



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: January 11, 2023

1450 KLO Road, Kelowna, BC V1W 3Z4
P 250.469.6271 F 250.762.7011
www.obwb.ca

OBWB Directors

Sue McKortoff - Chair,
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Blair Ireland - Vice-Chair,
Regional District of Central
Okanagan

Victor Cumming, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Rick Fairbairn, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Christine Fraser, Regional Dis-
trict of North Okanagan

Wayne Carson, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Charlie Hodge, Regional Dis-
trict of Central Okanagan

Doug Holmes, Regional
District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Rick Knodel, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

Tim Lezard, 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 **February 7,
2023**, online.

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Water Board welcomes returning & new faces: The OBWB welcomed new and returning directors this week. Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) representative Sue McKortoff was re-elected for the fifth year in a row as chair. New Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) appointee Blair Ireland was elected vice-chair. Returning OBWB directors include Victor Cumming and Rick Fairbairn from Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO), and Doug Holmes and Rick Knodel from RDOS. New directors include RDNO's Christine Fraser, and RDCO's Wayne Carson and Charlie Hodge. Water Management Appointments include Coun. Tim Lezard as the new representative from the Okanagan Nation Alliance, and returning are Water Supply Assn. of BC Chair Bob Hrasko, and Okanagan Water Stewardship Council Chair Scott Boswell.

2023 OBWB water grant program deadline nears: The board's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program for 2023 is accepting applications until 4 p.m., Feb. 24. The program awards up to \$30,000 to Okanagan local governments, improvement districts and non-profits. Grants are provided under a number of categories. Bonus points will be awarded for applications that use open data to address Okanagan water challenges (e.g. LiDAR mapping and water quality data). Details at www.OBWB.ca/WCQI.

Invasive Mussel Vulnerability Toolkit in development: The Water Board is working with an expert to develop a vulnerability assessment toolkit for Okanagan local governments and utilities, helping protect aquatic infrastructure in case of a zebra and/or quagga mussel infestation. The consultant has developed a similar plan for Ontario's largest electric utility, and works with federal agencies in North America on mussel prevention. The toolkit will help determine options for risk mitigation and adaptation, and prioritize actions.

Project underway looking at value of water for Okanagan agriculture: The board was updated on a project OBWB is conducting with UBC Okanagan, BC Tree Fruit Assoc., and others, looking at the value of irrigated agriculture for food, climate moderation, fire breaks, and more. The project will consider policy to protect water for farming and look at how water allocations and investments in irrigation can support the Okanagan economy.

OBWB looks at modernizing milfoil machine fleet: Directors approved staff to put out a request for proposals for an amphibious milfoil harvester. The OBWB's milfoil control program includes winter rototilling. But in spring/summer, the crew uses a harvester and takes the weeds to shore for pick-up and disposal. Currently, the two harvesters are almost 45 years old and at least one is in need of costly repairs. An amphibious harvester, although more costly, potentially addresses several issues including improved access for milfoil control and weed storage issues.

Board receives water campaign wrap-up reports: The board was provided with reports on its May-October [Make Water Work](#) (MWW) and [Don't Move A Mussel](#) (DMM) campaigns. Highlights include 7,162 new visitors to the MWW website and millions more reached with billboards, bus ads, social media ads and more. It also leveraged almost \$59K in funding to deliver a campaign worth \$127K thanks to in-kind support. DMM had 7,919 new visitors and reached millions more with similar advertising, and leveraged \$46.8K in funding to deliver a campaign worth \$78.8K.

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