



## BOARD REPORT: May 6, 2022

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# Okanagan Basin

WATER BOARD

## 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

**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 June 7,  
2022 at 10 a.m. Location TBD.**

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**Efforts to improve water flow for fish discussed:** The board received a presentation from Kari Alex, Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) fisheries biologist, regarding stream restoration and work to ensure proper environmental flow needs (EFNs) for fish in the valley. It was noted that several factors are making it difficult for fish, including historic diking and channeling. Climate change and licences for water withdrawals are also making it hard to ensure enough cool, clean water at the right time in the life cycle of the fish. In addition to undertaking several restoration projects in the valley, ONA has been working in partnership with the Water Board to determine EFNs in various Okanagan streams to improve outcomes. Directors were told that summer water conservation is critical.

**Annual Okanagan Water Supply Webinar planned:** The OBWB's annual Okanagan Water Supply webinar is set for May 10, 11 a.m. to noon at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87346802445>. The online event features speakers from Environment and Climate Change Canada, B.C. River Forecast Centre, ONA and others, with updates on Okanagan reservoir levels, snowpack, groundwater, weather and wildfire forecast for spring/summer and an outlook on the local fishery. The webinar will be of interest to water managers, the agricultural community, local government electeds and staff, and others.

**Board reviews long-term milfoil control plans:** Directors were presented an asset replacement plan, helping with long-term planning for OBWB equipment. Of particular note are the two milfoil harvesters, both 35 years old and 10 years past their intended lifespan. The plan suggests replacing these in 2023 at an expected cost of \$250,000 each. The board voted to forward the plan to the three Okanagan regional districts for approval. To learn more about the milfoil control program, visit [www.OBWB.ca/milfoil](http://www.OBWB.ca/milfoil). The board also heard about research by UBC Okanagan engineering students to improve transport of cut milfoil, suggesting a barge that can dewater and shred the weed, allowing 10 times more material to be collected and transported. If successful, the barge could save transport time and the need for lakeshore access for drop off locations – an ongoing issue.

**OBWB to host boating impact workshop:** The Water Board is organizing a workshop on June 22 to discuss impacts from boating and supporting infrastructure (e.g. marinas) on Okanagan lakes. Invitations will be going out to First Nations, local and senior government staff and post-secondary representatives working in water, boating industry representatives, boating clubs, dock builders, and conservation groups. The purpose is to identify impacts, solutions, and develop a list of possible actions. Registration will open in mid-May.

**Directors receive wrap up on Source Water Protection project:** The board was updated on the completion of the Source Water Protection project. This effort includes a toolkit that looks at barriers and solutions for successful source protection plans, and a recorded webinar series that discusses each tool ([www.sourcewaterprotectiontoolkit.ca](http://www.sourcewaterprotectiontoolkit.ca)). OBWB also received funding to support the *k'əmcnitk*<sup>w</sup> Floodplain Re-engagement Project along the Okanagan River in Penticton and led by the En'owkin Centre. This project will support at-risk fish, birds, reptiles, and species of cultural significance to *syilx* people. Finally, a public outreach and education poster, "Choose Your Watershed" was developed and illustrates how various actions in different parts of the Okanagan basin can harm or protect water quality. The poster is available at [www.OkWaterWise.ca/resources](http://www.OkWaterWise.ca/resources).

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