



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: June 7, 2019

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

OBWB Directors

Sue McKortoff - Chair,
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Cindy Fortin - Vice-Chair,
Regional District of Central
Okanagan

Victor Cumming, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Rick Fairbairn, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Bob Fleming, Regional District
of North Okanagan

James Baker, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Colin Basran, Regional District
of Central Okanagan

Toni Boot, Regional District of
Okanagan-Similkameen

Rick Knodel, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

To be determined, Okanagan
Nation Alliance

Bob Hrasko, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Denise Neilsen, Okanagan
Water Stewardship Council

The next regular meeting of the OBWB will be an abbreviated session on Sept. 6, 2019 following the Annual Public Meeting. Exact time and location to be confirmed.

Floodplain re-engagement project highlighted: Michael Bezener of the En'owkin Centre presented on the "K'əmcənitkw ('alongside the water') Floodplain Re-engagement Project." This project received funding through the OBWB's Water Conservation & Quality Improvement Grant Program and is set on Penticton Indian Reserve #1, next to the Penticton River channel. It is intended to restore a portion of land to improve rearing habitat for native fish species while supporting recovery of at-risk species that require healthy waterways. Renaturalizing the area with native plants will also enhance carbon sequestration and flood mitigation.

Board updated on zebra & quagga mussel prevention efforts: The board heard an update on efforts to protect B.C. waters from invasive mussels. Provincial inspection stations are now open and include 12 stations along the B.C. border with Alberta and Washington and 64 auxiliary Conservation Officers (COs). New this year is the increase from two to three full-status COs with authority to chase down people who fail to stop at the stations, and an increase from one to two dogs trained to sniff out the mussels. The board is still waiting to hear from the province on recommendations it made in November 2018 and asked staff to follow up. Directors were also told of a presentation staff made in Ottawa to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries & Oceans, calling for stronger support to address aquatic invasive species (AIS), especially invasive mussel prevention in the Okanagan. Staff also provided an update on the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise's [Don't Move a Mussel](#) campaign which will include public outreach to help spread the message.

Okanagan responds to call for support on invasive milfoil control: Several letters to the federal and B.C. government, supporting OBWB's milfoil control program, were provided to the board, including many from Okanagan municipal councils. The province has curtailed permission to conduct milfoil control out of concern it could harm native Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels (RMRM), currently considered at-risk. The federal government is also considering whether to list the mussel as endangered. Recent research, conducted for the province, suggested RMRM numbers are potentially healthier than once thought. The OBWB has asked senior government officials for additional studies.

Outdoor water conservation campaign launches & expands: As concerns about potential drought deepen, the board was updated on the launch of its annual Make Water Work (MWW) campaign. The launch, held at École Glenmore Elementary on May 16, included valley mayors pledging to conserve, inviting residents to do the same, and unveiling of the students' new WaterWise garden, featuring the MWW Plant Collection. Mayors and students even paired up to do some additional planting. The number of garden centres promoting the plant collection in the valley has also grown from six to nine. To pledge and find the MWW Plant Collection, visit www.MakeWaterWork.ca.

Annual Public Meeting set for Sept. 6: The OBWB will hold its Annual Public Meeting on Sept. 6 at Kelowna's Rotary Centre for the Arts. More details soon at www.OBWB.ca.

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