



Okanagan Basin WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: December 5, 2013

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www.obwb.ca

OBWB Directors

Rick Fairbairn - Acting Chair,
Regional District of North
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Juliette Cunningham,
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Doug Dirk, Regional District of
North Okanagan

Don Dobson, Okanagan Water
Stewardship Council

Keith Fielding, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Doug Findlater, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Allan Patton, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

James Pepper, Okanagan
Nation Alliance

Toby Pike, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Tom Siddon, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

Stu Wells, Regional District of
Okanagan-Similkameen

Gerry Zimmermann, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

The next regular meeting of the
OBWB is 10 a.m.,
February 4th, 2014 at
Regional District of Central
Okanagan.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Inspection program to stop zebra mussels considered: Following up on a meeting with Okanagan MLAs and MPs regarding the threat of invasive zebra and quagga mussels to the valley, and interest in a possible pilot boat inspection program, board directors asked staff to prepare a proposal. A study conducted for the Okanagan Basin Water Board found the cost to the region could be at least \$43 million each year in lost revenue (e.g. tourism), added maintenance of aquatic infrastructure and irreparable ecological damage. As best as we know, the Okanagan is still free from these mussels. For more information on zebra and quagga mussels and potential impact to the Okanagan visit www.DontMoveAMussel.ca.

Partnership formed to assess agricultural water needs in valley: The board voted to enter into a partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, and the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC, to update a 2006 survey of Okanagan agricultural lands to determine current and future water needs. Lands within the Regional Districts of North and Central Okanagan will be surveyed in 2014 and lands within the South Okanagan will be surveyed in 2015. The data will update the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study and will be shared with Okanagan local governments to help with future planning decisions.

Interior Health responds to OBWB concerns on toxic algae blooms: Interior Health has agreed to work with the B.C. Drinking Water Leadership Council to develop a provincial standard response protocol to address algae blooms. The decision was made following on a letter from the OBWB about the need for such a protocol. The Water Board raised concerns following last summer's outbreak of toxic blue-green algae in Osoyoos Lake when it became apparent that such a protocol did not exist.

Water Conservation & Quality Improvement Program refined: The Board voted on a number of improvements to its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) grant program. Among the changes, a special workshop will be held in 2014 for grant-eligible organizations (local governments, improvement districts and non-profits) to share project successes, improve basin-wide collaboration and identify ways to achieve OBWB strategic goals. Since the program began in 2006, the Water Board has provided \$2.4 million in WCQI grant funding. Learn more at www.obwb.ca/wcqj/. A call for applications will go out later this month.

Sign up for updates on Water Board website: Improvements have been made to the OBWB website at www.obwb.ca. As part of the changes, the public is invited to sign up to receive updates on events, contests, grant opportunities, and general Okanagan water news. People can also stay connected through the Okanagan WaterWise Facebook page (www.facebook.com/OkWaterWise) or Twitter (twitter.com/OkWaterWise).

For more information, please visit: www.OBWB.ca