



**Okanagan Basin**  
WATER BOARD

**BOARD REPORT: July 6, 2021**

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### **OBWB Directors**

**Sue McKortoff - Chair,**  
Regional District of Okanagan-  
Similkameen

**Cindy Fortin - Vice-Chair,**  
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Okanagan

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**Rick Fairbairn,** Regional  
District of North Okanagan

**Bob Fleming,** Regional District  
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**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 held on Septem-  
ber 10, 2021 at 9 a.m. online.**

## **Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights**

**OBWB commits to advancing relationship with the syilx Nation:** The board passed a resolution supporting the establishment of a working group to integrate the spirit of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and syilx rights and responsibilities into the OBWB. The resolution also commits to the continuation of co-led water partnerships, and the undertaking of UNDRIP and syilx cultural awareness training by OBWB directors and staff. The board also supported making voting rules for the Okanagan Nation Alliance director the same as those for directors appointed by the Okanagan regional districts (pending approval of regional district boards). The board also noted the recent release of the syilx [siwfkw \(Water\) Strategy](#) which demonstrates many shared values and priorities.

**Water Board responds to drought and launches “Make Water Work”:** After an exceptionally dry spring and an unprecedented heat wave last week, OBWB staff are providing drought communications and coordination support to water suppliers throughout the valley. The OBWB’s Okanagan WaterWise program has also launched its annual “[Make Water Work](#)” campaign, helping residents conserve water outdoors. Okanagan mayors helped with the launch, posting videos to share their commitment to make water work better this summer and calling on residents to join them. This year, residents who pledge at [www.MakeWaterWork.ca](http://www.MakeWaterWork.ca), or who post their own pledge video on Facebook or Instagram, are entered to win one of two \$750 WaterWise yard upgrades. Find mayor video links and more info at <https://bit.ly/3xkwtpf>.

**Milfoil harvesting faces challenges:** Milfoil growth appears to be more abundant than normal this year, possibly due in part to lower water levels and warmer water temperatures. Harvesting is now underway in Osoyoos Lake and the Vernon arm of Okanagan Lake. Operators are working to complete their work in Okanagan Lake before lower water levels make it even more difficult to harvest and will then move to Wood Lake.

**“Don’t Move a Mussel” campaign gets a new look:** Now in its 9th year, “[Don’t Move A Mussel](#)” has relaunched this summer aimed at grabbing the attention of those still unaware of the threat of invasive zebra and quagga mussels. Okanagan residents are also being encouraged to ask friends and family, coming to the valley with watercraft, to stop at inspections stations and clean, drain, dry their equipment. Residents who post images of themselves cleaning, draining or drying their water toys on Facebook or Instagram with #DontMoveAMussel and tagging Okanagan WaterWise will be entered to win a Don’t Move A Mussel prize pack, including a Yeti cooler. The OBWB continues to partner with the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS). Keep an eye out for OASISS staff at boat launches this summer.

**Water Board calls for better source water protection in the Okanagan:** The OBWB is sending a letter to the Government of B.C. calling for stronger protection of drinking water sources. In particular, the letter asks the Province to provide a status report on source water protection legislation in B.C.; to consider and acknowledge Indigenous values consistent with B.C.’s commitments under UNDRIP; to assign a lead provincial agency for source water protection; and to dedicate a permanent source of funding for watershed security and source water protection.

**For more information, please visit: [www.OBWB.ca](http://www.OBWB.ca)**