

# Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



**DATE:** March 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 tm̓x̓w̓úlaʔx̓w̓ (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honour and respect this land and the siw̓łk (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

## 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommendation:

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

## 4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 3, 2026, held online.

Recommendation:

***THAT** the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 3, 2026 held online be approved.*

P. 3

## 5. BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

## 6. DELEGATION

- 6.1 James Telford, Senior Authorizations Specialist – Water, BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship: The importance of hydrometric data for decision making in times of drought.
- 6.2 Mario Piroddi, CISA, CPA, CA, Partner, BDO: Audit Planning for OBWB’s 2025-26 Financial Year.
- 6.2.1 Audit planning report from BDO, dated Jan. 28, 2026, for the year ended March 31, 2026 (to be circulated)

## 7. STAFF REPORTS

- 7.1 Executive Director Report P. 8

Recommendation:

***THAT** the Executive Director’s Report, dated Feb. 25, 2026, be received.*

- 7.2 Chief Operating Officer Report P. 13

Recommendation:

***THAT** the Chief Operating Officer Report, dated Feb. 23, 2026, be received.*

- 7.3 Water Stewardship Director Report P. 14

Recommendation:

***THAT** the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated Feb. 25, 2026, be received.*

- 7.4 Office and Grants Manager Report P. 16  
Recommendation:  
*THAT the Office and Grants Manager's Report, dated Feb. 23, 2026, be received.*
- 7.5 Communication Manager Report P. 18  
Recommendation:  
*THAT the Communications Manager's Report, dated Feb. 23, 2026, be received.*
- 7.6 Water Science Specialist Report P. 23  
Recommendation:  
*THAT the Water Science Specialist's report dated Feb. 20, 2026, be received.*
8. **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
- 8.1 Potential Date Change for OBWB's Water Management Program 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.
9. **CORRESPONDENCE**
- 9.1 Water Supply Association of BC's 2026 appointments for the OBWB, dated Feb. 13, 2026. P. 28  
Recommendation:  
*THAT correspondences to and from the OBWB, dated Jan. 28 and Feb. 13, 2026, be received.*
10. **IN-CAMERA**
- 10.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(2)(b)(i) and 90(2)(b)(ii) of the Community Charter)
11. **NEXT MEETING**
- 11.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be April 7, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, 101 Martin St., Penticton, B.C.
12. **ADJOURNMENT**  
Recommendation:  
*THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 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 FEB. 3, 2026, ONLINE**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Vice Chair Doug Holmes	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Brian Guy	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director Kevin Kraft	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Ron Cannan	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sheena Spencer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C

**REGRETS**

Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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**STAFF**

Melissa Tesche	Executive Director
James Littley	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

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Executive Director Melissa Tesche called the meeting to order at 10:25 a.m.

1.1 She respectfully acknowledged that we work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm'xwúla?xw (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honour and respect this land and the siwl'k (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.

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

2.1 Ms. Tesche welcomed Directors appointed to the Okanagan Basin Water Board for 2026:

**Regional District of North Okanagan**

Brian Guy, City of Vernon, Councillor  
 Rick Fairbairn, RDNO Electoral Area 'D', Director  
 Bob Fleming, RDNO Electoral Area 'D', Director  
 Alternate Directors: Christine Fraser, Shirley Fowler, Victor Cumming

**Regional District of Central Okanagan**

Blair Ireland, District of Lake Country, Mayor  
 Kevin Kraft, RDCO Electoral Area 'Okanagan East', Director

Ron Cannan, City of Kelowna, Councillor  
 Alternate Director: Patrick Van Minsel

### **Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen**

Doug Holmes, District of Summerland, Mayor  
 Subrina Monteith, RDOS Electoral Area '1', Director  
 Sue McKortoff, Town of Osoyoos, Mayor  
 Alternate Directors: Adrienne Fedrigo, Mark Pendergraft, Matt Taylor

She noted that new appointments had not yet been received for the Water Management Appointments, so they remain:

Tim Lezard, Okanagan Nation Alliance, Penticton Indian Band, Councillor  
 Bob Hrasko, Water Supply Association, Chair  
 Sheena Spencer, Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, Chair

Ms. Tesche requested nominations for position of Chair of OBWB for 2026. Dir. McKortoff nominated Dir. Ireland. Dir. Ireland accepted the nomination. Dir. Cannon seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Dir. Ireland was elected Chair by acclamation.

Ms. Tesche requested nominations for Vice-Chair of OBWB for 2026. Dir. McKortoff nominated Dir. Holmes and he accepted the nomination. Chair Ireland seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Dir. Holmes was elected Vice-Chair by acclamation.

***"THAT Dir. Blair Ireland be elected as Chair and Dir. Doug Holmes be elected as Vice Chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board for the year 2026."***

**CARRIED**

### **3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

A request from the Regional District of Central Okanagan for the Board to reconsider the OBWB's 2026 requestion increase was introduced as a late item. The matter was added to the agenda for discussion under New and Unfinished Business Item 10.1.

### **4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**CARRIED**

### **5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

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

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

**CARRIED**

### **6. BOARD CHAIR REMARKS**

No Chair remarks.

### **7. DIRECTOR REPORT**

7.1 Director Bob Fleming shared a video that detailed progress on the OBWB-funded Hogg's Gulch Restoration project.

### **8. DELEGATION**

8.1 Lisa Scott – Executive Director, Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS).

Ms. Scott presented OASISS's work on aquatic invasive species prevention in 2025, with a focus

on their work as the delivery partner for the OBWB-funded Don't Move a Mussel outreach campaign. The OASSIS team reached more than 2,800 people through school presentations, community events, and online platforms, while distributing educational materials to nearly 200 businesses. Staff conducted 1,073 watercraft surveys across 15 boat launches – finding high awareness of invasive species and/or Clean-Drain-Dry practices (91%), but lower familiarity with the Pull the Plug legislation (46%). Monitoring efforts across six lakes and the Similkameen River included 174 plankton tow samples, 12 substrate monitor pairs and invasive clam surveys, all showing no invasive mussels or clams detected. A citizen science program involving 18 volunteer dock owners expanded monitoring capacity by 150%.

The Board thanked Ms. Scott for her presentation and she exited the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

## 9. STAFF REPORTS

### 9.1 Executive Director Report – Melissa Tesche

Ms. Tesche reported to the Board that the first draft of the 5-year Strategic Direction would be delivered at the end of February. She noted that the milfoil crew had passed their mandatory crane operation and rigging training, and she applauded the work of Office and Grants Manager Carolina Restrepo Tamayo, who secured a grant that offset 60% of the training costs. She updated the Board on year-end audit planning and preparations for the Water Management Program's 20th anniversary celebration – scheduled for Friday June 5, 2025, timed with the launch of the new milfoil harvester machine.

Ms. Tesche encouraged the Board to attend the upcoming March siwłk<sup>w</sup> Water & Climate Forum, noting that OBWB would register any directors who were not already registered through the Collaborative Leadership Table. She updated on recent discussions with provincial staff about the new drought-rating systems and its impact on communications and the progress of Bill M216. Ms. Tesche also confirmed the WCQI grant timeline and noted that the locations for the finalized 2026 meeting schedule had now been confirmed.

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

### 9.2 Chief Operating Officer Report - James Littlely

Mr. Littlely reported that OBWB had received federal and provincial responses to its invasive mussel Calls to Action, noting that the federal reply reiterated existing programs but provided a new staff contact for follow-up, while the provincial letter affirmed progress under recent Wildlife Act amendments without committing to timelines for mandatory inspection-station regulations. He also updated the Board on the upcoming release of Version 2 of the Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure, newly expanded to include golden mussels, and confirmed it would be presented publicly in early February. He briefly summarized the province's 2025 Invasive Mussel Defence (IMDP) inspection season results and monitoring efforts.

Mr. Littlely reported on the completion of winter rototilling, planned spring work, and preparations to deploy the amphibious harvester in Duck Lake due to heavy milfoil growth. He also updated the Board on ongoing UBCO Capstone collaborations supporting milfoil operations, invasive-species response planning, and decontamination-technology development.

Director Subrina Monteith entered the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

Mr. Littlely additionally noted that as the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) directs watercraft to provincial inspection stations, operational costs shift to the Province, underscoring the importance of seeking continued federal funding support for provincial invasive-mussel prevention efforts. He also clarified differences in ecological risk among invasive species during Board questions and provided a brief update on the Snake River mussel treatment effort and outcomes.

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

**CARRIED**

9.3 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel

Dr. Jatel reported on the January meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC), noting strong attendance and improved member engagement using new interactive tools. He summarized 2025 water stewardship priorities and regional updates. He highlighted preparations for the Feb. 12, 2026 meeting, which will feature a panel on beaver-based wetland restoration.

Dr. Jatel confirmed that the Cyanobacteria Working Group had met several times to advance early-warning tools and coordinated monitoring across the mainstem lakes.

Director Spencer reported on OWSC committee progress, including ongoing review of blue-green algae risk, improvements to climate-station access, policy-committee work, and the resumption of the Ethical Space Committee meetings following a busy fall. She confirmed momentum across OWSC committees.

***"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Jan 26. 2026, be received."***

**CARRIED.**

9.4 Communications Manager Report – Carmen Weld

Ms. Weld reported on recent local government partner visits for the Make Water Work and Don't Move a Mussel campaigns and noted strong continued support for both programs, including positive feedback on the multi-channel outreach approach. She summarized key communications since November, including drought bulletins, media coverage, grant announcements, and high-engagement social media posts.

***"THAT the Communication Manager's Report, dated Jan 27. 2026, be received."***

**CARRIED.**

9.5 Water Science Specialist Report – Sandra Schira

Ms. Schira reported that January temperatures had briefly dropped before rebounding and that the region continued to experience below-normal precipitation, with snowpack levels remaining low across most monitoring stations. She noted that seasonal forecasts from Environment and Climate Change Canada indicated a likelihood of slightly warmer and wetter conditions through early spring.

From the meeting, Ms. Schira added that despite some provincial stations showing "above normal" readings, the Okanagan remained significantly low overall and may follow patterns observed in recent dry years. She confirmed that hydrologic conditions would continue to be monitored and that no major system changes were anticipated at this time. There was discussion about the unusual disconnect between high-elevation and mid-elevation snow pack levels, with almost no snow received at mid-elevations.

***"THAT the Water Science Specialist's Report, dated Jan 27. 2026, be received."***

**CARRIED.**

10. **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 10.1 Ms. Tesche noted that OBWB had received a request from the Regional District of Central Okanagan to consider reducing the OBWB requisition. She noted that the request was not unique to OBWB, that RDCO was investigating ways to reduce their proposed increase both internally and across external partnerships and programs. Staff recommended maintaining the OBWB approved increase of 2%, noting the increase was

fiscally responsible, just below the Consumer Price Index, and helps the program keep up with inflation. Directors discussed the importance of prudent budgeting and agreed to support the already-approved requisition increase.

***"THAT the OBWB proceed with the 2026-27 requisition as outlined in the budget."***  
**CARRIED**

**11. CORRESPONDENCES**

***"THAT correspondences to and from the OBWB, dated Nov. 14, 2025 through Jan. 13, 2026, be received."***

**CARRIED**

**12. NEXT MEETING**

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

**\*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.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

***"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 3, 2026 be adjourned at 12:32 p.m."***

**CARRIED**

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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: Feb. 25, 2026  
Subject: Executive Director's Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting March 3, 2026 Agenda No: 7.1
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### **International Joint Commission (IJC) Looking at Feasibility of Converting Osoyoos Lake Board of Control into an International Watershed Board**

Staff from the IJC visited the Okanagan from Feb. 17-20, 2026, for a series of interviews and meetings examining the feasibility of converting the existing International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control into a watershed board.

The mission statement of the IJC is that “the International Joint Commission prevents and resolves disputes between the United States of America and Canada under the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty and pursues the common good of both countries as an independent and objective advisor to the two governments.” The IJC established the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control in 1946. The scope of the board is restricted to the operations of Zosel Dam, monitoring the levels of Osoyoos Lake, and issuing drought declarations and removals that allow lake levels to be managed in accordance with the orders.

Converting the existing control board structure into a watershed board would allow for a much broader scope, including monitoring water quantity, quality, and aquatic ecosystem health issues. The activities of a watershed board could include planning water use, sharing data and research, coordinating water conservation efforts, and reporting on water quality etc.

Chair Ireland and I met with the study team on Feb. 18. 2026, where they presented some background on the different types of IJC Boards, and we shared the history and scope of work of the OBWB. The team is in the initial scoping phase of the study, and the report is expected to be released in the spring of 2027.

### **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. Mario Piroddi, Partner at BDO, will present this year's Audit Planning Report. The report will be circulated to the board ahead of time.

**The Okanagan Nation Alliance Hosts siw4k<sup>w</sup> Water and Climate Forum in Collaboration with the Collaborative Leadership Table, March 23-24, 2026**

If any Directors have not registered for the forum and wish to do so, please let OBWB staff know and we will register you. The Forum is scheduled for March 23-24, 2026, at the Delta Grand in Kelowna. Mr. Littley and I attended the Feb. 20, 2026 CLT Meeting held in Coldstream, where they announced that the registration for the forum reached capacity, but they were able to open additional seats. The agenda for the conference is attached to this memo.

# siwłk<sup>w</sup>

MARCH 23 – 24  
2026

## WATER AND CLIMATE FORUM

### DELTA GRAND RESORT, KELOWNA, BC

MARCH 23, 2026 – DAY 1

**8:00 CHECK-IN & WELCOME COFFEE**

**9:00 OPENING PRAYER**

**9:05 WELCOME AND FORUM PURPOSE**

Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table (CLT) Co-Chairs  
yilmix<sup>w</sup>m simo – CHIEF ROBERT LOUIE, Westbank First Nation  
and COUNCILLOR TRICIA BRETT, Lake Country

**9:20 MC INTRODUCTION: AARON DERICKSON**, PhD, Syilx scholar, UBCO Educator and Facilitator

**9:25 KEYNOTE: SIWŁK<sup>w</sup> AS LIFE – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

laḥlaḥtk<sup>w</sup> DR. JEANNETTE ARMSTRONG, Syilx scholar, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies, UBCO and Canada Research Chair Okanagan Indigenous Knowledge and Philosophy

**10:00 BREAK & NETWORKING:** Sponsored by Real Estate Foundation of BC and the Watershed Security Fund

**10:30 RIVERSIDE CHAT: OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP TABLE**

**LEADERS:** Journey of Collaboration, from shared vision to 250-Year Pathway  
Moderated by CLT Co-Chair COUNCILLOR TRICIA BRETT, District of Lake Country

- yilmix<sup>w</sup>m sil-teekin – CHIEF GREG GABRIEL, snpink'tn Indian Band
- MAYOR JULIUS BLOOMFIELD, City Of Penticton
- DIRECTOR AMANDA SHATZKO, Regional District North Okanagan, SilverStar/BX
- yilmix<sup>w</sup>m simo – CHIEF ROBERT LOUIE, Westbank First Nation



**11:45 LUNCH & NETWORKING**

**1:00 PANEL: FROM EXPERIENCE TO INSIGHT: WHAT CLIMATE RISKS HAVE TAUGHT US**

- RICHARD BUSSANICH, MSc, ONA Fisheries and Water Biologist  
Mr. Bussanich will explore the shift from managing fish to honouring relationships, sharing how drought is reshaping our responsibilities to salmon and what they continue to teach us about caring for water and watershed resilience.
- SAMANTHA PHAM, MSc, ONA Limnologist  
Ms. Pham will present on how extreme and variable climates can magnify the degradation of water quality in salmon nursery lakes and the challenges we face protecting the quality of salmon habitat.

# siwɔk<sup>w</sup> WATER AND CLIMATE FORUM

MARCH 23 – 24  
2026

DELTA GRAND RESORT, KELOWNA, BC

MARCH 23, 2026 – DAY 1, continued

**1:30 PANEL: CLIMATE RISKS: TEACHINGS INTO ACTION**

- **JOHN JANMAAT**, PhD, Professor of Economics, UBCO  
Dr. Janmaat will present on using environmental and resource economics to address climate and sustainability challenges.
- **KELLY JOHNSTON**, RPF, Operations Director, Community Wildfire Planning Center.  
Mr. Johnston will share insights from over 35 years in wildland fire management, exploring wildfire risk, watershed protection, and community resilience in a changing climate.
- **ADRIAN ARTS**, RPA, Executive Director, BC Fruit Growers Association  
Mr. Arts will present on the climate challenges facing BC's tree fruit sector, drawing on his experience in agricultural policy, industry leadership, and orchard management.
- **ZHAOZHI (GEORGE) WANG**, PhD, PEng, ONA hydrologist  
Dr. Wang will present on the evolution of the Okanagan Hydrometric Information Network – from manual stations to sophisticated real-time monitoring.

**2:10 KEYNOTE: RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INDIGENOUS AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND GOVERNANCE**

**GWEN BRIDGE**: CEO and President of Gwen Bridge Consulting

**2:50 BREAK**

**3:10 SUMMARY & KEY INSIGHTS: AARON DERICKSON**, PhD  
Sylx scholar, UBCO Educator and Facilitator

**3:15 COLLABORATIVE DIALOGUE**: Table discussions: ideas, perspectives, and shared priorities

**3:45 CLOSING REFLECTIONS & DAY 1 WRAP-UP**

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# siwłk<sup>w</sup> WATER AND CLIMATE FORUM

MARCH 23 – 24  
2026

DELTA GRAND RESORT, KELOWNA, BC

MARCH 24, 2026 – DAY 2

- 7:45 SIWŁK<sup>w</sup> CEREMONY AT KŁÚSǪNÍTK<sup>w</sup> – OKANAGAN LAKE:**  
x<sup>w</sup>ayluxalqs TRISH MANUEL, Syilx Knowledge Holder, Upper Nicola Band
- 9:30 SETTING THE INTENTION**  
Reflections from Day 1, drought realities, and global governance learning
- 9:45 KEYNOTE: LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LESS WATER: SPAIN'S JOURNEY TOWARD CLIMATE-RESILIENT WATER GOVERNANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE**  
Dr. NURIA HERNÁNDEZ-MORA, Senior Policy Officer, Senior Researcher, I-CISK project, Water Policy Expert for the European Union Commission, Madrid, Spain
- 10:45 COFFEE BREAK** Sponsored by FortisBC
- 1:00 KEYNOTE: WALKING TOGETHER FOR THE NEXT 250 YEARS; LEARNING FROM LONGSTANDING GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS**  
TERRI-LYNN WILLIAMS-DAVIDSON, Vanier scholar and Principal of White Raven Law, citizen of, and General Counsel to the Haida Nation
- 11:45 LUNCH & NETWORKING**
- 1:00 ACTION LAB: DROUGHT PLANNING**  
OLIVER BRANDES, Co-Director, POLIS Project on Ecological Governance and  
DEBORAH CURRAN, Professor, Executive Director of the Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria
- 2:30 CLOSING PANEL: MOVING FROM VISION TO ACTION:**  
Pathway to shared watershed governance and implementation
- 3:45 CLOSING REMARKS** by CLT CO-CHAIRS

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## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: James Littley, COO  
Date: Feb. 23, 2026  
Subject: Chief Operating Officer Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 3, 2026  
Agenda No: 7.2

### Invasive Mussel Infrastructure Guide Volume 2 Published

In February we completed and published volume 2 of *Preparing for Invasive Mussels: Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure*. Version 2 incorporates the most up-to-date information about Golden Mussels, and their specific habitat and water quality requirements. This update will help utility operators, local and senior governments, First Nations, and anyone else with infrastructure in the water to assess the level of risk for all three species of invasive mussels. We will be providing limited printed versions of the guide in the next few months, and the electronic version is available on our website here: <https://obwb.ca/preparing-for-invasive-mussels-vulnerability-assessment-guide-for-raw-water-infrastructure/>

### UBCO Captone Project Showcase

This year, Water Quality Project Manager Christina White and I have supported three UBCO Capstone Groups (two in Engineering, and one in sustainability) working on issues we defined. One group has developed a mounting bracket for an underwater HD camera that will help milfoil operators define treatment areas, identify hazards, and potentially differentiate between invasive and native plants during the winter. A second group is working on a shading system for shallow and inaccessible areas that can be deployed for a few weeks in the spring or early summer to limit or prevent milfoil growth in the shaded areas. The final group is working on a regional response plan for invasive mussels, using the Snake River quagga mussel response for lessons learned to ensure we are prepared for immediate action should mussels be detected in the Okanagan. These projects will be showcased on Friday April 10, 2026 at KF Aerospace Centre of Excellence in Kelowna from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.. Board Directors are welcome to attend to hear about these great student projects.

### Milfoil Program Update

Our milfoil team has completed rototilling in Wood Lake and the Vernon arm of Okanagan Lake as well as West Kelowna for the winter. Two machines are currently working in the Kelowna area and one is in Kalamalka Lake. We anticipate moving back in Osoyoos Lake to finish operations there in the coming months, if lake levels allow.



## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Nelson Jatel  
Date: Feb. 25, 2026  
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting March 3, 2026 Agenda No: 7.3
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### **Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (Council) – Technical Advisory Body to the OBWB**

#### Summary: OWSC Meeting: Feb. 12, 2026

At the Feb. 12, 2026, Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting, members heard an informative panel presentation on beaver-based wetland restoration from Dr. Jonathan Laumer and Eva Hartmann.

The presentation highlighted how beaver-based restoration approaches can help improve watershed health by slowing water movement, increasing water storage in the landscape, supporting wetlands, and improving habitat. The panel also helped connect this work to broader Okanagan water stewardship priorities, including drought resilience, ecosystem health, and climate adaptation.

The session was very well received by Council members and generated strong interest and discussion. Members appreciated the practical and science-based examples shared by the speakers, as well as the relevance of this work to watershed planning and restoration efforts in our region.

In addition to the feature panel, the meeting included member updates and discussion on current water stewardship activities underway across the basin.

#### Next OWSC Meeting: March 12, 2026

The next OWSC meeting will be held on Thursday, March 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 the presentation and discussion and member updates.

At the March meeting, Council members will hear from Dr. Sheena Spencer on forestry hydrology and related work underway in the Okanagan Valley.

This is a timely and important topic for the Okanagan because forest conditions play a major role in how water moves through our watersheds. Changes linked to wildfire, drought, pests, land use, and forest management can affect snow accumulation and melt, runoff timing, erosion, stream temperatures, and groundwater recharge. These changes directly influence water supply, aquatic habitat, and both flood and drought risk.

This session will help Council members better understand how upland watershed conditions connect to downstream water management decisions, and why forestry hydrology is an important part of long-term water resilience planning in the Okanagan.

### **Okanagan Hydrometric Program Update**

OBWB continues to lead the Okanagan Hydrometric Information Network Program in partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) and Water Survey of Canada (WSC). This program strengthens the valley's streamflow and water-level monitoring network and supports shared priorities around water supply planning, drought and flood preparedness, fish and ecosystem needs, and long-term climate resilience. Hydrometric information is a core foundation for many day-to-day and long-term water management decisions in the Okanagan, including infrastructure planning, flood management, water supply and demand modelling, and climate change assessment.

A key focus this spring is building local capacity through training. OBWB and ONA are hosting a series of hydrometric training workshops, starting with a full-day Hydrometric Data Collection Workshop on March 26, 2026 (9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.) at the ONA Westbank Office. The workshop will cover “the science and art” of collecting streamflow data, using real-world scenarios to show how field observations are used to compute and review streamflow datasets and how good observations reduce uncertainty in the data that decision-makers rely on. The session is designed for water technicians who want to sharpen their skills, as well as band members interested in learning how hydrometric field work supports water management. The workshop is being developed and delivered by Saskia Kowallik (Provincial Hydrology Program – Thompson Okanagan Region), and registration is coordinated through George Wang ([gwang@syilx.org](mailto:gwang@syilx.org)).

Hydrometrics are important in the Okanagan because we live in a valley where water is limited and highly variable from place to place, and season to season. Reliable streamflow data helps us answer basic, practical questions: *How much water do we have? When does it arrive? How is it changing over time?* These measurements support better planning and quicker response during droughts and floods, stronger decisions about water allocations and operations, and clearer understanding of what flows are needed to support healthy streams and fish.



## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Carolina Restrepo  
Date: Feb. 23, 2026  
Subject: Office and Grants Manager Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 3, 2026  
Agenda No: 7.4

### **Environmental Flows Conference 2026 – Planning Update (Oct. 7–9, 2026 | Capri Hotel, Kelowna)**

Planning is underway for the third Environmental Flows Conference, taking place Oct. 7–9, 2026, at the Capri Hotel in Kelowna. This year, the conference is co-hosted by the Okanagan Nation Alliance, the BC Branch of the Canada Water Resources Association, and the Okanagan Basin Water Board. A multi-organization leadership committee is actively guiding the planning for this unique event, which will bring together leading researchers and practitioners to share the latest knowledge and innovations in Environmental Flows science, management and innovation.

As in previous editions, the conference is expected to attract close to 200 delegates. Over three days, participants will take part in more than 30 presentations, keynotes, and seminars delivered by international, national, and local experts. The program will also include networking opportunities, social activities, and tourism experiences, contributing to an event that always been innovative and informative.

Four committees are actively supporting the planning process:

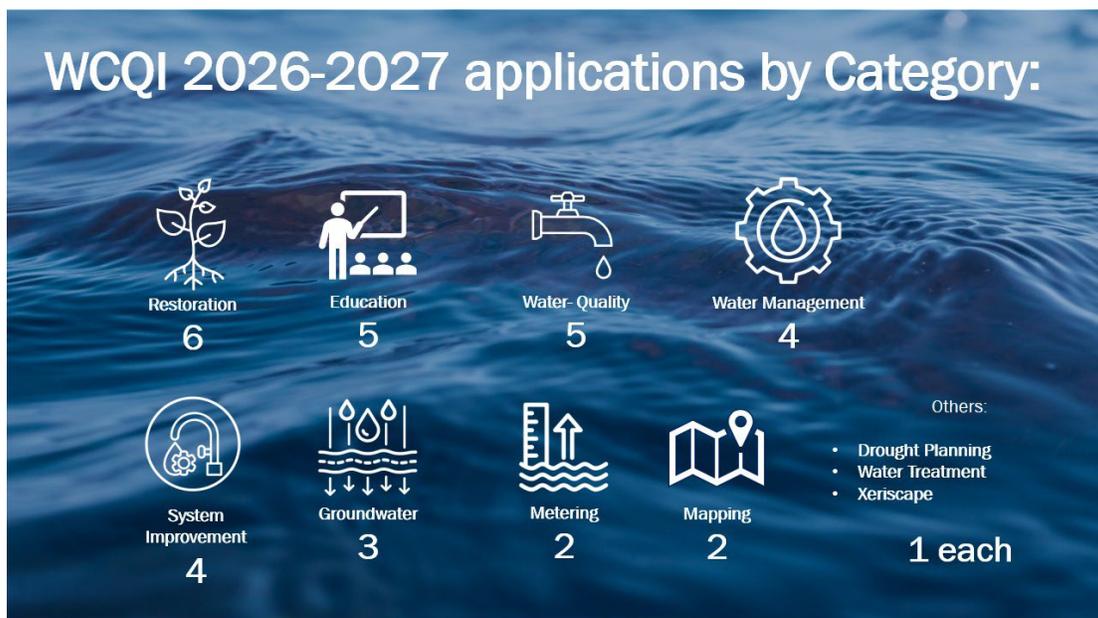
- Program, Speakers & Sessions
- Fundraising & Budget
- Communications
- Logistics

### **WCQI Grant Program draws one of its strongest responses with 33 proposals submitted**

The call for applications for the 2026/2027 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) Grant Program closed on Friday, Feb. 20, 2026 at 4:00 p.m., This year marked one of the strongest responses the program has seen, with 34 proposals submitted from across the region. The program provides funding to Okanagan local governments, improvement districts, Okanagan First Nation communities, and non-profit organizations for projects that conserve and protect water, grounded in the shared principle of “One Valley, One Water.” Throughout March, OBWB staff will review and score all submissions based on the Board-approved criteria, assessing each project’s anticipated impact, outcome on water quality or

conservation, basin-wide benefit, use and promotion of best practices, collaboration, and alignment with program priorities. Staff recommendations will then be forwarded to the Board of Directors for approval at the April 7, 2026, meeting. With \$350,000 available in total grant funding this year; awarded projects will be announced on April 8, 2025.

This year's strong response reflects the region's increasing commitment to increasing water stewardship, improving watershed health, and supporting innovative approaches to long-term water sustainability issues. We want to extend our sincere thanks to all organizations, local governments, First Nations and community groups who dedicated time and effort to prepare proposals. This shows the leadership and creativity that will drive meaningful progress in water conservation and water quality improvement across the Okanagan Basin. Below is some at-a-glance information about the proposals received this year:



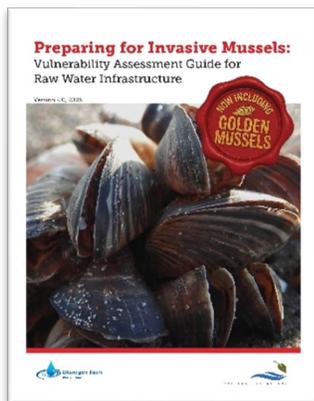


## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Carmen Weld  
Date: Feb. 23, 2026  
Subject: Communications Manager Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 3, 2026  
Agenda No: 7.5

### Update to Preparing for Invasive Mussels: Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure live on Obwb.ca



Updated in February 2026 to include the invasive golden mussel, this document provides a step-by-step guide to help facility managers evaluate the vulnerability of their source water and infrastructure to invasive mussel infestations.

The guide can be applied to all types of raw water infrastructure — supporting drinking water and agricultural systems, municipal and private utilities, industrial facilities, and operations of all sizes and complexity.

[Check it out here.](#)

### OBWB to co-host World Water Day film screening and event — a jaw-dropping look at how invasive quagga mussels transformed the Great Lakes... and what that could mean for the Okanagan.

In recognition of World Water Day, the Okanagan Basin Water Board and UBC Okanagan’s Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences are hosting a free community screening of the award-winning freshwater documentary *All Too Clear* on Sunday, March 22, 2026.

Following the 90-minute film, guests are invited to stay for a 60-minute expert panel and audience Q&A, with complimentary refreshments. This event supports our ongoing mandate to protect Okanagan water resources by



raising awareness about invasive mussel threats and their potential impacts on our region's lakes, ecosystems, and economy.

The featured film, [\*All Too Clear\*](#), examines how quadrillions of invasive quagga mussels are transforming the Great Lakes at a scale not seen since the glaciers — raising urgent questions about what a similar invasion would mean for the Okanagan's drinking water, fisheries, real estate values, tourism, recreation economy, and cultural value.

#### Event Details

- What: *All Too Clear* film screening + expert panel/Q&A
- When: Sunday, March 22, 2026, 2:00–5:00 p.m. (Doors open at 1:30 p.m.)
- Where: Commons 201 Theatre, UBCO, 3297 University Way, Kelowna
- Cost: Free (registration required): <https://WWD2026AllTooClear.eventbrite.ca>

#### Agenda

- 1:30 p.m. – Doors open
- 2:00 p.m. – Greetings & film screening
- 3:30 p.m. – Break
- 3:45 p.m. – Panel & Q&A
- 5:00 p.m. – Adjourn

#### A look at OBWB Communication's recent activities and upcoming events

- Feb. 21, 2026: OBWB booth at Seedy Saturday at the Penticton Senior's Centre
- Feb. 24, 2026: OBWB presentation at the City of Kelowna Climate Action Committee meeting
- March 8, 2026: OBWB booth at Seedy Sunday at Parkinson Rec Centre
- March 9, 2026: OBWB booth at the UBCO Sustainability Showcase
- March 16, 2026: OBWB presentation at First Things First Okanagan Climate Action (FTFO) in Penticton at Okanagan College
- March 21, 2026: OBWB presentation at Okanagan Regional Library, West Kelowna branch
- March 22, 2026: *All Too Clear* film screening + expert panel/Q&A

#### Key communications since last report

- Feb. 6, 2026: [February Board Report](#)
- Feb. 23, 2026: [World Water Day event invite](#)
- Media of note:
  - OBWB Water Science Specialist [Sandra Schira did longer-form interviews on both CBC and AM1150](#) exploring the state of the local snowpack and discussing how the Okanagan has been stuck in drought conditions since 2023.

- OBWB Chief Operating Officer James Littley did an interview with the Tye titled [Warnings of a Dire New Shellfish Invasion in BC.](#)
- Key social media posts with the most engagement since the last report include:
  - Invasive zebra, quagga, and golden mussels starve native salmon populations; posted [Feb. 19, 2026.](#)
  - Water Phenomenon series: 🍷 What is that swirling vortex in the lake?! [It's a waterspout!](#) And it's all about water movement and physics! 🌊
  - Show your Lake Love! ❤️ 💧



## Media Tracking

Please find monthly media tracking below, listing articles from Jan. 26, 2026 to Feb. 23, 2026, in reverse chronological order.

Date	Source	Headline	Link
Feb. 17, 2026	Castanet	Osoyoos Lake levels lowest on record for February	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/news/Oliver-Osoyoos/599564/Osoyoos-Lake-levels-lowest-on-record-for-February">https://www.castanet.net/news/Oliver-Osoyoos/599564/Osoyoos-Lake-levels-lowest-on-record-for-February</a>
Feb. 11, 2026	Castanet	Pick the coolest white for hot gardens	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-598803-1152-htm#598803">https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-598803-1152-htm#598803</a>
Feb. 10, 2026	VernonMatters	Work ongoing to secure funding for an invasive mussel detection project	<a href="https://vernonmatters.ca/2026/02/10/work-ongoing-to-secure-funding-for-an-invasive-mussel-detection-project/">https://vernonmatters.ca/2026/02/10/work-ongoing-to-secure-funding-for-an-invasive-mussel-detection-project/</a>
Feb. 4, 2026	CBC Daybreak	Exploring the state of the local snowpack, with the Okanagan Basin Water Board	<a href="https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/9.7074087">https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/9.7074087</a>
Feb. 3, 2026	VernonMatters	RDNO looking for lake documentary and education funding	<a href="https://vernonmatters.ca/2026/02/03/rdno-looking-for-lake-documentary-and-education-funding/">https://vernonmatters.ca/2026/02/03/rdno-looking-for-lake-documentary-and-education-funding/</a>
Feb. 1, 2026	Kelowna Capital News	New B.C. drought measuring index	<a href="https://kelownacapnews.com/2026/02/01/new-b-c-drought-">https://kelownacapnews.com/2026/02/01/new-b-c-drought-</a>

	and other regional Black Press publications	concerning to water board staff	<a href="#">measuring-index-concerning-to-water-board-staff/</a>
Jan. 31, 2026	Kelowna Capital News and other regional Black Press publications	B.C.'s Bill M 216 sidesteps watershed protection to encourage housing growth	<a href="https://kelownacapnews.com/2026/01/31/b-c-s-bill-m-216-sidesteps-watershed-protection-to-encourage-housing-growth/">https://kelownacapnews.com/2026/01/31/b-c-s-bill-m-216-sidesteps-watershed-protection-to-encourage-housing-growth/</a>
Jan. 30, 2026	The Tye	Warnings of a Dire New Shellfish Invasion in BC	<a href="https://thetyee.ca/News/2026/01/30/Okanagan-Officials-Warn-Golden-Mussels-Invasion/">https://thetyee.ca/News/2026/01/30/Okanagan-Officials-Warn-Golden-Mussels-Invasion/</a>
Jan. 30, 2026	Vernon Morning Star	Aberdeen Road project, and others, resumes in Coldstream	<a href="https://vernonmorningstar.com/2026/01/30/aberdeen-road-project-and-others-resumes-in-coldstream/">https://vernonmorningstar.com/2026/01/30/aberdeen-road-project-and-others-resumes-in-coldstream/</a>
Jan. 28, 2026	Castanet and All for Gardening	Plan a xeriscape that helps protect your home	<a href="https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-596519-1152-.htm#596519">https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-596519-1152-.htm#596519</a>

**The Stats: Jan. 26, 2026 – Feb. 23, 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>
29	222,192	24M

**\*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.

Featuring a free screening of...

# All Too Clear



Rob Stewart Award For  
Best Science or Nature  
Documentary or Series

Best Photography,  
Documentary or Factual

# WORLD WATER DAY

90 minutes screening of the  
All Too Clear documentary  
followed by 60 minute panel  
and Q&A with experts.

Complimentary refreshments.

Free entry but registration  
required.

Commons 201 Theatre - UBCO Kelowna

**SUN MARCH 22, 2026**

**2:00PM**

Watch how quadrillions of tiny invasive mussels are re-engineering the ecosystem of the Great Lakes at a scale not seen since the glaciers, and join us after for a discussion on what invasive mussels would mean for the Okanagan.



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Earth and Environmental Sciences  
Irving K. Barber Faculty of Science  
Okanagan Campus



## MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Sandra Schira  
Date: Feb. 20, 2026  
Subject: Water Science Specialist Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
March 3, 2026  
Agenda No: 7.6

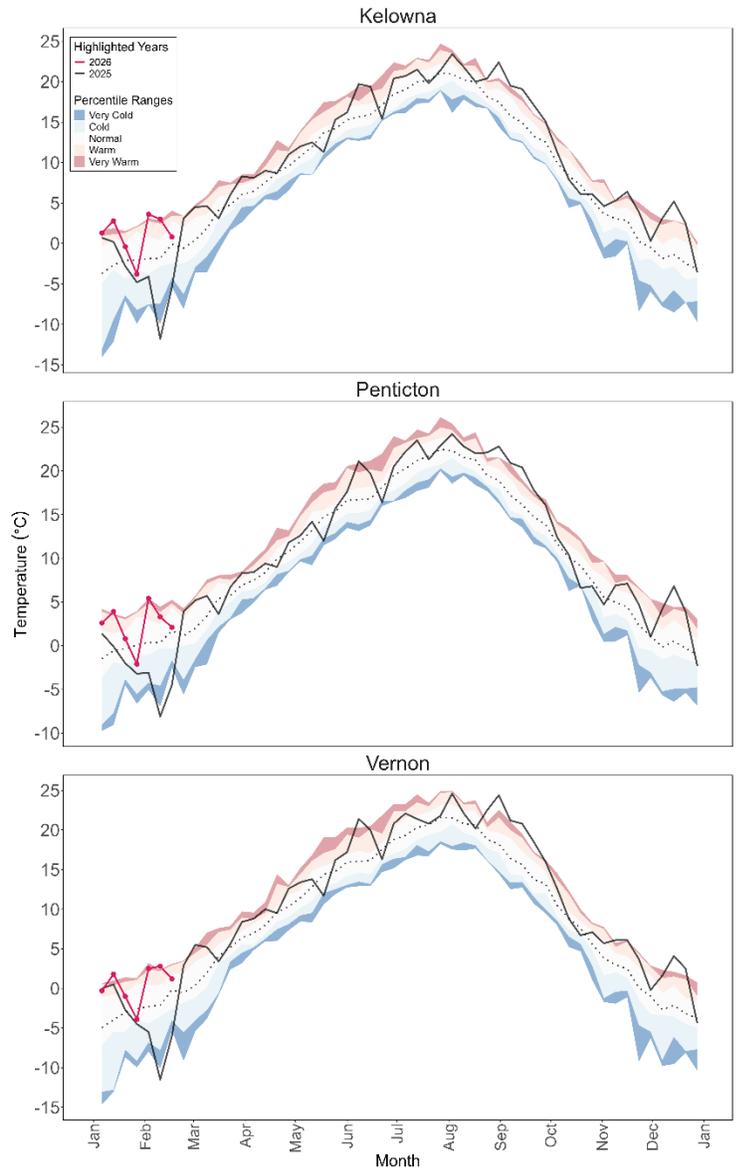
### Temperature

Weekly temperatures began to drop the week of Feb. 20, 2026, following a notably warm period across the valley (Figure 1). As of mid-February, weekly average temperatures had been above the 1991-2020 average for all but one week.

Warm temperatures can lead to plants not entering winter dormancy, or exiting their winter dormancy early. 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 Feb. 20, 2026. Compared to 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

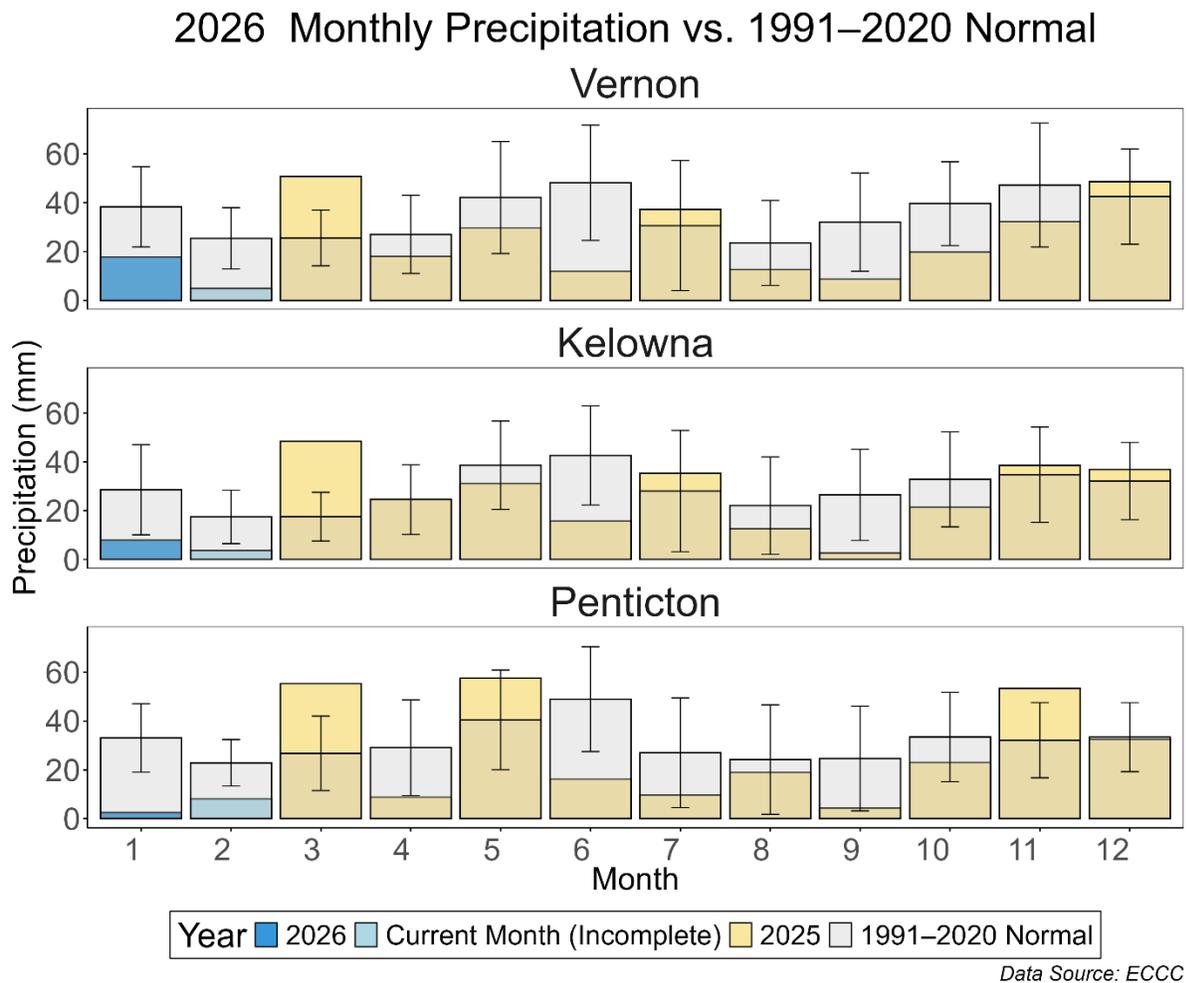
Weekly Mean Temperature vs. 1991–2020 Normal



Data Source: ECCC

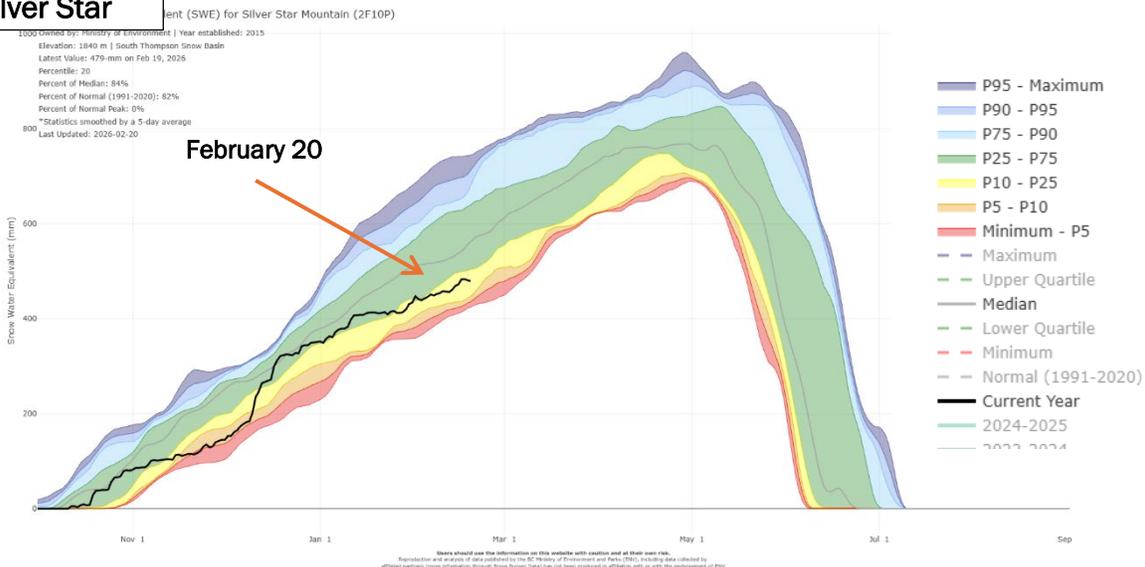
## Precipitation

Monthly total precipitation in the lower valley has been low so far in 2026, with January outside the typical 1991-2020 range (Figure 2). In the upper watershed, snowpack remains low across the valley (Figure 3). The average snowpack level for the Okanagan as of Feb. 17, 2026 was 78% of normal. At the time of writing, Brenda Mines was at 62% of normal, which is the lowest snowpack recorded at that station in mid-February since the station was established in 1992. Mission Creek and Silver Star were also well below average at 70% and 88% of normal, respectively. Typically, by February, around two-thirds of the total snowpack will have accumulated. While it is still too early to know how the freshet will look, low snowpack and warm temperatures increase the chance of an early, quick melt.

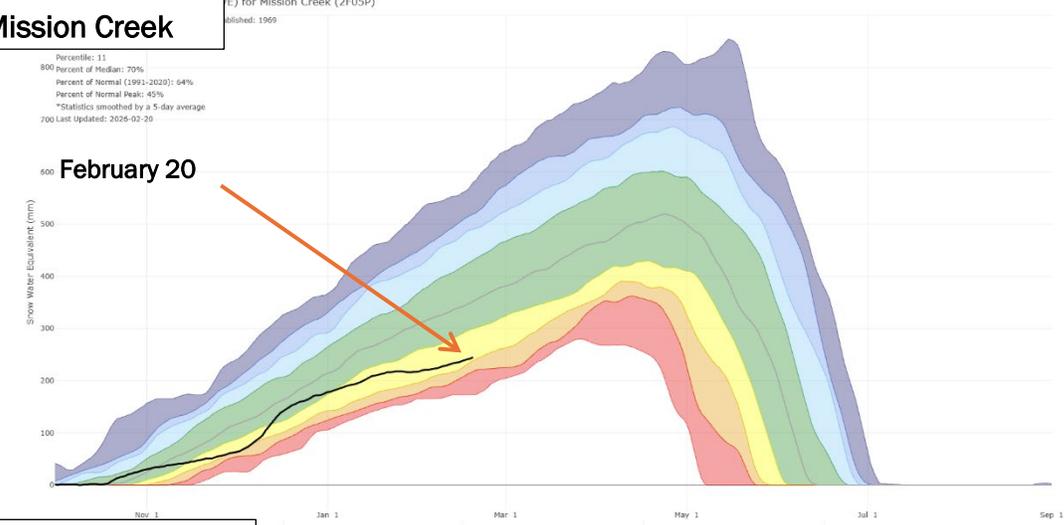


**Figure 2:** Monthly precipitation in the Okanagan as of Feb. 20, 2026 compared to 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

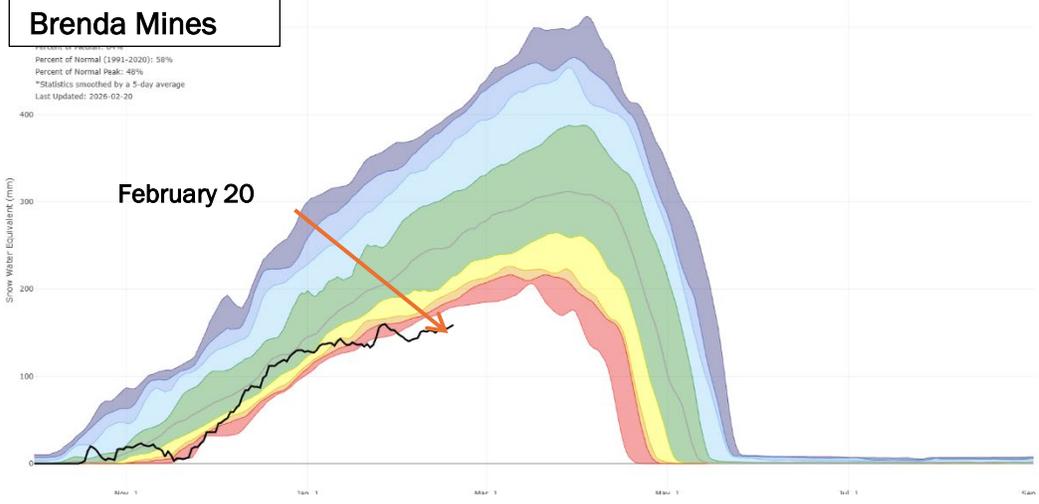
### Silver Star



### Mission Creek



### Brenda Mines



**Figure 3:** Weekly snowpack accumulation across the Okanagan as of Feb. 20, 2026. Data ranges for each station are Brenda: 1992 – present Mines, Mission Creek: 1969 – present, and Silver Star: 2015– present. Data from the Province of B.C.

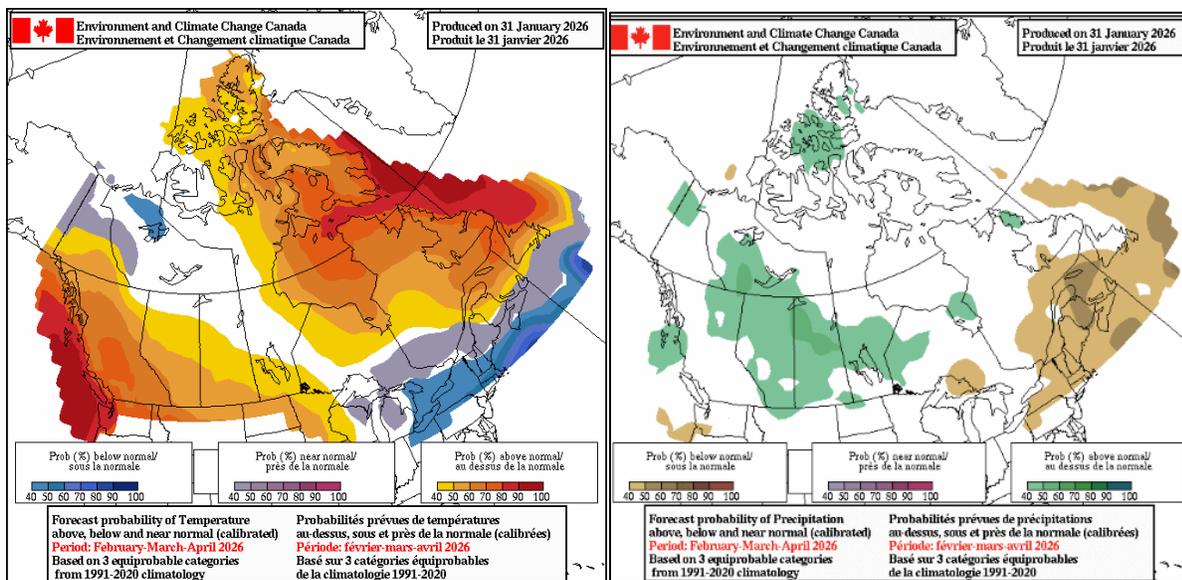


Figure 4: Three-Month Seasonal Forecast from ECCC<sup>1</sup> (Feb-May, 2026).

## Seasonal Forecast

Seasonal forecasts indicate that February through May have a medium chance of being warmer than normal (Figure 4). However, the long-term forecast for precipitation shows no clear signal in either direction. 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

Lake levels for Osoyoos Lake were at a historic low through February (Figure 5). Okanagan Lake levels at Kelowna started off the year slightly low and have remained stable (Figure 6).

Mill Creek, Naramata Creek, and Coldstream Creek continue to flow lower than normal for this time of year. However, most other streams across the Okanagan were flowing around normal values for this time of year. Across the valley, many streams have some form of control structures, so observed stream flows reflect a combination of natural conditions and management decisions.

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

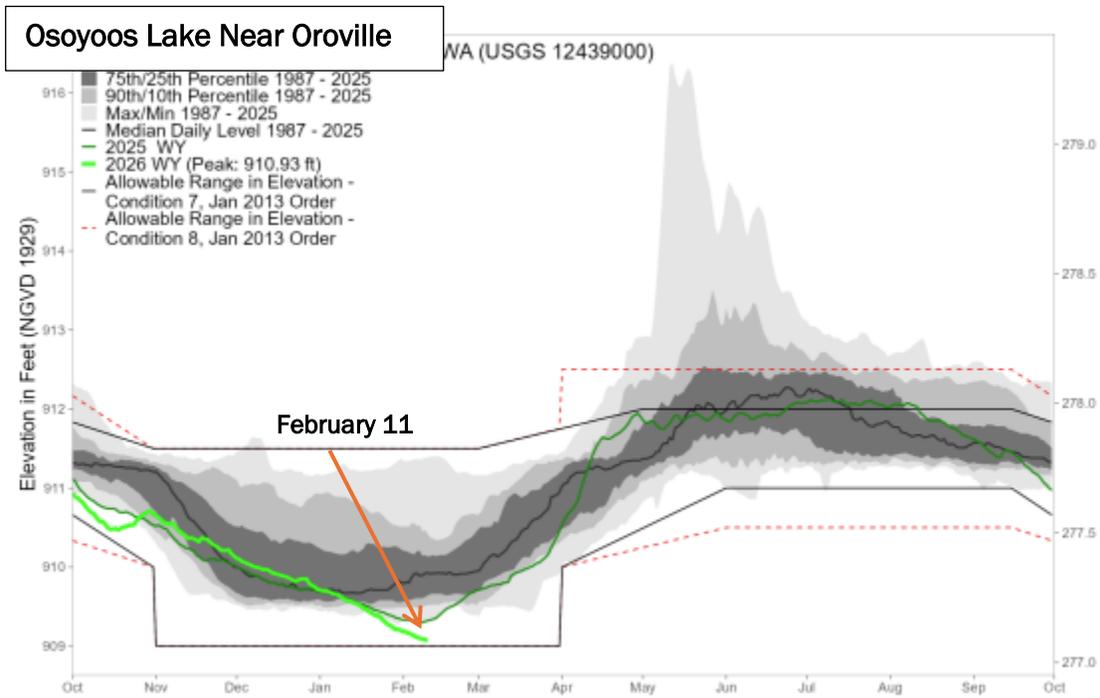


Figure 5: Osoyoos Lake near Oroville level from the USGS as of Feb. 11, 2026.

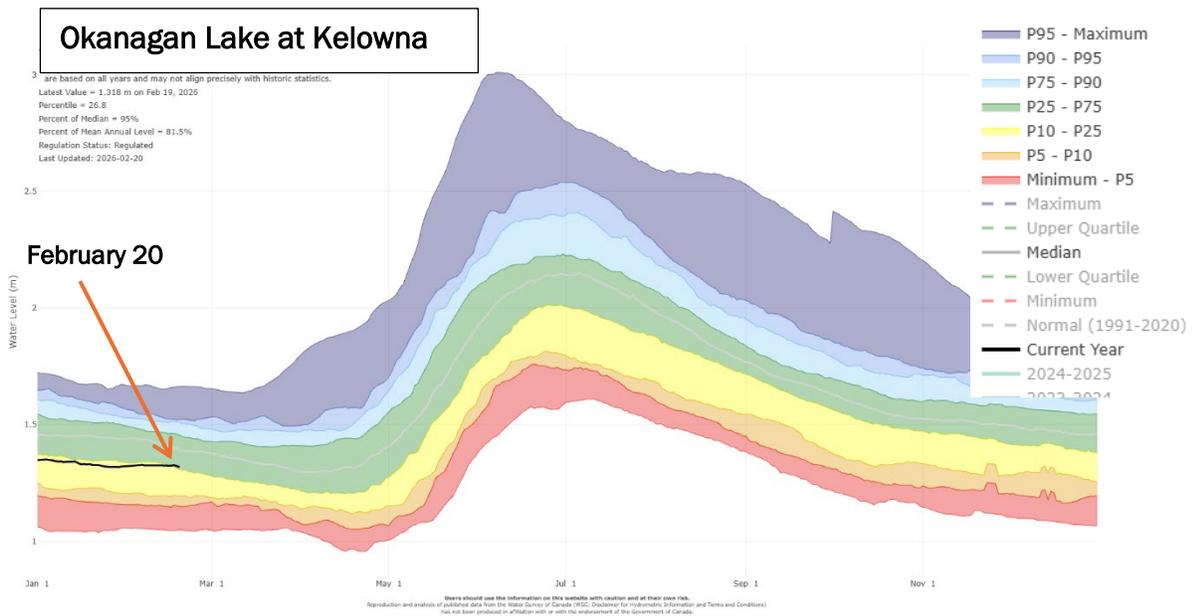


Figure 6: Weekly lake levels for Okanagan Lake at Kelowna compared to the 1944 – 2023 range as of Feb. 20, 2026. Data is retrieved from the Water Survey of Canada.

## WSABC Appointments for 2026

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From bhrasko@gmail.com <bhrasko@gmail.com>

Date Fri 2026-02-13 1:31 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

The appointments from the WSABC Directors for 2026 are :

Okanagan Basin Water Board

Appointee Bob Hrasko, WSABC Director (Chair) also Black Mountain Irrigation District

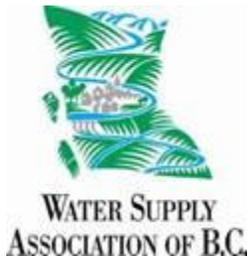
Alternate David Best, WSABC Director , City of Penticton

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Appointee Patti Meger - WSABC Director District of Lake Country

Alternate Angela Lambrecht - WSABC Director, RDCO

Bob



**Bob Hrasko**  
**Water Supply Association of B.C.**  
Chair – Board of Directors  
Ph: 250-212-3266  
web: [www.wsabc.ca](http://www.wsabc.ca)  
email: [bhrasko@gmail.com](mailto:bhrasko@gmail.com)