



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: April 8, 2020

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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

Chris Derickson, 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 10 a.m.
Tuesday, May 5, 2020.
Location to be determined.

Water Board work continues despite office closure: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Water Board staff are working from home as much as possible, and our offices are now closed to the public, following the recommendations of provincial and federal officials to help “flatten the curve.” Staff continue to receive emails and voicemail messages and are responding as they are able. All meetings have been moved online until further notice. Contact details are available at www.OBWB.ca/contact.

Directors approve community water grants: The Board approved \$350,000 in funding for 16 projects through its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program. There were 21 applications this year with a total ask worth \$448,186. Last year, the board voted to increase the program by \$50,000 for the first time since it began in 2006, recognizing the importance of the program, the rise in inflation and growing interest in the grants. Applicants were required to show valley-wide benefit and collaboration. The board voted to support an additional project, separate from the grant program, acknowledging that it is a good fit with another OBWB initiative. Applicants will be notified of the results in the days ahead.

Annual state of Okanagan water supply webinar set for April 16: The OBWB is hosting its annual Water Supply Webinar on Thurs., April 16, 11 a.m. to 12 noon. This online seminar will include updates on the current state of reservoir levels, snow pack, groundwater, as well as a look at the weather and wildfire forecast. This event will be of interest to local government staff and elected officials, the agricultural community, water managers, water professionals and others. Details posted soon at www.OBWB.ca.

Milfoil control moves from rototilling to harvesting: The milfoil control crew is completing rototilling work in valley lakes and will be heading into the maintenance shop to prepare their machines for harvesting season. Rototilling (de-rooting) the invasive weed is the most effective control method, but can only be done when temperatures are below 10 degrees Celsius when the plant cannot re-root. Harvesting (or mowing) is done in summer. The crew is following physical distancing measures, and other best practices while working, to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

B.C. AquaHacking Challenge goes fully virtual: The AquaHacking Challenge BC 2020 Semi-Final went ahead as a fully virtual event on March 21. Participants, judges, mentors and others, logged in remotely to hear and see teams from across Canada pitch solutions to some of B.C.’s greatest water challenges. Some 195 participants registered from post-secondary institutes across B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, forming 30 teams. In the end, 20 teams pitched at the semi-final. The public was invited to join participants and judges and tune in for the announcement of the five finalists during a Facebook Live event. The five finalists include *Atlantis* from Vancouver, addressing flood risk, *Ozero* from Quebec, tackling invasive zebra and quagga mussels, *Elite* and *Hydrodynamic Labs*, both from Kelowna and both addressing stormwater contamination, and *Agricultural Decision Support* from Victoria and Toronto, also working on stormwater contamination. These teams are now competing for \$50,000 in seed funding and placement in a start-up incubator to further refine their solution and bring it to market. Find their pitches on the OBWB’s Okanagan WaterWise Facebook page at https://bit.ly/BC-AH_semi-final_FBLive. A date for the final is still to be determined, but will also be virtual.

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