



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD APRIL 2, 2019, AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN  
9848 ABERDEEN RD., COLDSTREAM, B.C.**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Colin Basran	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Toni Boot	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt. Director Natasha Lukey	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Alt. Director Zee Marcolin	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Denise Neilsen	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

**REGRETS**

Vice-Chair Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan

**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
James Littley	Operations and Grants Manager
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Specialist
Stefanie Wenker	Water Demand Model Specialist

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Chair McKortoff respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional and unceded territory of Okanagan Nation and Splatstsin First Nation.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

***"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 2, 2019 be approved."***

**CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 5, 2019 at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

***"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 5, 2019 at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen be approved."***

**CARRIED**

**4. DELEGATION****4.1 Paul Demenok and Erin Vieira, Shuswap Watershed Council on “An Overview of the Shuswap Watershed Council”**

Mr. Demenok, who chairs the Shuswap Watershed Council, provided an overview of the council noting it is a collaboration between Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, District of Sicamous, City of Salmon Arm, Regional District of North Okanagan, Secwepemc Nation and B.C.’s Ministries of Agriculture, and Environment and Climate Change Strategy and works with additional agencies and interests. The mandate of the Shuswap Watershed Council is to help enhance water quality and safe recreation, and the work of the council is managed by the Fraser Basin Council.

As part of this effort, the council coordinates with 17 groups for the collection of water samples, and collects and reports this data.

Dir. Boot entered the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

The council has also been involved in water research, including looking at nutrient dynamics with UBCO. Water Quality Reports are available at [shuswapwater.ca](http://shuswapwater.ca)

There is also concern about invasive mussels and the council has partnered with the Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society to do outreach and water sampling for the mussels.

Safe recreation is also part of the council’s mandate. As such it also funds a “Kids Don’t Float campaign” which includes a personal floatation device loaner station at boat launches.

The council has also advocated to senior government on Agricultural Waste Control Regulations and invasive mussels.

In response to questions, Mr. Demenok added that the council is approaching year four of a five-year pilot program. Some of the issues they see are seasonal nutrients entering the water, which they are looking to mitigate. There have also been issues with forestry and debris flows during freshet season. These are issues that will need to be addressed recognizing the impacts exacerbated by climate change, he added.

**5. CHAIR’S REPORT**

Chair McKortoff noted that the Osoyoos Lake Board of Control is concerned about potential drought and is watching the situation closely. The Emergency Operations Centre at RDOS is also gearing up, getting ready for potential floods and fire.

**6. STAFF REPORTS****6.1 Executive Director Report**

Dr. Sears reminded the board that the next meeting is on Tues. May 7 and starts at 9 a.m. at Four Points Sheraton. It will be followed by a strategic planning session with the Water Stewardship Council (WSC). The meeting runs until 3 p.m.

Work on several flood-related projects are underway. The first set of LiDAR data is now being shared with local Okanagan governments with the rest of the data expected later in April. A meeting is planned for April 9 with local and First Nation governments, including planners, engineers and mapping staff, as well as provincial staff and consultants.

The board was told about an invitation from North Okanagan–Shuswap MP Mel Arnold, asking the OBWB to present to the federal Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans regarding a study looking at financial support to address aquatic invasive species. Staff will be following up.

The Water Board has been talking with organizers of an Aquahacking Challenge. The purpose of the challenge is to engage university students in solving real-world water problems and has been running for five years in Eastern Canada. Organizers are now looking to expand out west in 2020. The OBWB is recommending that the challenge focus on the Okanagan.

***“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated March 26, 2019, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

## 6.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel provided an overview of the March council meeting and presentations regarding source protection. The next council meeting on April 11 will look at climate and weather.

The annual Water Supply Webinar is set for Fri. April 12 and will include updates on snowpack, groundwater, a weather and fire forecast to support local governments, water managers, agriculture water users and others plan for the upcoming summer.

Staff are working with ONA to do bathymetry cross-sections in Okanagan River Channel. Sockeye eggs are emerging now so work will resume in June.

Alt. Dir. Zee Marcolin entered the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

In response to questions, Alt. Dir. Lukey added that the ONA monitors spawning using the Fish Water Management Tool. Emergence was pushed back a couple weeks because of cold temperatures this year. Work has been done on Woolsey Dam (e.g. with fish ladders) to help the salmon but there have been issues with sediment loading and the impact on fish eggs. The public is invited to a sockeye fry release on May 2 in Penticton on Green Mountain Road, she added.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated March 27, 2019, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

## 6.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley gave an update on winter rototilling (de-rooting) efforts for milfoil noting that not much could be done in the North Okanagan due to native Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels (RMRM), which are a protected species, in the area.

The board was given an overview of the RMRM issue and how earlier studies suggested low numbers. More recent studies, however, have found larger numbers of the mussel. At the same time, the federal government is considering listing the species as endangered, which would curtail rototilling significantly. In addition, some provincial staff have suggested that the OBWB move to a harvest-only control method. However, this is less effective and mainly cosmetic.

There was discussion about the need for further study, including a look at the impact invasive milfoil may have on the local mussel. Pat Field, who has been working with the milfoil control program since the 1970s, noted that milfoil mats in the mid-70s were so dense that boats could not get through. Since mussels need water movement to filter water, it’s possible that rototilling has been beneficial and created more habitat for the species.

The board asked that a letter be sent to the provincial and federal government asking for further study before moving to list the RMRM as endangered.

***“THAT the OBWB send a letter to the B.C. and federal governments asking for further study of the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel, its numbers, and the impact of invasive milfoil on the mussel before moving to list it as endangered.”***

**CARRIED**

***“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager’s Report, dated March 27, 2019, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

#### 6.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson gave an update on Canada Water Week activities, including the March 7 screening of “Beyond Climate” and follow-up panel with film narrator David Suzuki, director Ian Mauro, Sylix knowledge keeper Jeanette Armstrong, and Dr. Sears, and follow-up reception. The board was also briefed on the Okanagan WaterWise Challenge, encouraging youth to “Be a Climate Hero.”

An update was provided on Don’t Move A Mussel and Make Water Work campaigns, which will be rolling out in May. The board was also provided details from the province’s 2018 mussel inspection efforts and plans for 2019.

***“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated March 27, 2019, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

#### 6.5 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia noted that as part of the OBWB’s outreach to utilities and agriculture customers, staff are promoting the Water Supply Webinar as a useful tool for gathering the most recent information on valley water supplies to help plan for the upcoming summer and irrigation season.

Staff are updating the OBWB’s Drought Response Strategy which will be triggered if a sub-basin has water supply challenges or if the province declares the region in Level 2 drought. The province’s Thompson-Okanagan Drought Response Team will be holding its first call April 24 to review progress made on action items from 2018 and plan for the upcoming season. OBWB staff participate in these calls, sharing local water supply conditions and helping ensure a coordinated response.

Work on the Sustainable Water Strategy continues. A draft should be ready by June and delivered to the board in September.

In response to a question, Alt. Dir Marcolin, who also works for RDNO-Greater Vernon Water, noted that their upland reservoirs are high so the utility is releasing some water to prepare for potential spring rains. The concern is if the rains don’t come and the utility has to draw down its storage as summer continues, then there could be issues.

***“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist’s Report, dated March 26, 2019, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

**7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**7.1 Review of 2014-2019 OBWB Strategic Plan**

Dr. Sears introduced the last strategic plan and reviewed the purpose and mandate of the OBWB, key strategies and desired outcomes, long-term goals and strategic priorities, in preparation for next month’s planning session.

Drs. Fleming and Boot noted the importance of bringing greater attention to aquatic invasives, including milfoil and zebra and quagga mussels.

Dir. Basran suggested that climate change be addressed. Dir. Nielsen added the need to look at land use and its water impacts. Alt. Dir. Marcolin continued, noting a climate projections report being conducted by RDNO and SFU that will look at infrastructure but perhaps should look at impacts and solutions.

Dir. Baker noted the importance of sufficient supply, the need to measure what we have, what we use, and ensure enough to meet our needs in a changing climate (e.g. fire-fighting).

Dir. Boot added that municipalities are responsible for ensuring enough clean drinking water and planning land use. As such, more attention should be spent on addressing building in floodplains and interface areas near forests.

As discussion continued it was noted that climate change for the Okanagan has meant a shift in hydrology patterns so we have an earlier spring melt, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events increases. It also impacts the amount and type of water available. It was noted that the OBWB looks at adaptation but needs to look at mitigation as well.

**8. IN-CAMERA**

8.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(m) of the Community Charter

**9. RISE & REPORT FROM IN-CAMERA**

*“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board approve the 2019 grant funding as presented.”*

**CARRIED**

*Dir. Nielsen and Alt. Dirs. Lukey and Marcolin abstained*

**10. NEXT MEETING**

10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, May 7, 2019 at 9 a.m. at Four Point Hotel (across from Kelowna airport), 5505 Airport Way.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

*“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 2, 2019 be adjourned at 1:27 p.m.”*

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director