposals opened last November, we anticipate a higher than usual number of applications this year.

## **2026 Meeting Locations Confirmed**

I am attaching the final 2026 meeting schedule to this memo. While the board had already approved the dates, we were still waiting to confirm locations based on boardroom availability. OBWB staff will make sure that calendar invitations are updated and sent to Directors’ calendars.



# siw̓t̓kʷ Water & Climate Forum

**MARCH 23–24, 2026**

**DELTA GRAND OKANAGAN RESORT**

**This is not just a conference. It's a pathway forward for water, land, and future generations.**

## **THIS FORUM WILL:**

- Highlight innovative, climate-resilient water governance models
- Enhance the Collaborative Leadership Table as a scalable BC approach
- Contribute to a 250-year water responsibility plan
- Align leadership, investment, and actions across jurisdictions

## **EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**

Who should attend: Leaders, knowledge holders, policy makers, water professionals, post-secondary students, and anyone interested in protecting water.

### **Early Bird Registration for General Public**

SCAN HERE



### **Free Registration for Indigenous Peoples**

Limited spaces available

Email: [waterforum@syilx.org](mailto:waterforum@syilx.org)  
to Register!

ks̓ kə́t̓qayx̓w̓ntim i? siw̓t̓kʷ • we will protect the water

**For more information, contact:**

Alycia Burns  
[waterforum@syilx.org](mailto:waterforum@syilx.org)  
[www.syilx.org](http://www.syilx.org)

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## **2026 OBWB Meeting Schedule**

Date	Location	Notes
Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026	No Meeting	Winter Break - avoiding conflicts with holiday schedules
Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026	Online	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2026	Online	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 7, 2026	RDOS	WCQI grant approvals
Tuesday, May 5, 2026	Kelowna	Joint OBWB/Water Stewardship Council Meeting
<b>Friday, June 5, 2026</b>	<b>TBD, Kelowna</b>	<b>Water Management Program 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (replaces fall annual public meeting)</b>
Tuesday, July 7, 2026	RDNO	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2026	No Meeting	Summer break – avoiding day after BC Day Stat
Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026	RDOS	First opportunity to adopt 2027-28 Budget
Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2026	RDNO	Adopt 2027-28 Budget, approve 2027 meeting schedule
Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2026	Cancelled	Pending regional district appointments following municipal elections
Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2026	RDCO	Pending regional board appointments following initial regional district meetings



## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: James Littley, COO  
Date: Jan. 27, 2026  
Subject: Chief Operating Officer Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Feb. 3, 2026  
Agenda No: 9.2

### Federal and Provincial Responses to Invasive Mussel Calls to Action

#### Federal Response

On Jan. 13, 2026, the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) received a response to our latest calls for federal action to address the threat of invasive mussels (see attached correspondence). Consistent with previous federal communications, the letter primarily reiterates existing programs and investments, without commitments to match provincial funding or support new frontline research and innovation initiatives. The response notes that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) “will consider options for future risk assessments” for golden mussels but references an earlier national risk assessment framework rather than outlining any specific updated process or timeline. In response to OBWB’s request for annual public progress reporting on aquatic invasive species (AIS), the letter points to existing federal webpages and information portals, including fisheries enforcement, science advisory resources, and the AIS webpage, much of which remains limited in scope or is outdated. This reliance on existing, limited resources fails to meet the need for a clear and transparent national reporting system.

The letter also provides a Director General (executive level, reporting to ADM) staff contact at DFO for follow up. OBWB staff will follow up with the contact as suggested.

#### Provincial Response

On Jan. 6, 2026, OBWB received a response to our calls for provincial action on invasive mussel prevention (see correspondence). The letter affirms the Province’s commitment to prevention and highlights recent legislative amendments to the Wildlife Act, including strengthened inspection authorities, mandatory “Pull the Plug” requirements, and the listing of golden mussels as a prohibited species. The response indicates a clear long-term policy direction toward mandatory watercraft inspections, noting that the legislative framework is now in place to enable future regulations requiring inspections of out-of-province watercraft

prior to launch in B.C. waters. However, the Province does not commit to implementation timelines, citing fiscal constraints and the need to balance regulatory development with the continued delivery of the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP). The letter does not support interim safeguards such as a temporary moratorium on high-risk watercraft, referencing operational and enforcement challenges, and emphasizes existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms rather than establishing a new Western Canada Mussel-Free Zone framework. It also underscores the importance of federal involvement at international borders and ports of entry, noting continued provincial requests for renewed federal funding and participation, while reaffirming a collaborative, phased approach to strengthening prevention efforts across jurisdictions.

OBWB staff will continue to engage on this file.

### **Invasive Mussel Project Updates**

#### Golden Mussel Update to Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure

Over the past few months, OBWB Water Quality Project Manager White has been updating the Guide to include water chemistry and other information for the threat of golden mussels. Although the body of knowledge for golden mussels is not as far along as it is for zebra and quagga mussels, the US Fish and Wildlife Service recently published an Ecological Risk Screening Summary with the most up-to-date water chemistry risk. Ms. White used this and other sources to update our new version 2.0 guide, which is currently under review by technical experts and will be complete in early February. I am scheduled to present version 2.0 publicly for the first time to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council at their AGM on Feb. 10, 2026.

#### Provincial Update on Invasive Mussel Defense Program (IMDP)

On Jan. 19, 2026, the Province hosted an online update on the IMDP 2025 program and provided information for 2026. In 2025, there were six “permanent” and four roving inspection stations, staffed by 49 auxiliary inspectors. The program inspected 27,100 watercraft, including 319 considered high-risk. They also performed 170 decontaminations and found six mussel-fouled boats, with five from Ontario and one from North Dakota. Three infested boats were headed for the Okanagan, and one each to the lower mainland, Vancouver Island, and Alaska. This year the province estimated a 92.2% compliance rate at inspection stations (boats that pulled over), up from 90.7% in 2024. The province and their partners also collected more than 1,200 water samples from 91 priority water bodies including both plankton tow and eDNA samples. All samples were negative for invasive mussels.

For 2026, the province reviewed their list of priority waterbodies for sampling based on the risk from golden mussels and updated science on zebra and quagga mussels. For 2026 they removed seven waterbodies from the priority monitoring list, while adding 17 more.

These changes were mostly based on temperatures associated with mussel reproduction, not establishment or survival. They also provided an update that an aggressive invasive Green sunfish has been reported in Skaha Pond in Penticton, and that Corbicula (invasive clams) have been found on Upper Arrow Lake at the Nakusp boat launch.

### **Milfoil Control Program**

Winter rototilling is now complete in Wood Lake and continues in Okanagan Lake and Skaha Lake. Early in the season we also rototilled extensively in permitted areas in Osoyoos Lake, where we anticipate returning before spring. I expect this will lead to less milfoil growth in Osoyoos Lake this summer compared to summer 2025 since we were not able to access the lake at all during the previous winter.

We are also working to put the amphibious harvester into Duck Lake (Ellison Lake) this summer as many parts of the lake were completely choked with milfoil and covered in algae last summer. Ms. White and I attended several meetings around Duck Lake last summer to assess the milfoil growth and look at options for access and transfer sites. We also were hosted at Holiday Park Resort in late October to present on milfoil control to residents around the lake, with approximately 50 people attending. In the long-term, rototilling would be the best control option, but as the lake has never been rototilled before, there are several assessments and referrals to complete before that is a viable option.

### **UBC-O Capstone Students Tackle OBWB Challenges**

This year, Ms. White and I are working with three Capstone groups representing OBWB as “industry partners.” One Engineering Capstone group is working on an adjustable mount for an underwater camera for our rototillers to detect hazards, substrate conditions, and potentially differentiate between plant-types.

A second engineering group is developing an easily deployable in-water shade, mimicking the effects of a benthic blanket, but without the lake bottom disturbance. This type of control – effectively shading the lake bottom for several weeks during the growing season – has proven successful in a recent provincial study in the Fraser Valley. If the technology works, it could be a game-changer for controlling milfoil in shallow, small, or inaccessible parts of the lake, especially around docks and marinas.

Another Capstone group from the Bachelor of Sustainability Program is working with us to conduct a gap analysis of a rapid response plan for invasive mussels, using the 2023 infestation in the Snake River as a case study. Long-term, this student work will help inform a region-specific rapid response plan that will function as an Okanagan appendix for the provincial Early Detection Rapid Response Plan.

A previous capstone project, developing a modular watercraft decontamination dip tank, is also moving forward into a final design stage.

## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Nelson Jatel  
Date: Jan. 26, 2026  
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting Feb. 3, 2026 Agenda No: 9.3
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### Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) – Technical Advisory Body to the OBWB

#### Summary: OWSC Meeting – Jan. 8, 2026

At the Jan. 8, 2026 OWSC meeting, Chair Sheena Spencer introduced a new interactive engagement format using *Mentimeter* to capture real-time member input on upcoming events, key presentation takeaways, and influential 2025 developments. The Water Stewardship Director presented on 2025 water trends and priorities for 2026, highlighting progress on watershed governance, ongoing funding challenges, successful inter-agency partnerships, and emerging monitoring technologies. Member roundtable discussions reflected on significant 2025 events including budget constraints, labour disruptions, legislative changes, infrastructure milestones, agricultural resilience, and advances in watershed planning. The new engagement approach was well received and will be evaluated over several meetings before broader adoption.

#### Next OWSC Meeting: Feb. 12, 2026 – Beaver-Based Wetland Restoration

The upcoming Feb. 12, 2026 OWSC meeting will feature a panel discussion on the role of beavers in Okanagan hydrology and watershed resilience, bringing together leading practitioners and researchers working at the intersection of beaver ecology, wetland restoration, and water management. The meeting will be held Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026, from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna, with lunch from 12:00-1:00 p.m., followed by panel presentation and discussion from 1:00-3:00 p.m., and member updates from 3:00-4:00 p.m.

#### *Panel Participants:*

The panel will feature several presenters involved in beaver-related projects in the Okanagan. The BC Wildlife Federation has launched an ambitious 10,000 Wetlands program, which uses beaver-based restoration to enhance watershed resilience across British Columbia. Presentations will cover ecological and hydrological benefits of beaver-created wetlands, methodologies for beaver-assisted restoration in diverse landscape settings, case studies demonstrating improved water retention and groundwater recharge, and best practices for working with beavers as ecosystem engineers. Dr. Jonathan Laumer, Chair of Mechanical Engineering Technology at Okanagan College, will present a new research initiative focused on

advanced tracking technology for monitoring beaver activity at wetland restoration sites. The project aims to correlate beaver behavior with hydrological and ecological parameters to develop evidence-based introduction protocols for successful beaver introduction and build comprehensive models linking beaver activity to measurable watershed benefits. Eva Hartmann, co-founder of the Interior Wildlife Rehabilitation Society, will share insights from years of hands-on work with beavers, focusing on practical aspects of human-beaver coexistence including non-lethal solutions for managing beaver impacts on infrastructure, the ecological value of beaver wetlands in urban and suburban settings, and community education strategies drawn from successful case studies in the Okanagan region.

*Relevance to Okanagan Water Management:*

This panel discussion is particularly timely given the Okanagan's ongoing challenges with drought, water scarcity, and the need for enhanced watershed resilience. Beaver-based restoration offers multiple benefits relevant to regional water stewardship priorities, including increased water storage and groundwater recharge through wetland creation, flow regulation that can moderate both drought and flood conditions, improved water quality through natural filtration processes, enhanced riparian and aquatic habitat, and cost-effective nature-based solutions that support climate adaptation through increased landscape water retention capacity.

The combination of practitioner experience, cutting-edge research, and on-the-ground implementation knowledge will provide OWSC members with a comprehensive understanding of how beaver-based approaches can be integrated into Okanagan watershed management strategies.

### **Cyanobacteria Monitoring Project Launches**

The City of Kelowna and Westbank First Nation have successfully launched the federally funded Collaborative Monitoring and Early-Warning System for Harmful Algal Blooms project, following approval of \$200,000 in funding from the Canada Water Agency. The inaugural meeting of the Cyanobacteria Working Group was held on Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, co-chaired by Ed Hoppe, Water Quality and Customer Care Manager for the City of Kelowna, and Krista Derrickson, Manager of Utilities and Public Works for Westbank First Nation.

The project will establish a regionally coordinated algae and cyanobacteria monitoring program across Okanagan mainstem lakes, developing early-warning tools and adaptive management strategies for water utilities through advanced predictive modeling, real-time pigment sensor probes, and remote sensing technology. Initial discussions focused on finalizing the contribution agreement with the Canada Water Agency and exploring integration of optical sensors into municipal SCADA systems to enable continuous monitoring at drinking water intakes. The OBWB is contributing \$60,000 in cash and \$30,000 in-kind support over the two-year project period, serving as a key partner in regional coordination, data sharing, and development of the Okanagan Cyanobacteria Data Hub.



## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Carmen Weld  
Date: Jan. 27, 2026  
Subject: **Communications Manager Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Feb. 3, 2026  
Agenda No: 9.4

### **Make Water Work and Don't Move a Mussel Partner Meetings**

In November 2025, I had the opportunity to meet with 16 of our partners up and down the valley to discuss both the Make Water Work (MWW) and Don't Move a Mussel (DMM) campaigns. In general, there continues to be strong regional support for both campaigns, specifically praising the multi-channel approach including social media, billboards and more, the successful co-branding with FireSmartBC™ in 2025 and the revised drought bulletins. To enhance future impact, partners recommend prioritizing short-form social media videos featuring local personalities, developing an agriculture-specific track of the MWW campaign, and evolving messaging to directly counter drought denialism and the "myth of abundance." While the creative remains well-liked, there is a clear call for more urgent, consequence-driven visuals for DMM and a simplified, more visible "Take the Pledge" program with better prizes. Overall, the feedback emphasizes a transition toward streamlined digital collaboration and high-impact, clear and consistent content to maintain momentum across the Okanagan Valley.

<i>Partner visits completed</i>			
City of Armstrong	Township of Spallumcheen	Regional District of North Okanagan	District of Lake Country
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Black Mountain Irrigation District	City of Kelowna	Glenmore Ellison Improvement District
Westbank First Nation	City of West Kelowna	District of Peachland	City of Penticton
Penticton Indian Band	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	Town of Oliver	Town of Osoyoos

## Key communications since last report

- Nov. 12, 2025: [OBWB Launches Annual \\$350K Grant Program, Prioritizing Innovation in Water Security](#)
- Nov. 14, 2025: [OBWB Sounds Alarm: Private Member's Bill Poses Threat to Watersheds, Drinking Water, and Local Governments](#)
- Drought Bulletin – [December 1, 2025](#)
- Dec. 24, 2025: [Happy Holidays from OBWB](#)
- Dec. 31, 2025: OBWB Year in Review: [Scientific Investment, Advocacy and Collaboration](#)
- Media of note:
  - OBWB Water Science Specialist [Sandra Schira on Global News](#) discussing how the Okanagan has been stuck in drought conditions since 2023, and how a substantial amount of winter moisture is needed to rebuild a healthy snowpack.
- Key social media posts with the most engagement since the last report include:
  - WaterWordWednesday: An aquifer is an underground layer of rock, sand, or gravel that holds water—[kind of like a natural sponge beneath the ground.](#)
  - [Giving our rototillers a set of underwater eyes!](#)
  - CONGRATS to our first [Make Water Work 2025 winner](#), Rebecca Muller of Spallumcheen!
  - Congratulations to Sandra Schira, Water Science Specialist at the Okanagan Basin Water Board, [on her recent publication!](#)
  - [WaterWordWednesday Reel:](#) 💧 Bathymetry describes the change in surface elevation, the underwater terrain, of lakes and rivers.
  - Don't think we're in drought? 😬 Check this out!! - [Thirsk Dam Footage](#)
    - Concerns about salmon as Summerland, B.C., continues to face low water levels on [CBC News](#).
  - **Congrats** to our OBWB Chief Operating Officer James Littlely!! 🎉👏 on his [2026 UBC Alumni Builder Award!](#)

## Media Tracking

Please find monthly media tracking below, listing articles from Oct. 27, 2025 to Jan. 26, 2026, in reverse chronological order.

Date	Source	Headline	Link
Jan. 16, 2026	Kelowna Chamber of Commerce	Letter to Canada Water Agency re Rapid eDNA Detection to combat invasive mussels	<a href="https://www.kelownachamber.org/news/post/967/Letter-to-Canada-Water-Agency-re-Rapid-eDNA-Detection-to-combat-invasive-mussels/">https://www.kelownachamber.org/news/post/967/Letter to Canada Water Agency re Rapid eDNA Detection to combat invasive mussels/</a>
Jan. 15, 2026	The Similkameen Spotlight	EDITORIAL: Despite present snow levels, dry year is still possible in 2026	<a href="https://similkameenspotlight.com/2026/01/15/editorial-despite-present-snow-levels-dry-year-is-still-possible-in-2026/">https://similkameenspotlight.com/2026/01/15/editorial-despite-present-snow-levels-dry-year-is-still-possible-in-2026/</a>
Jan. 14, 2026	Castanet	Evergreens rule in the winter garden	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/editorial/news-story-594000-1152-.htm#594000">https://www.castanet.net/editorial/news-story-594000-1152-.htm#594000</a>
Jan. 10, 2026	Castanet	Early snowpack numbers for Summerland reveal reservoirs sitting normal	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/news/Summerland/593433/Early-snowpack-numbers-for-Summerland-reveal-reservoirs-sitting-normal">https://www.castanet.net/news/Summerland/593433/Early-snowpack-numbers-for-Summerland-reveal-reservoirs-sitting-normal</a>
Jan. 8, 2026	Penticton Western News and other Black Press publications	Snow measurements higher than normal at Summerland sites	<a href="https://pentictonwesternnews.com/2026/01/08/snow-measurements-higher-than-normal-at-summerland-sites/">https://pentictonwesternnews.com/2026/01/08/snow-measurements-higher-than-normal-at-summerland-sites/</a>
Jan. 7, 2026	FundsforNGOs	Open Call for Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program (Canada)	<a href="https://www2.fundsforngos.org/environment/open-call-for-water-conservation-and-quality-improvement-grant-program-canada/">https://www2.fundsforngos.org/environment/open-call-for-water-conservation-and-quality-improvement-grant-program-canada/</a>
Jan. 7, 2026	CBC News and Yahoo! News	Concerns about salmon as Summerland, B.C., continues to face low water levels	<a href="https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/summerland-drought-level-4-salmon-9.7035881">https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/summerland-drought-level-4-salmon-9.7035881</a>
Dec. 31, 2025	Castanet and All For Gardening	2025 was an energizing year for the Okanagan Xeriscape Association	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/591737/2025-was-an-energizing-year-for-the-Okanagan-Xeriscape-Association">https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/591737/2025-was-an-energizing-year-for-the-Okanagan-Xeriscape-Association</a>
Dec. 31, 2025	Vernon Matters	OBWB reflects on supporting projects and	<a href="https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/12/31/obwb-reflects-on-">https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/12/31/obwb-reflects-on-</a>

		work, advocacy to protect water in 2025	<a href="#">supporting-projects-and-work-advocacy-to-protect-water-in-2025/</a>
Dec. 27, 2025	Penticton Herald online and print	Small Hedley lot sparks big debate over provincial one-hectare policy	<a href="https://www.pentictonherald.ca/news/article_0f207670-f535-4174-9052-b9f91301ccd0.html">https://www.pentictonherald.ca/news/article_0f207670-f535-4174-9052-b9f91301ccd0.html</a>
Dec. 18, 2025	The Peak	Indigenous-led restoration project uses beaver dam structures to restore waterways	<a href="https://the-peak.ca/2025/12/indigenous-led-restoration-project-uses-beaver-dam-structures-to-restore-waterways/">https://the-peak.ca/2025/12/indigenous-led-restoration-project-uses-beaver-dam-structures-to-restore-waterways/</a>
Dec. 18, 2025	Penticton Western News and other Black Press publications	Okanagan grant risks scuttle Hedley rezoning application	<a href="https://pentictonwesternnews.com/2025/12/18/okanagan-grant-risks-scuttle-hedley-rezoning-application/">https://pentictonwesternnews.com/2025/12/18/okanagan-grant-risks-scuttle-hedley-rezoning-application/</a>
Dec. 18, 2025	Vernon Matters	OBWB renews calls for protections from invasive mussels, province says no contamination in 2025	<a href="https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/12/18/obwb-renews-calls-for-protections-from-invasive-mussels-province-says-no-contamination-in-2025/">https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/12/18/obwb-renews-calls-for-protections-from-invasive-mussels-province-says-no-contamination-in-2025/</a>
Dec. 17, 2025	Castanet and All For Gardening	There are hidden risks in festive plants	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/589581/There-are-hidden-risks-in-festive-plants">https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/589581/There-are-hidden-risks-in-festive-plants</a>
Dec. 3, 2025	Castanet and All For Gardening	Beware of the hidden dangers in your yard	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/587247/Beware-of-the-hidden-dangers-in-your-yard">https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/587247/Beware-of-the-hidden-dangers-in-your-yard</a>
Dec. 5, 2025	Global News, Daily Guardian and Canadian Trends	Rain, snow to fall as Okanagan ends year in a drought	<a href="https://globalnews.ca/news/11564487/rain-snow-to-fall-okanagan-drought/">https://globalnews.ca/news/11564487/rain-snow-to-fall-okanagan-drought/</a>
Dec. 4, 2025	Castanet	Osoyoos resident wins \$500 gift from Make Water Work challenge	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-587644-87-.htm">https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-587644-87-.htm</a>
Nov. 29, 2025	The Penticton Herald and print	RDOS tax increase should be under 4%	<a href="https://www.pentictonherald.ca/news/article_76eb1f1a-dda5-42f9-8c5a-7c3ab69cf493.html">https://www.pentictonherald.ca/news/article_76eb1f1a-dda5-42f9-8c5a-7c3ab69cf493.html</a>
Nov. 28, 2025	Cityhallwatch	Update on Bill M216 (Professional Reliance Act). Public consultation extended to January	<a href="https://cityhallwatch.wordpress.com/2025/11/28/update-bill-m216-professional-reliance-act-opposition-grows/">https://cityhallwatch.wordpress.com/2025/11/28/update-bill-m216-professional-reliance-act-opposition-grows/</a>

		2026 amid rising opposition, including Union of BC Municipalities.	
Nov. 19, 2025	Castanet and All For Gardening	Leaving fallen leaves on the ground is beneficial to ecosystem	<a href="https://www.castanetkamloops.net/edition/news-story-584734-1152-.htm">https://www.castanetkamloops.net/edition/news-story-584734-1152-.htm</a>
Nov. 18, 2025	Abbotsford News	Invasive golden mussel poses new threat to B.C. waterways	<a href="https://abbynews.com/2025/11/18/invasive-golden-mussel-poses-new-threat-to-b-c-waterways/">https://abbynews.com/2025/11/18/invasive-golden-mussel-poses-new-threat-to-b-c-waterways/</a>
Nov. 18, 2025	Kelowna Chamber of Commerce	Kelowna Chamber Opposes Bill M216 – 2025 - The Professional Reliance Act	<a href="https://www.kelownachamber.org/news/post/959/Kelowna_Chamber_Opposes_Bill_M216_2025_The_Professional_Reliance_Act/">https://www.kelownachamber.org/news/post/959/Kelowna_Chamber_Opposes_Bill_M216_2025_The_Professional_Reliance_Act/</a>
Nov. 18, 2025	20+ Black Press Publications	Invasive golden mussel poses new threat to B.C. waterways	<a href="https://kelownacapnews.com/2025/11/18/invasive-golden-mussel-poses-new-threat-to-b-c-waterways/">https://kelownacapnews.com/2025/11/18/invasive-golden-mussel-poses-new-threat-to-b-c-waterways/</a>
Nov. 17, 2025	KelownaNow	Okanagan water board sounds alarm over bill that will ‘dismantle’ safeguards for BC watersheds	<a href="https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Okanagan/Okanagan_water_board_sounds_alarm_over_bill_aimed_at_reducing_administrative_costs/">https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Okanagan/Okanagan_water_board_sounds_alarm_over_bill_aimed_at_reducing_administrative_costs/</a>
Nov. 17, 2025	The Vernon Morning Star and other Black Press Publications	Busy year winding down for Armstrong wetlands group	<a href="https://vernonmorningstar.com/2025/11/17/busy-year-winding-down-for-armstrong-wetlands-group/">https://vernonmorningstar.com/2025/11/17/busy-year-winding-down-for-armstrong-wetlands-group/</a>
Nov. 15, 2025	Castanet	Okanagan water board blasts private member's bill	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/584105/Okanagan-water-board-blasts-private-members-bill">https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/584105/Okanagan-water-board-blasts-private-members-bill</a>
Nov. 13, 2025	Castanet	District of Summerland moves into drought level 4 with reservoir levels running low	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/news/Summerland/583877/District-of-Summerland-moves-into-drought-level-4-with-reservoir-levels-running-low">https://www.castanet.net/news/Summerland/583877/District-of-Summerland-moves-into-drought-level-4-with-reservoir-levels-running-low</a>
Nov. 13, 2025	Vernon Matters	Grant applications open for Okanagan water projects	<a href="https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/11/13/grant-applications-open-for-okanagan-water-projects/">https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/11/13/grant-applications-open-for-okanagan-water-projects/</a>
Nov. 10, 2025	Vernon Matters	OKIB, RDNO and Lake Country endorse North	<a href="https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/11/10/okib-rdno-and-lake">https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/11/10/okib-rdno-and-lake</a>

		Aberdeen Plateau Guidance Plan	<a href="#">country-endorse-north-aberdeen-plateau-guidance-plan/</a>
Nov. 10, 2025	The Vernon Morning Star and other Black Press Publications	Land and water protection prioritized by North Okanagan mayors, chief	<a href="https://vernonmorningstar.com/2025/11/10/land-and-water-protection-prioritized-by-north-okanagan-mayors-chief/">https://vernonmorningstar.com/2025/11/10/land-and-water-protection-prioritized-by-north-okanagan-mayors-chief/</a>
Nov. 7, 2025	Vernon Matters	Outside funds helping Kelowna with algal monitoring project	<a href="https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/11/07/outside-funds-helping-kelowna-with-algal-monitoring-project/">https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/11/07/outside-funds-helping-kelowna-with-algal-monitoring-project/</a>
Nov. 3, 2025	Vernon Matters	Outside funds to support Lavington Wetland assessment	<a href="https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/11/03/outside-funds-to-support-lavington-wetland-assessment/">https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/11/03/outside-funds-to-support-lavington-wetland-assessment/</a>
Nov. 1, 2025	Castanet and All For Gardening	Okanagan Xeriscape Association's demonstration garden recognized	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-582116-1152-.htm">https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-582116-1152-.htm</a>
Oct. 29, 2025	Castanet	District of Coldstream finishing several projects before snow flies	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/580856/District-of-Coldstream-finishing-several-projects-before-snow-flies">https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/580856/District-of-Coldstream-finishing-several-projects-before-snow-flies</a>

#### The Stats: Oct. 27, 2025 – Jan. 26, 2026

<i>Total individual articles mentioning OBWB work, projects etc. (includes multiple listings of the same article)</i>	<i>Total Estimated Views*</i>	<i>Total Reach*</i>
<b>115</b>	<b>81,248</b>	<b>50.3 M</b>

**\*Total Estimated Views** is pulled from our media monitoring service Meltwater. According to Meltwater, Estimated Views is a metric that approximates the number of times an average article from a publication has been viewed. This is accomplished by dividing a publication's monthly page views by the number of articles it published in a given month.

**\*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  
Date: Jan. 26, 2026  
Subject: Weather Report

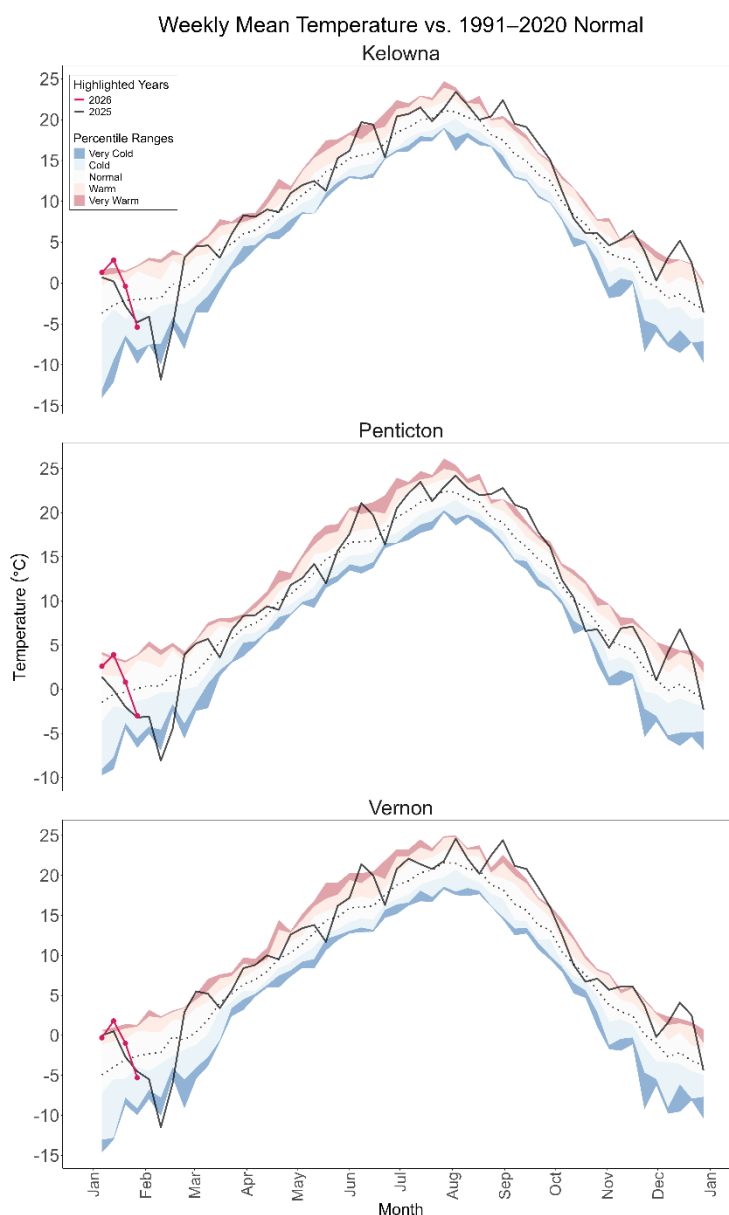
Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Feb. 3, 2026  
Agenda No: 9.5

### Temperature

Weekly temperatures – as of Jan. 25, 2026 – began to drop after a period of being warmer than normal across the valley (Figure 1). Fall temperatures for 2025 were consistently above the 1991-2020 average. By mid-January, temperatures had begun trending downwards below normal levels. For the week of Jan. 19-Jan. 25, 2026, average temperatures were -5.3 C in Vernon, -5.4 C in Kelowna, and -3.0 C in Penticton.

Cold temperatures were also observed across Canada due to a polar vortex event. These cooler temperatures are not unprecedented for the Okanagan. However, as seen with the 2024 cold snap, sudden temperature drops after warmer periods can have lasting impacts on plants. The 2024 cold snap was colder, with the coldest weekly average temperature observed being -12.4 C in Vernon.

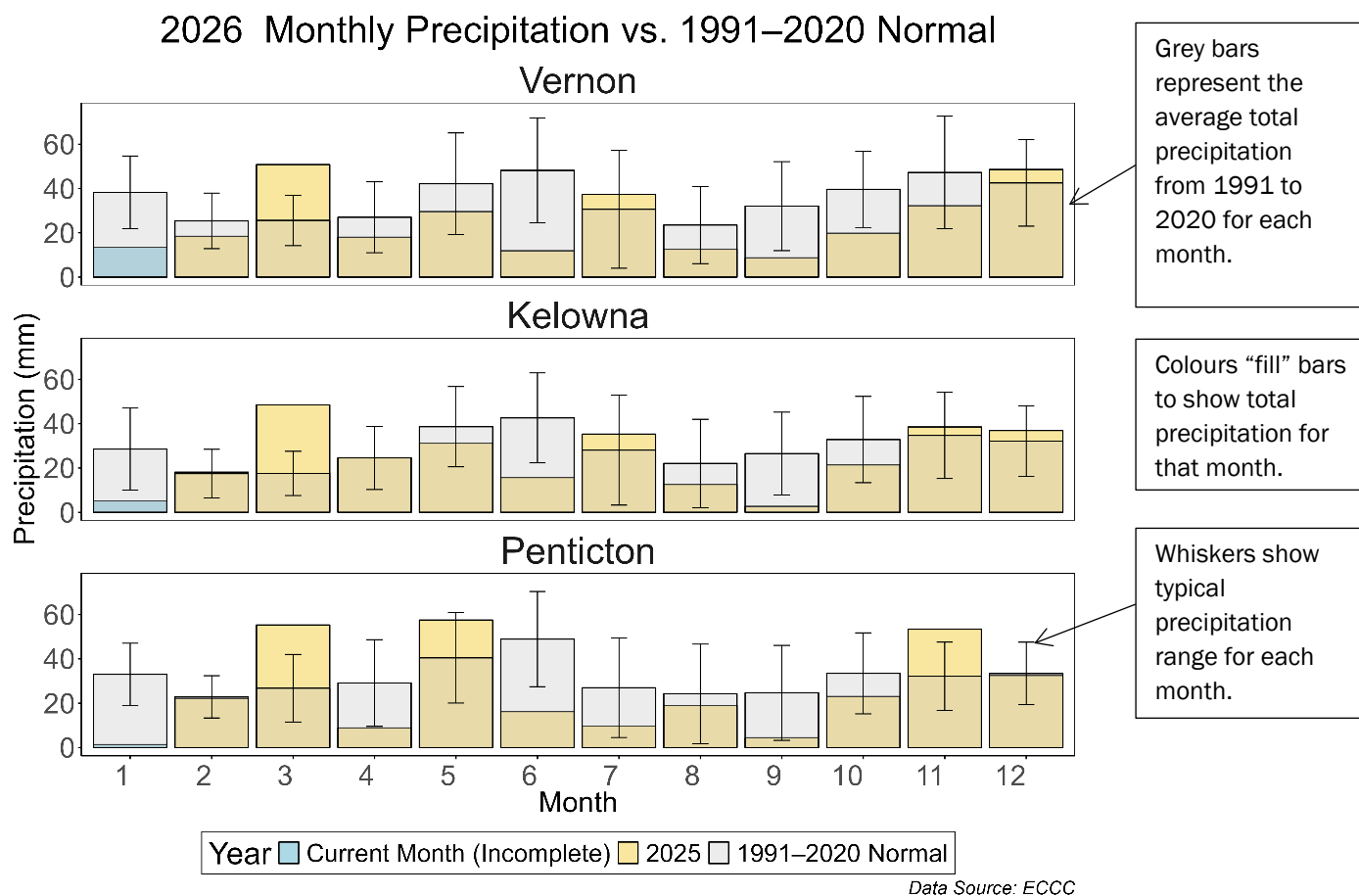
**Figure 1:** Weekly average temperature across the Okanagan as of Jan. 26, 2026. Compared to 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada.



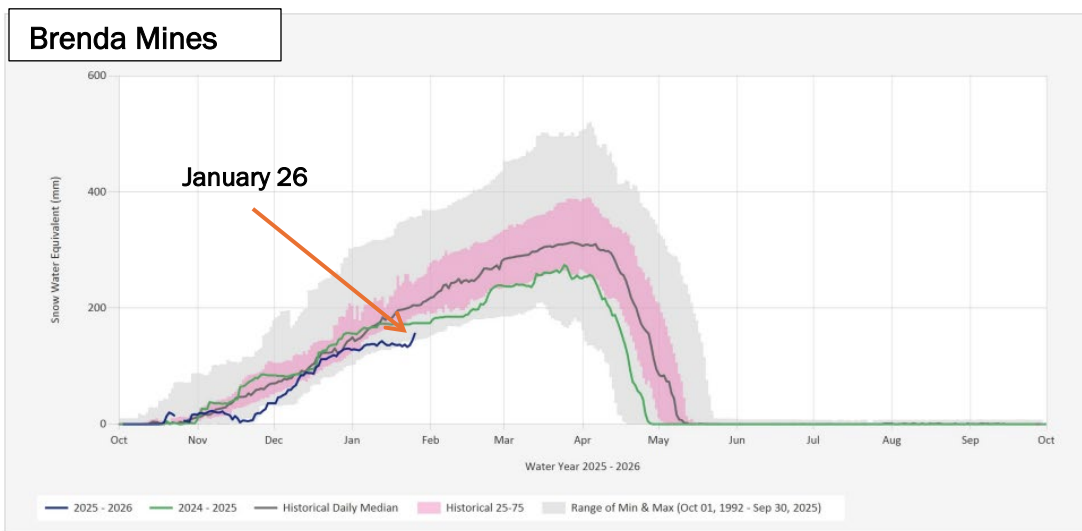
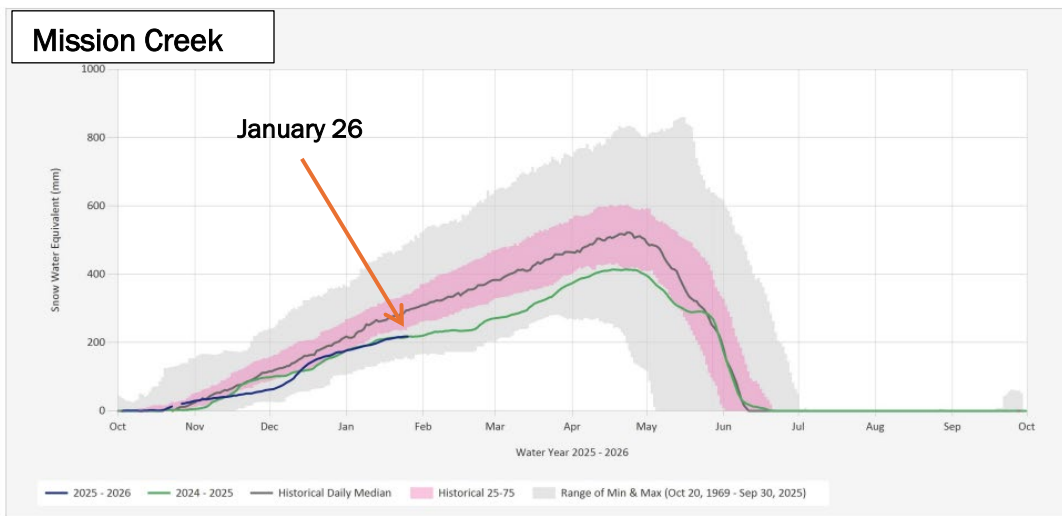
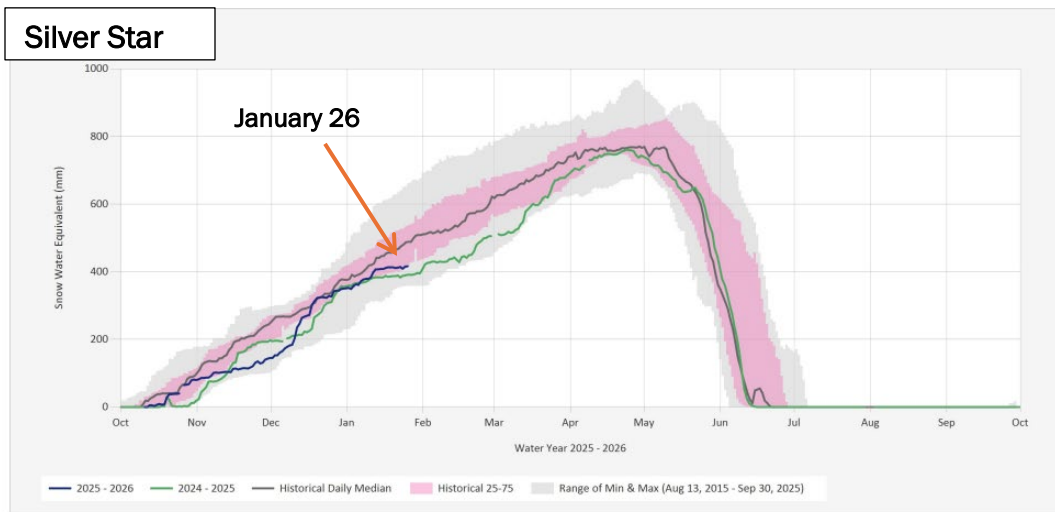
Data Source: ECCC

## Precipitation

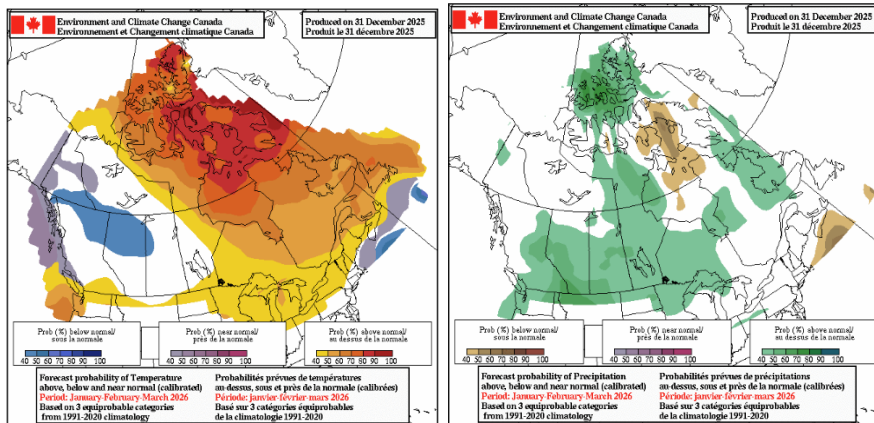
Monthly total precipitation was low as of mid-January after being within the normal range in November and December (Figure 2). Overall, 2025 was drier than the 1991-2020 average, and a consistent wet period is needed to offset the long-term dry conditions across the valley. Provincial snow data shows snowpack remains lower than average across the valley (Figure 3). Snow accumulation at Silver Star is the closest to normal, while Mission Creek and Brenda Mines remain similar to last year.



**Figure 2:** Monthly precipitation in the Okanagan as of Jan. 26, 2026 compared to 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada.



**Figure 3:** Weekly snowpack accumulation across the Okanagan as of Jan. 26, 2026. Data from the Province of B.C.

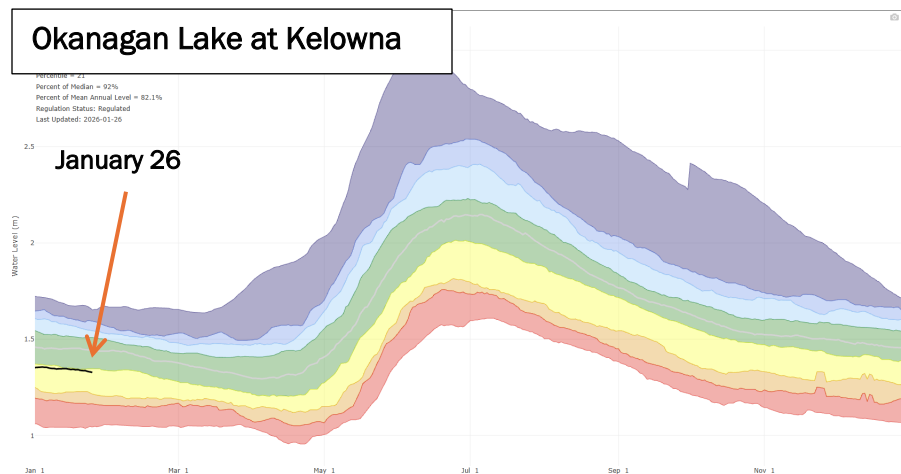


**Figure 4: Three-Month Seasonal Forecast from ECCC<sup>1</sup> (Jan-Mar).**

Seasonal forecasts indicate that January through March might be warmer and wetter than normal (Figure 4). The Environment and Climate Change Canada<sup>1</sup> long-term seasonal forecast indicates a moderate likelihood of above-normal temperatures in the Okanagan over the next three months. Precipitation also shows a moderate likelihood of wet conditions. Seasonal forecasting is highly challenging, so disagreement between models or variations from projections is not uncommon. The forecasts show the likelihood of above or below normal conditions and do not show by how much those conditions vary. Seasonal forecasts can be used to provide a sense of likely future conditions, but they should not be taken as 100% certain.

## Hydrology

Okanagan Lake levels at Kelowna started off the year slightly low (Figure 5). As of mid-January, most streams across the Okanagan were flowing around normal values for this time of year. Mill Creek, Naramata Creek, and Coldstream Creek are the exceptions, and were all lower than normal. Across the valley, many streams have some form of control structures, so observed stream flows reflect a combination of natural conditions and management decisions.



**Figure 5: Weekly lake levels for Okanagan Lake at Kelowna compared to the 1944 – 2023 range as of Jan. 26, 2026. Data is retrieved from the Water Survey of Canada.**

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



Nov. 14, 2025

The Honourable Randene Neill  
Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship  
Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4  
[WLRs.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:WLRs.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

RE: Bill M 216 Threatens Watershed Security, Drinking Water, and Local Government Due Diligence

Dear Minister Neill,

On behalf of the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), I am writing to express our grave concerns with *Bill M 216 – 2025, Professional Reliance Act*. While we understand MLA George Anderson's intent was to support housing development and streamline approvals, the bill carries serious unintended consequences for watershed security and drinking water protection. It also conflicts with the Province's commitment to watershed security and the investment of \$100 million in the Watershed Security Fund.

Bill M 216 mandates that local governments accept professional submissions without question. This would remove the ability of municipal engineers, planners, and water experts to seek clarification, require additional data, or send reports for independent peer review — all of which are essential safeguards. This is especially true when reviewing complex or high-risk proposals: water treatment plants, septic systems in sensitive habitats, slope-side developments near fish-bearing streams, etc. These checks are not bureaucratic delays; they are due diligence measures that prevent environmental harm, protect drinking water, and reduce long-term public costs.

The Bill states that the qualified professionals would be responsible for "damages resulting from any harm." Realistically, our watersheds will pay first and could face irreparable damage. In the end, watershed remediation and recovery efforts would fall squarely on local governments, not the individual professional. If contamination, slope failure into a creek, aquifer disruption, or other watershed damage occurs, local governments and water utilities will bear the brunt. They will be responsible for emergency response, boil water advisories, infrastructure repair, source water cleanup, and long-term restoration.

The fallout from forced acceptance of a flawed report could be enormous: costly, prolonged, and politically explosive. No complaint-based provincial system can protect our watersheds or shield local governments from the financial, operational, and reputational consequences of environmental harm. For these reasons, reducing local governments' ability to perform due diligence is neither safe nor defensible.

Our request is clear: Bill M 216 should not proceed.

We fully appreciate the urgency around housing, but changes to the professional reliance framework must be done thoughtfully and transparently. If changes are desired, we urge the Province to start fresh, and initiate a structured consultation process with First Nations, local governments, professional regulatory bodies, water providers, and other technical experts. Any reforms to professional reliance must strengthen — not weaken — watershed protection and environmental due diligence.

Although we are an Okanagan-based organization, the unintended consequences of this bill we have highlighted here are not limited to this region. We trust you will represent all of B.C.'s watersheds on this issue.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Melissa Tesche  
Executive Director  
Okanagan Basin Water Board

CC:

- All Members of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
- Okanagan Nation Alliance, Chiefs Executive Council
- Okanagan Local Government Chairs and Mayors
- UBCM President, Councillor Cori Ramsay
- BC Watershed Security Coalition Chair, Coree Tull  
(distributed electronically)

*The OBWB respectfully acknowledges that we live and operate on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm̓xʷúlaʔxʷ (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honor and respect this land and the siw̓łk (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.*

*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.*



Reference: 48147

December 17, 2025

**VIA EMAIL: [Melissa.Tesche@obwb.ca](mailto:Melissa.Tesche@obwb.ca)**

Melissa Tesche, Executive Director  
Okanagan Basin Water Board  
1450 KLO Road  
Kelowna, British Columbia  
V1W 3Z4

Dear Melissa Tesche:

Thank you for your letter of November 14, 2025, regarding concerns related to the private member's *Bill M 216 – 2025*.

I acknowledge the need and urgency in balancing growth of housing development through streamlining approvals with watershed security and drinking water protection. In this regard, I agree with your statement that changes to the professional reliance framework in our province must be done thoughtfully and transparently.

I appreciate your comments regarding *Bill M 216 – 2025* as proposed. I will be sure to consider these points, along with the input from other organizations and stakeholders, as government contemplates the intentions and implications of this bill.

Again, thank you for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

Randene Neill  
Minister



Nov. 27, 2025

The Hon. Randene Neill  
Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship  
PO Box 9012 Stn. Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9L6  
Email: [WLRS.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:WLRS.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

### **Re: Calls to Action for Invasive Mussel Prevention**

Dear Minister Neill,

Thank you for your continued leadership in strengthening British Columbia's aquatic invasive species prevention framework. The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) appreciates the province's ongoing work to address the growing threat of invasive mussels, including recent amendments to the *Wildlife Act* enabling new tools for prevention.

While these developments are significant, the current timeline for full implementation poses an unacceptable risk. With zebra and quagga mussels now well established in neighbouring jurisdictions, and the emergence of golden mussels in the western United States, the window for effective prevention is rapidly closing. We urge the province to move swiftly from legislative authority to regulatory action and enforcement.

### **Calls to Action – Provincial Government**

1. Deliver regulations for mandatory watercraft inspections.

We encourage the Ministry to expedite the development and enactment of regulations under the *Wildlife Act* to make watercraft inspections mandatory, ensuring adequate staffing and budget to support full implementation—ideally through a pilot region by summer 2026.

2. Adopt interim safeguards until regulations are in place.

Until the new regulations are operational, we recommend the province implement a temporary moratorium on all watercraft from high-risk jurisdictions. This measure would reduce the risk of introduction during this critical transition period.

3. Pursue a Western Canada Mussel-Free Zone.

Given the cross-border nature of this threat, we also recommend B.C. initiate a political-level task force with Alberta and Saskatchewan to harmonize inspection standards, penalties, and rapid-response protocols. A coordinated regional framework will strengthen Canada's perimeter defence and ensure consistency across western jurisdictions.

### **Federal Leadership and Regional Collaboration**

As part of this broader effort, the OBWB is also calling for greater federal leadership and dedicated funding for invasive mussel prevention. Watercraft inspection and enforcement at international borders are inherently federal responsibilities, and decisive national coordination is imperative to align with provincial initiatives.

To demonstrate our continued commitment to prevention and innovation, the OBWB has allocated \$200,000 over two years (pending full project funding) to UBC Okanagan's "Rapid eDNA Detection Tool for Invasive Mussel Biosecurity" project. This technology—described as an "artificial dog's nose" for invasive species detection—will allow inspectors to identify mussel DNA on watercraft within minutes, dramatically improving early-detection capacity in B.C. and across the Pacific Northwest. We believe this initiative exemplifies the kind of forward-looking partnership that can guide federal and provincial collaboration.

The OBWB stands ready to work with your Ministry, federal partners, and neighbouring provinces to ensure that British Columbia's waters remain protected and mussel-free.

Thank you for your continued attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blair Ireland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Blair" being more prominent than the last name "Ireland".

**Blair Ireland, Chair, Okanagan Basin Water Board**

cc:

- Okanagan MPs and MLAs
- Okanagan Nation Alliance, Chiefs Executive Council
- Local Government Chairs and Mayors
- OBWB Board of Directors
- Invasive Species Council of B.C.
- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
- Shuswap Watershed Council
- Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
- Tourism Kelowna



Reference: 48371

January 6, 2026

**VIA EMAIL:** c/o [carmen.weld@obwb.ca](mailto: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 of November 27, 2025, regarding calls to action on invasive mussel prevention. 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).

### **Calls to Action Provincial Government**

1. Deliver regulations for mandatory watercraft inspections.

As you are aware in spring 2025, the B.C. government passed amendments to the *Wildlife Act* making “Pull the Plug” mandatory and strengthen the authorities to stop and inspect watercraft. Amendments also included listing the golden mussel as a prohibited species in B.C. under the *Wildlife Act*. This puts B.C. as a leader in taking quick regulatory action to address the emerging threat of the golden mussel. Further, the amendments also enable mandatory inspections for watercraft entering B.C. from another jurisdiction prior to launch.

We appreciate the support from the Okanagan Basin Water Board for Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) staff to attend the recent Okanagan Invasive Mussel Working Group meeting. This was an important opportunity to hear early ideas on how to build out the regulation for future implementation of mandatory inspections prior to launch in B.C. A regional pilot may be considered; however, timelines for

Page 1 of 3

implementation would need to be balanced against the continued delivery of the IMDP operations in a fiscally conservative context.

2. Adopt interim safeguards until regulations are in place.

A temporary moratorium on all watercraft from high-risk jurisdictions has numerous operational and enforcement factors that are very challenging to implement on an interim basis. To start, the IMDP determines if a watercraft is high-risk based on two factors: 1) where the watercraft was last launched, and 2) a visual inspection to determine if that boat is clean, drained and dry. Therefore, not all watercraft coming from a mussel-fouled jurisdiction are considered high-risk.

Secondly, this approach would require both provincial and federal jurisdictions to stop boats from crossing at the Canada-US and Alberta borders. From an enforcement perspective, this would either require voluntary compliance or increased enforcement capacity. Regardless, significant investments would need to be made to increase outreach to educate boaters on the new requirements. For this coming year, with its projected fiscal constraints, it will be important to keep resources focused on IMDP operations and assessing options for mandatory inspection prior to launch.

3. Pursue a Western Canada Mussel-Free Zone.

With respect to initiating a political level task force with Alberta and Saskatchewan, B.C. participates on several intergovernmental committees at the technical and political levels, that include Alberta and Saskatchewan, to coordinate action on invasive mussel priorities. For example, I regularly connect with ministers across Canada through the Canadian Council for Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM). I will be hosting our next CCFAM meeting this summer in B.C. This will provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen Canada's perimeter defence and ensure a consistent approach to invasive mussel prevention and response across Canada.

### **Federal Leadership and Regional Collaboration**

The federal government also plays an important role in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species. Aquatic invasive species are provincially and federally regulated, and the Canada-U.S. border is federal jurisdiction. The B.C. IMDP works with the Canada Border Services Agency to respond to notifications of watercraft entering Canada through B.C. The Province continues to request the federal government to resume funding IMDP's work at federal ports of entry and financially support the Province's response preparedness.

WLRS is focused on the delivery of the IMDP, a critical component of which is cross-jurisdictional collaboration. IMDP program staff participate in numerous working groups to share the latest research, procedures, and lessons learned on invasive mussel prevention and response. We look forward to continuing to work with the Okanagan Basin

Blair Ireland, Chair, Okanagan Basin Water Board

Water Board to strengthen our existing prevention efforts and explore novel approaches to mitigate the threat of invasive mussels in B.C. and across the Pacific Northwest.

Again, thank you for your forward actions on this and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randene Neill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a stylized "N".

Randene Neill  
Minister



Nov. 27, 2025

The Hon. Joanne Thompson, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Fisheries, Minister's office

200 Kent St. Station 15N100

Ottawa ON, K1A 0E6

Email: [DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) and [joanne.thompson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:joanne.thompson@parl.gc.ca)

The Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P.

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6

Email: [Dominic.LebLANC@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Dominic.LebLANC@parl.gc.ca)

### **Re: Calls to Action for Invasive Mussel Prevention**

Dear Minister Thompson and Minister LeBlanc,

On behalf of the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), I am writing to express growing concern over the critical failure of coordinated federal action to prevent invasive mussels from entering western Canada. While provinces like British Columbia have made meaningful progress through legislative amendments and regional partnerships, federal participation has been negligible—despite the clear national implications of a mussel invasion.

An introduction of zebra, quagga, or golden mussels into B.C. waters would have devastating consequences. The economic, environmental, and cultural losses would be measured in billions of dollars, affecting hydropower generation, irrigation systems, drinking-water utilities, and fisheries across multiple jurisdictions. This is not a provincial issue—it is a national one. Watercraft cross international borders under federal jurisdiction, and the frontline costs of prevention at those borders must not be carried solely by provincial budgets.

### **Calls to Action – Federal Government**

#### **1. Match provincial investments in invasive mussel defence.**

We urge the Government of Canada to immediately establish a matching-fund model for invasive mussel prevention, beginning with contributions to western provinces that are currently reallocating limited provincial stewardship budgets to sustain border inspection programs. This funding should come from existing enforcement allocations within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) or the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), both of which share responsibility for protecting Canada's perimeter.

#### **2. Invest in research and innovation to strengthen prevention.**

Federal investment is urgently needed to accelerate development of early-detection tools, including environmental-DNA (eDNA) systems, mobile field laboratories, and watercraft tracking technologies such as QR-tagged inspection permits. The OBWB has acted decisively to fill this vacuum. In October, our Board passed a resolution committing \$200,000 over two years to the UBC Okanagan "Rapid

eDNA Detection Tool for Invasive Mussel Biosecurity” project—a groundbreaking initiative that will allow inspectors to detect mussel DNA on watercraft within minutes. This commitment is contingent on the project receiving matching funds for the remaining un-funded \$200,000.

This work represents the kind of innovation that federal science agencies should be championing and scaling nationally. We urge the federal government to support and co-fund this project and others like it through the DFO Aquatic Invasive Species Program or related research streams, ensuring these technologies are rapidly deployed at Canada’s borders. The technology may also be adapted to other biosecurity concerns including other invasive species and pathogens.

3. Update national risk mapping to include golden mussels.

Canada’s national invasive-species risk assessments must be updated to include *Limnoperna fortunei* (golden mussel), which can survive in lower-calcium waters and now poses a credible threat to uninfested regions throughout Canada, including those portions of the Great Lakes not already infested with zebra or quagga mussels. It would be a death knell to Great Lakes fisheries. The United States has already recognized this species as an emerging high-risk invader; Canada must do the same to remain aligned with international partners.

4. Establish public accountability for invasive mussel prevention.

We ask that the Government of Canada commit to issuing annual public progress reports on aquatic invasive species prevention. Transparent reporting—detailing funding, inspection volumes, detections, and risk assessments—would help demonstrate accountability and provide Canadians with a clear picture of the country’s readiness.

The OBWB has consistently demonstrated its commitment to prevention, innovation, and collaboration. However, without federal leadership, the gaps along Canada’s borders remain unaddressed. A national perimeter defence requires national responsibility.

Thank you for your attention to this critical national issue. We look forward to your response and to seeing tangible federal action to protect Canada’s freshwaters.

Sincerely,



**Blair Ireland, Chair, Okanagan Basin Water Board**

cc:

- Okanagan MPs and MLAs
- Okanagan Nation Alliance, Chiefs Executive Council
- Local Government Chairs and Mayors
- OBWB Board of Directors
- Invasive Species Council of B.C.
- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
- Shuswap Watershed Council
- Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
- Tourism Kelowna



January 13, 2026

Mr. Blair Ireland  
Chair  
Okanagan Basin Water Board  
c/o Ms. Carmen Weld  
< [carmen.weld@obwb.ca](mailto:carmen.weld@obwb.ca) >

Dear Mr. Ireland,

Thank you for your correspondence of November 27, 2025, regarding calls to action for invasive mussel prevention.

Effective management of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is a shared priority and responsibility across federal, provincial, and territorial governments. The Province of British Columbia (BC) is the lead for the management of AIS within BC's freshwaters.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) currently has several AIS-related priorities, including the prevention, detection, response, and management of AIS within DFO's jurisdictional boundaries through the Department's AIS National Core Program. The 2022 Fall Economic Statement identified \$36.6 million over five years to fight AIS in Canada, which is dedicated to strengthening operations while increasing early detection and response activities, and creating partnerships through the AIS Prevention Fund.

DFO has made significant investments in various organizations in BC for invasive mussel early detection, monitoring, and prevention. For example, DFO is providing up to \$540,000 from 2023 to 2025 to the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation. In addition, more than \$475,000 was contributed directly to BC's Invasive Mussel Defence Program. DFO has provided additional support to the BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program through the purchase of three decontamination trailer units and through joint training and inspection operations.

DFO has also supported other western provinces in their invasive mussel prevention efforts, helping to prevent their movement to BC. This includes a contribution to the Province of Saskatchewan for the purchase of two decontamination units, partnering with the Province of Manitoba to conduct joint roadside inspections on Highway 1 near the Manitoba–Ontario border, and introducing an inspection and decontamination station at the Emerson, Manitoba, border crossing.

.../2

DFO continues to invest in research and innovation to strengthen prevention efforts, including the use of eDNA technology. In February 2024, the Gulf Fisheries Centre in Moncton, New Brunswick, became DFO's first International Organization for Standardization 17025 accredited eDNA testing lab for AIS, and in 2024–2025 received over two thousand eDNA samples to process and analyze. The accreditation certifies that the results produced in the lab meet international standards for accuracy and reliability.

DFO is aware of the emerging threat of golden mussels and will consider options for future risk assessments and listing under the *Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations*. Other advice generated by the Department to support invasive mussel management includes an [updated national risk assessment for zebra and quagga mussels in Canada](#) and [advice on the effectiveness of “Clean, Drain, Dry, and Decontaminate” treatment and protocols](#).

In addition, on behalf of the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers, DFO has funded the CSA Group to develop national minimum standards for decontamination protocols for recreational watercrafts and gear to help address the stowaway pathway of AIS introduction and spread, in particular for invasive mussels. This initiative, now led by the CSA Group, involves collaboration with provinces, territories, other federal departments, industry, and academia.

DFO remains committed to transparent communication on AIS, through reporting on our [inspection efforts](#), publishing science advice on the [Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat website](#), and exploring more frequent digital updates through DFO's [AIS webpage](#). For example, DFO is developing an interactive online map to display federal AIS survey data, to make this information more accessible to Canadians.

Should you have any additional questions, I encourage you to contact Ms. Kate Ladell, Director General, Ecosystems and Biodiversity Management, DFO, by email at < [Kate.Ladell@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Kate.Ladell@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) >.

Thank you for providing me with your thoughts on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Joanne Thompson, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: Distribution List

Distribution List:

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., K.C., M.P.

President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and  
Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs,  
Internal Trade and One Canadian Economy

The Honourable David Eby, K.C., M.L.A.

Premier of British Columbia



**Ms. Kaili Levesque**

Interim Deputy Minister

200 Kent Street

Ottawa, ON, K1A 0E6

*By hand via Minister Thompson*

December 4, 2025

Dear Ms. Levesque,

Thank you for your appearance at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans this morning. Enclosed is the letter I cited when questioning you about federal resources for preventing the proliferation of aquatic invasive species in British Columbia.

The enclosed November 27 letter to Minister Thompson from the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) details the acute threats that invasive species pose to British Columbia. The letter also outlines the OBWB's proposed joint venture with the University of British Columbia- Okanagan to develop a rapid eDNA detection tool for invasive mussel biosecurity.

Please review this correspondence and provide a response to the Okanagan Basin Water Board and I as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mel Arnold'.

**Mel Arnold, M.P.**

Kamloops- Shuswap- Central Rockies

Associate Shadow Minister for Fisheries

Cc. Mr. Blair Ireland, Chair, Okanagan Basin Water Board



Nov. 27, 2025

The Hon. Joanne Thompson, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Fisheries, Minister's office

200 Kent St. Station 15N100

Ottawa ON, K1A 0E6

Email: [DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) and [joanne.thompson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:joanne.thompson@parl.gc.ca)

The Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P.

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6

Email: [Dominic.LebLANC@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Dominic.LebLANC@parl.gc.ca)

### **Re: Calls to Action for Invasive Mussel Prevention**

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We ask that the Government of Canada commit to issuing annual public progress reports on aquatic invasive species prevention. Transparent reporting—detailing funding, inspection volumes, detections, and risk assessments—would help demonstrate accountability and provide Canadians with a clear picture of the country’s readiness.

The OBWB has consistently demonstrated its commitment to prevention, innovation, and collaboration. However, without federal leadership, the gaps along Canada’s borders remain unaddressed. A national perimeter defence requires national responsibility.

Thank you for your attention to this critical national issue. We look forward to your response and to seeing tangible federal action to protect Canada’s freshwaters.

Sincerely,



**Blair Ireland, Chair, Okanagan Basin Water Board**

cc:

- Okanagan MPs and MLAs
- Okanagan Nation Alliance, Chiefs Executive Council
- Local Government Chairs and Mayors
- OBWB Board of Directors
- Invasive Species Council of B.C.
- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
- Shuswap Watershed Council
- Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
- Tourism Kelowna

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## RDCO appointments to OBWB

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From Corporate Officer <corporate.officer@rdco.com>

Date Thu 2025-11-06 5:19 PM

To Melissa Tesche <Melissa.Tesche@obwb.ca>

Cc Sally Ginter <Sally.Ginter@rdco.com>; Corporate Officer <corporate.officer@rdco.com>

Good afternoon Melissa,

Kindly note the Regional District of Central Okanagan Board Chair has updated the RDCO appointments to the Okanagan Basin Water Board. Please be advised of the following RDCO appointments are now in effect:

Director Blair Ireland, [ireland@lakecountry@bc.ca](mailto:ireland@lakecountry@bc.ca)

Director Ron Cannan, [rcannan@kelowna.ca](mailto:rcannan@kelowna.ca)

Director Kevin Kraft, [kevin.kraft@rdco.com](mailto:kevin.kraft@rdco.com) and

Alternate Director Partick Van Minsel [mayorvanminsel@peachland.ca](mailto:mayorvanminsel@peachland.ca) .

The RDCO Directors have been provided your contact details and have been advised that OBWB will connect with them directly to arrange for onboarding, meeting dates etc.

Kind regards,  
Corie Griffiths

I acknowledge my presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded [tmxʷúlaʔxʷ](#) (land) of the syilx / Okanagan people who have resided here since time immemorial. I recognize, honour, and respect the syilx / Okanagan lands upon which we live, work, and play.

### Corie Griffiths

Corporate Officer | Deputy CAO

Regional District of Central Okanagan

250-769-4918 | [corporate.officer@rdco.com](mailto:corporate.officer@rdco.com)

Connect with us | [www.rdco.com](http://www.rdco.com)



# REGIONAL DISTRICT NORTH OKANAGAN

## MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES:

CITY OF ARMSTRONG

CITY OF ENDERBY

DISTRICT OF COLDSTREAM

VILLAGE OF LUMBY

CITY OF VERNON

TOWNSHIP OF SPALLUMCHEEN

## ELECTORAL AREAS:

"B" – SWAN LAKE

"C" – BX DISTRICT

"D" – LUMBY (RURAL)

"E" – CHERRYVILLE

"F" – ENDERBY (RURAL)

OFFICE OF: CORPORATE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

OUR FILE No.: 0540.04.02/2026-OBWB

December 22, 2025

Attn: Melissa Tesche, Executive Director  
Okanagan Basin Water Board  
1450 KLO Road  
Kelowna BC V1W 3Z4  
[melissa.tesche@obwb.ca](mailto:melissa.tesche@obwb.ca)

To Whom it May Concern:

## **Re: 2026 Okanagan Basin Water Board Appointment of Members**

At the regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on December 17, 2025, the Board appointed:

1. Director Brian Guy;
2. Director Rick Fairbairn; and
3. Director Bob Fleming

as the Regional District's area representatives to the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Director Victor Cumming, Director Shirley Fowler and Director Christine Fraser were appointed alternate representatives (at large).

Please forward any correspondence as follows:

Director Brian Guy 3400 30 Street Vernon, BC V1T 5E6 Email: <a href="mailto:bguy@vernon.ca">bguy@vernon.ca</a>	Director Rick Fairbairn 292 Trinity Valley Road Lumby, BC V0E 2G0 Email: <a href="mailto:rick.fairbairn@rdno.ca">rick.fairbairn@rdno.ca</a>
Director Bob Fleming 6040 Butters Road Vernon, BC V1B 3L5 Email: <a href="mailto:bob.fleming@rdno.ca">bob.fleming@rdno.ca</a>	Alternate Representative (at large) Director Victor Cumming 3400 30 Street Vernon, BC V1T 5E6 Email: <a href="mailto:mayor@vernon.ca">mayor@vernon.ca</a>
Alternate Representative (at large) Director Shirley Fowler 3570 Bridge Street PO Box 40 Armstrong, BC V0E 1B0 Email : <a href="mailto:sfowler@cityofarmstrong.bc.ca">sfowler@cityofarmstrong.bc.ca</a>	Alternate Representative (at large) Director Christine Fraser 217 Greenhow Road Vernon, BC V1B 3S2 Email: <a href="mailto:mayor@spallumcheentwp.bc.ca">mayor@spallumcheentwp.bc.ca</a>

Letter to:	Okanagan Basin Water Board	File No.: 0540.04.02/2026-OBWB
From:	RDNO, Corporate Services	Dated: December 22, 2025
Subject:	2026 Okanagan Basin Water Board Appointment of Members	Page 2 of 2

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Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours truly,



Colleen Reardon  
Senior Clerk, Corporate Services

ec: Ashley Bevan, Deputy Corporate Officer  
Courtney Stowards, Payroll Coordinator

---

**RE: 2026 RDOS Director Appointments to OBWB**

---

**From** Marc Aucoin <maucoin@rdos.bc.ca>  
**Date** Tue 2026-01-27 3:21 PM  
**To** Melissa Tesche <Melissa.Tesche@obwb.ca>

CAUTION: This message was sent from outside the RDCO. Please do not click links, open attachments, or respond unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hi Melissa,

We've just confirmed that there are no changes to our appointments for 2026, so for OBWB it remains:

Directors McKortoff, Holmes, Monteith  
Alternate Representatives: Directors Fedrigo, Pendergraft, and Taylor

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Marc

*One Region Working Together*

 **Marc Aucoin** (he/him) • Legislative Services Coordinator  
Legislative Services • Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen  
101 Martin Street, Penticton, BC V2A 5J9  
p. 250-490-4395 • tf. 1-877-610-3737 • f. 250-492-0063  
[www.rdos.bc.ca](http://www.rdos.bc.ca) • [maucoin@rdos.bc.ca](mailto:maucoin@rdos.bc.ca)

---

**From:** Melissa Tesche <Melissa.Tesche@obwb.ca>  
**Sent:** January 27, 2026 1:38 PM  
**To:** Marc Aucoin <maucoin@rdos.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** 2026 RDOS Director Appointments to OBWB

You don't often get email from [melissa.tesche@obwb.ca](mailto:melissa.tesche@obwb.ca). [Learn why this is important](#)  
Hi Marc,

I hope 2026 is treating you well so far!

Could you please confirm the 2026 RDOS appointments to the OBWB? Our first meeting of the year is February 3.

Thank you,  
Melissa

**Melissa Tesche — OBWB Executive Director**  
**Okanagan Basin Water Board**

1450 KLO Road, Kelowna, BC, V1W 3Z4  
Office: 250-469-6251 Cell: 250-488-5274  
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I respectfully acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm̓x̓wúla?x̓w (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honor and respect this land and the siwłk (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.