



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: October 6, 2023

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OBWB Directors

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District of North Okanagan

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Tim Lezard, Okanagan Nation
Alliance

Bob Hrasko, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Jeremy Fyke, Environment &
Climate Change Canada

**The next regular meeting of the
OBWB will be Tuesday, Nov. 7,
online.**

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Board directors share UBCM update: OBWB directors gave an update on recent discussions from the Union of B.C. Municipalities convention in Vancouver. Topics discussed with Premier David Eby and provincial ministers included: more support for wildfire prevention and fuel mitigation around drinking water reservoirs in light of climate change and drought; protection of B.C. waters from invasive zebra and quagga mussels; and, greater enforcement for source water protection in upper watersheds.

OBWB preps for Environmental Flow Needs conference: The board was briefed on the upcoming *siwtk^w (Water) For All – Co-creating Futures* conference, March 13-15, 2024 in Kelowna. This is a follow up to the 2018 Environmental Flow Needs conference which is again being co-presented by the Water Board and the B.C. branch of the Canadian Water Resources Association, partnering with Okanagan Nation Alliance, local and senior governments, academia and others. The 2024 conference will focus on several themes, including the latest research on setting in-stream flow needs for fish and healthy ecosystems. Registration is now open. Find details at <https://environmentalflows2024.ca>.

Rains provide little drought relief, board hears: Directors were told that recent rains and cooler temperatures are welcome, but have done little to quench the Okanagan's drought conditions. Although a number of creeks are showing an increase in flows and kokanee are returning to spawn, flows in some creeks aren't high enough for other large-bodied species, including sockeye. Creeks of particular concern include Coldstream, Shingle, Shuttleworth, Trout, Vaseux and Shorts Creek. Water managers, Okanagan Nation Alliance's Fisheries Department, and others are watching water levels closely, hoping for more precipitation through fall and winter. Seasonal forecasts, however, project warmer and drier-than-normal conditions due to El Niño, and it is possible the drought could continue into 2024. The OBWB is continuing to promote water conservation, encouraging farmers to use resources at www.OBWB.ca/ag and for residents to find information at www.OkWaterWise.ca and www.MakeWaterWork.ca.

Water Board responds to news of invasive mussels in Idaho: The board was updated on invasive quagga mussels recently discovered in a section of the Snake River in Twin Falls, Idaho. State officials have closed off the area to the public and are preparing to release a copper-based treatment into the waters to kill the mussels, recognizing that it will also kill fish and aquatic plants in the area. Whereas the closest infestation of mussels was, until now, in Manitoba or South Dakota, Twin Falls is only an 11-hour drive to Osoyoos. Also of concern is that the Snake River is a tributary to the Columbia River that connects to the Okanagan. The board voted to establish a working group to review potential response to the mussels. Learn more about the mussels on our website at www.DontMoveAMussel.ca.

Water Board Annual Report available online: The OBWB released its 2023 annual report "Tapping into Water Solutions" at its annual meeting on Sept. 8. The report is now available on the board's website at www.OBWB.ca/annualreport. A video with highlights from the annual meeting can also be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFkAitm_ydY.

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