



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: August 3, 2017

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OBWB Directors

Tracy Gray - Chair,
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Doug Dirk, Regional District of
North Okanagan

Rick Fairbairn, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Doug Findlater, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Cindy Fortin, Regional District
of Central Okanagan

Ron Hovanes, Regional
District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Sue McKortoff, Regional
District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Peter Waterman, Regional
District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Lisa Wilson, Okanagan Nation
Alliance

Toby Pike, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Brian Guy, Okanagan Water
Stewardship Council

The next regular meeting of the OBWB will be an abbreviated meeting on **September 8, 2017** at the Westbank Lions Community Centre following the Annual Public Meeting. Exact time to be determined.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Mel Arnold – Aquatic invasive species costly and devastating for environment: North Okanagan – Shuswap MP Mel Arnold spoke to the board on his concerns about invasive aquatic species, including zebra and quagga mussels, and the need to prevent them from coming to the Okanagan. Mr. Arnold described the history in the Shuswap of eradication attempts for invasive fish species like perch and bass, and the cost of those treatments – between \$60,000 and \$600,000 per lake. Given that there are no proven ways to eradicate invasive mussels once established, Mr. Arnold expressed an interest in working with the OBWB to support local prevention efforts, and of the need for rapid response at all levels of government. The board discussed ways to improve coordination with Ottawa on aquatic invasive species issues.

OBWB to reach out to new B.C. government on Okanagan water issues: Given the recent change of BC government, OBWB directors committed to a communication strategy to inform the new premier and ministers about Okanagan water issues. Directors look forward to using UBCM meetings to press for stronger defense against invasive mussels, and will write letters about mussels, flood response and other water concerns in coming months.

New rototiller will be a welcome addition to Okanagan: The OBWB is moving forward with plans to build a new underwater rototiller/de-rooter designed for Okanagan lakes. Rototillers dig up the shallow roots of milfoil during winter months, helping to combat the spread of this invasive aquatic plant. With freezing and flooding conditions through winter and spring, the crews were slightly set back this year. The summer harvesting season has begun, and operators are now at work throughout the Okanagan.

Water board works with local communities on extreme weather: The transition from flooding to hot dry weather in a few weeks' time was a topic of discussion at the board meeting. The OBWB is currently working with local governments on applications for floodplain mapping for future flood mitigation. As well, the provincial declaration of a Stage 2 drought in the Southern Interior means that staff are now keeping an eye on stream flow conditions and reservoir levels.

Residents encouraged to Make Water Work: The board was updated on the Make Water Work campaign, a valley-wide outdoor water conservation initiative delivered by the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program in partnership with Okanagan local governments. The 2017 launch was held June 14 with valley mayors and elected officials gathering to pledge to conserve water this summer. Okanagan residents are invited to take the challenge, pledge and be entered to win \$6,000 in WaterWise yard upgrades. Find contest info, as well as water conservation tips, restrictions, and our drought-tolerant Plant Collection at www.MakeWaterWork.ca. Contest ends August 20, 2017.

Annual Public Meeting to be held September 8, 2017: The Okanagan Basin Water Board will host its annual public meeting next month at the Westbank Lions Community Centre. The theme of the meeting is "Weathering Extremes". From cold weather and floods to fires and droughts, 2016-17 has been a year of extreme weather. The board welcomes keynote speaker Max Kniewasser from the Pembina Institute, who will be talking about new climate policies of the province and federal governments, and climate adaptation and mitigation strategies for local governments. All are welcome to attend this open meeting. Please find our Eventbrite registration link on our website, www.obwb.ca.

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