



## BOARD REPORT: June 8, 2023

1450 KLO Road, Kelowna, BC V1W 3Z4

P 250.469.6271 F 250.762.7011

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# Okanagan Basin

WATER BOARD

### OBWB Directors

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Regional District of Okanagan-  
Similkameen

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

**Victor Cumming,** Regional  
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**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  
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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 **Aug. 1, 2023**  
at Regional District of North  
Okanagan.

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## Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

**Water Board responds to new invasive mussel impact report:** The board was briefed on the Province of B.C.'s recent release of its updated *Potential Economic Impact of Zebra and Quagga Mussels in B.C.* report. It notes infestation costs would be \$64 to \$129 mill. annually. This includes costs to hydro facilities, irrigation infrastructure, municipal water treatment facilities, domestic water intakes, losses in property values and property taxes, tourism, boats and marinas. It does not include impacts to aquatic ecosystems and fish, or to our quality of life. The board voted to send a letter to the province reiterating ongoing concerns about B.C.'s protection measures, and also voted to request a meeting with Premier David Eby about the issue. Find the report at <https://bit.ly/3J3ubT8>.

**Regional drought meetings ramp up:** Directors were told the Thompson Okanagan Regional Drought Response Team is meeting weekly to review and respond to water conditions. Although snowpack in most of the Okanagan was normal to above normal this year, last year's dry fall led to low flows and dry soils in many areas into the winter. This, plus warmer than normal spring temperatures and an earlier freshet has resulted in little snowpack heading into June. Substantial rains are needed to prevent drought this summer. Water managers are watching conditions closely.

**OBWB welcomes Okanagan Climate Change Indicators Project intern:** The board welcomed intern Sandra Schira, working until September on the OBWB's climate change indicators project. This work follows on the *Climate Projection for the Okanagan Region 2020* report. The report showed the valley will significantly warm and experience changes in precipitation patterns due to climate change. This project will use historical Okanagan climate and hydrological data to look at how much change has actually occurred and how observed trends in heatwaves, extreme precipitation, droughts, snowpacks, etc. are matching projections. The information will be compiled on a website dashboard to help valley residents and decision-makers understand and respond to climate change.

**Valley-wide water conservation campaign launches with new partners:** Directors were updated on the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise launch of the annual "Make Water Work" campaign on May 18 with chiefs and mayors. The campaign encourages residents to reduce outdoor water use through summer and early fall to ensure enough for food crops, fish returning to waterways to spawn, and firefighting. The campaign has two new garden centre partners promoting the "Make Water Work Plant Collection." Find the news release [here](#), and learn more and pledge to Make Water Work at [www.MakeWaterWork.ca](http://www.MakeWaterWork.ca).

**Okanagan to get new milfoil harvester:** The board approved \$700,000 in funding for a new milfoil harvester. Following an RFP process, the OBWB awarded the contract to Berky GMBH of Germany. The machine is expected to be delivered in June 2024. The new equipment will be able to remove invasive milfoil at 1.7 metres deep, slightly deeper than the current 1.5 metres, and hold 5.5 m<sup>3</sup> compared to the current 2-3 m<sup>3</sup>.

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