



Photo courtesy Richard Rolke



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: February 3, 2022

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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

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.

Scott Boswell, Okanagan
Water Stewardship Council

**The next regular meeting of the
OBWB will be held March 1,
2022 at 10 a.m. Location TBD.**

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Board of Directors re-elect chair and vice-chair for fourth term: Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) representative Sue McKortoff was re-elected this week as Chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board for 2022 and Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO)'s Cindy Fortin was re-elected as Vice-chair. This is the fourth year for both in these roles. Additional directors re-appointed to the board include RDNO directors Victor Cumming, Rick Fairbairn and Bob Fleming; James Baker and Colin Basran, returning for RDCO; and returning RDOS directors Doug Holmes and Rick Knodel. Water Management Appointments include returning Okanagan Nation Alliance representative Chief Chris Derickson, Water Supply Association of BC's Bob Hrasko and Okanagan Water Stewardship Council Chair Scott Boswell.

Directors preview new flood maps under current lake management: The board received a presentation from Northwest Hydraulics Consultants (NHC), demonstrating new Okanagan mainstem (valley-bottom) flood maps. The maps, to be completed and released in March, show the extent that flood waters would reach under "design flood" conditions (the 2017 flood under 2050-2070 climate conditions) if the lake continued to be managed under current Okanagan Lake Regulation System (OLRS) operating procedures and infrastructure. The OBWB has been lobbying the province for funding to review and update the OLRS recognizing they were developed in the 1970s and the climate regime has changed in the valley. These new maps will compliment maps released in 2020 which showed the flood extent under an updated lake regulation system.

OBWB contracts for lake maps to plan for low lake levels: The OBWB awarded a contract to NHC to update the Okanagan hydrology model to match similar modelling the company did for the International Joint Commission, planning for low (and high) flows on the Similkameen River. The Similkameen flows into and influences Osoyoos Lake levels. The new modeling for the Okanagan will look at low flows – brought on by low precipitation or by management of the lake for flooding. The modeling will help inform future efforts to update the Okanagan Lake Regulation System.

Sewage Facilities Grant Program to be reviewed: The Water Board was provided an overview of plans to review its Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) grant program – the first comprehensive review since it started in 1977. In particular, the review will include a look at current and future eligible areas for new SFA grants and if program objectives are still being met, and what, if any, improvements could be made.

B.C. government releases Watershed Security Strategy with call for input: The board was updated on the province's release of its Watershed Security Strategy. The OBWB has long wanted the province to implement a strategy that actively addresses protection of drinking water sources in the Okanagan and throughout B.C. The board will be working with the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, its technical advisory body, to draft a response. The deadline for input is March 18, 4 p.m. More information can be found at <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/watershedsecurity>.

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