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BOARD REPORT: August 7, 2014

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Okanagan Basin WATER BOARD

OBWB Directors

Doug Findlater - Chair,
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Okanagan

Juliette Cunningham - Vice-Chair, Regional District of
North Okanagan

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North Okanagan

Bob Fleming, Regional District
of North Okanagan

Keith Fielding, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Patty Hanson, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Wes Hopkin, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

Allan Patton, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

Stu Wells, Regional District of
Okanagan-Similkameen

James Pepper, Okanagan
Nation Alliance

Toby Pike, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Don Dobson, Okanagan Water
Stewardship Council

The next meeting of the OBWB
will be 12 p.m. September 5,
2014 at Rotary Centre for the
Arts, in Kelowna, following our
Annual General Meeting.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Directors approve Water Management Program report: The board was presented with a draft review of its Water Management Program noting activities and achievements since 2011, and recommendations. The program includes the Water Stewardship Council (technical advisory body to the board), the Water Conservation & Quality Improvement Grant Program, Water Science and Research, and Communications and Outreach. Activities include the Water Supply and Demand Project, groundwater monitoring, workshops and conferences, the grant program and various outreach projects (e.g. Okanagan WaterWise). The board approved the report which will now be delivered to the three Okanagan regional districts for review and renewal.

Water Board to request meeting with Province on invasive mussels: Directors were provided an update on the "Speak Out" initiative which encourages residents to visit www.DontMoveAMussel.ca and send a letter to their MLA and MP to take action on invasive mussels. They were also briefed on a recent meeting at the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Summit on invasive mussels at which provincial and state officials attended. Based on this, and news that Alberta now has inspection stations, the board voted to send letters to the federal and provincial ministers responsible and push for action once again. The board will also be requesting a meeting with Minister of Environment Mary Polak at September's Union of B.C. Municipalities convention.

Milfoil proves a challenge this summer: Eurasian watermilfoil, an invasive aquatic weed, has been a significant problem in Okanagan lakes this summer, but also on the U.S. side of the border. The problem is a culmination of several factors including warm water temperatures and sunny days that promote growth, and lakeshore development which has reduced access to drop-off sites for our milfoil control operators. The board was told that operators are working extra hours to address the issue and there was even a request for help from the U.S. which we are unable to provide.

Board request for Blue-Green Algae protocol successful: The board was informed that Interior Health is working with communities to develop a protocol for responding to blue-green algae blooms at public beaches such as those in Lake Erie. The plan will be piloted this summer in the Central Okanagan and Okanagan-Similkameen. The OBWB requested action on this file after an algae bloom last September in Osoyoos and it became apparent that a plan was necessary.

Annual meeting set for September 5: Work is underway to prepare for the Water Board Annual Meeting to be held Sept. 5 at Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna. Guest speakers include lawyer Deborah Curran who will present on the new B.C. Water Sustainability Act and how it will affect local government. James Pepper will also provide an update on the Okanagan Nation Alliance's water strategy, in development for the past two years. All are welcome. More details to come.

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