



Photo courtesy Richard Allison



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: December 3, 2020

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OBWB Directors

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Similkameen

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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

Doug Holmes, 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.
Tues. Feb. 2, 2021.
Location to be determined.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Sustainable winegrowing certification highlighted: OBWB directors received a presentation from Katie Pease with Sustainable Winegrowing BC (SWBC). Grapes require less water than many other crops. However, with 80% of B.C. wine grapes grown in the dry Okanagan, there is much interest in water conservation. SWBC recently launched a certification program for vineyards which includes watershed management and conservation measures, and a program for wineries which includes water conservation and efficiency goals.

Invasive clams prompt Water Board & Shuswap to work more closely: The board was updated on an OBWB meeting with the Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society regarding the discovery of invasive clams in the Shuswap. Although the clams do not multiply as quickly as invasive zebra and quagga mussels, the introduction of the species is seen as a 'dress rehearsal' for invasive mussels. The two groups will be reviewing the B.C. government's rapid response plan for Z/Q mussels and looking at a vulnerability assessment for the region.

OBWB to hold Natural Assets Workshop: The Water Board will be holding a free online workshop for Okanagan local government staff on Jan. 13, 1-3:30 p.m. The purpose is to hear the current status and interest in Municipal Natural Assets in the region and share project examples. Guest speakers include experts from City of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, City of Grand Forks, Kelowna and Vernon. MNAs (e.g. wetlands) are one way communities are increasing infrastructure resilience and reducing risks from climate change. Registration details will be available soon at www.OBWB.ca.

Winter rototilling for milfoil underway: With cooler water temperatures, the OBWB's milfoil crew is rototilling (de-rooting) invasive milfoil in Wood Lake, as well as the Vernon and north arms of Okanagan Lake, West Kelowna and Peachland. Funds have also been approved to purchase a new trailer which should provide more flexibility for moving the milfoil machines in low-water conditions and potentially expand the work season in several areas.

Board receives outreach campaign reports & water survey results: The board received wrap-up reports for the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise's "[Make Water Work](#)" (MWW) and "[Don't Move A Mussel](#)" (DMM) campaigns which ran May 1–Oct. 15. Highlights include expansion of the MWW Plant Collection and garden centre partners, and 13,216 visits to the MWW website. Thanks to significant in-kind support from media partners, the campaign leveraged \$52,513 to deliver a campaign worth \$110,075. Due to COVID-19, the DMM campaign used advertising and pivoted to developing more digital outreach materials. Results include almost 4.3 million billboard and bus impressions, and 6,669 visits to the DMM site. With a \$44,025 investment from OBWB-OkWaterWise and in-kind support, this year's campaign was worth over \$87,112. An OBWB phone survey in October found 85% of Okanagan residents conserve water, with watering their yard less as the #1 conservation method. Also, 85% have heard of invasive mussels. More on the survey can be found at <https://bit.ly/3qrR4Vp>.

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