



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD OCTOBER 6, 2020, ONLINE  
OKANAGAN, B.C.**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
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
Alt. Director Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Christopher Derickson	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Denise Neilsen	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Operations and Grants Manager
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Specialist
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Special Projects Coordinator

**TECHNICAL OBSERVER**

Tessa Terbasket	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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**GUESTS**

Shaun Reimer	B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Nat. Res. Ops, Rural Dev.
Rob Munro	InfoNews

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

6.1 Datum proposal memo

***“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 6, 2020 be approved as amended.”***

**CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 4, 2020 held online.

***“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Sept. 4, 2020 held online be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**4. DELEGATION**

- 4.1 Shaun Reimer, Section Head – Public Safety and Protection Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development; presenting on *Considerations for Changes to the Okanagan Lake Regulation System (OLRS)*

Dr. Sears introduced Mr. Reimer and noted that his presentation is the result of a request from Peachland Council to discuss Okanagan Lake management levels. There have also been concerns raised about Kalamalka Lake levels, she added.

Mr. Reimer provided some background for how the current regulations were set. He also gave an overview of lake levels since 2017 and the issue of flooding, noting how conditions have been different each year and how the Okanagan is experiencing increased hydrologic variability. Decisions to release water downstream are proactive since only so much can be released at a time to prevent flooding downstream. At the same time, consideration is given to ensuring enough water to meet agricultural and domestic irrigation needs in summer. Other issues that are considered when releasing water is the impact on kokanee, ensuring eggs are not scoured out of the gravel in spring, and that there is enough water for fry emergence and shore spawning in fall. Okanagan sockeye are also considered. It has been difficult to manage for this, Mr. Reimer said.

It is recognized that the OLRS has to change and hopefully, by working with the OBWB, Okanagan Nation Alliance, local and senior governments and other partners, we can address it, he added. However, it's important to understand that any changes could have negative consequences for one of these interests. Other considerations are the impact on the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel, and Chinook salmon which are currently under review for possible listing under the Species at Risk Act.

The next step would be to do a gap analysis to determine the information needed to develop new OLRS targets. The original targets were developed as part of a consultative process and this would be required again to change them, Mr. Reimer added.

In response to questions around Kal Lake levels this year, he said that staff are investigating but believe there was a blockage impeding flow.

Regarding an update to the OLRS, Mr. Reimer suggested that perhaps a study should be conducted on expanding the channel downstream into the USA. This would have to include land acquisition to address downstream flood concerns, and would allow for a more reactive (rather than proactive) approach. Managing the lake as is done now, responding proactively and releasing water based on what inflow is expected, can cause issues in the case of a multi-year drought. A recent flood management report conducted for the OBWB by Northwest Hydraulic Consultants didn't speak to the increased risk for drought extremes with climate change.

Asked about the potential to capture and hold water in upland reservoirs, he explained that Okanagan Lake is best for providing a large stable water supply. Dr. Sears added that a preliminary report by the Water Stewardship Council's Dams and Reservoirs Committee suggests that increasing upland reservoir capacity would not be significant enough to help with flood control of mainstem lakes. Dir. Hrasko who chairs the committee added there are several issues with the idea of using upland reservoirs, including that there is no way to control levels from uphill, they freeze, they are hard to get to in winter to monitor and maintain, they can fill quickly.

When asked, Mr. Reimer responded that more stream and snow monitoring would be useful.

Dr. Sears suggested that the OBWB could write a letter to province later in November, after the provincial election, recommending that there be a review of the OLRs.

Rob Munro exited the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

Ms. Terbasket added that between 50 and 100 sockeye came through the Penticton Channel into Okanagan Lake this year. The lake has previously been managed for kokanee and sockeye downstream of this area, and it would be important to ensure sockeye in Okanagan Lake is also considered.

Chair McKortoff thanked everyone for their input.

Mr. Reimer exited the meeting at 10:53 a.m.

## 5. **STAFF REPORTS**

### 5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears reported that staff are in the process of budget planning.

Several flood resilience planning projects are underway and it is hoped that the province will help pay for a gap analysis and provide staff time and access to studies.

RDCO is working on flood mitigation strategies as the next phase in their Regional Floodplain Management Plan. The OBWB would like to eventually bring RDNO and RDOS into the process to ensure everyone is working together, ensuring consistent approaches related to development planning and lake level management.

Dr. Sears reported on a couple of senior government initiatives, noting that the Province of B.C. announced \$27 mill. in funding to watershed and wetland projects as part of its economic recovery from COVID-19. The OBWB joined with the B.C. Watershed Coalition in support of the funding. Staff are now talking with the coalition to determine what Okanagan projects are a fit. Also, she noted, the federal government has announced that it is committed to creating a Canada Water Agency. This will take time but is a positive step, she added.

***“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Sept. 30, 2020, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

### 5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported on the September council meeting and a presentation on municipal assets. The October meeting will look at potential research priorities based on results of a council survey.

Staff have been working toward the development of the Okanagan Hydrometric Monitoring Network, talking with ONA, Water Survey Canada and the province. Work to build on the Okanagan Wetland Strategy with UBCO and BCWF is also underway.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated Sept. 30, 2020, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

Dir. Baker exited the meeting.

### 5.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley updated the board on invasive mussel action by the OBWB, noting that this has been put on hold until after the provincial election. Another issue for the board to be aware of is that invasive Asian clams have been found in the Shuswap. They do not reproduce in numbers like the mussels but can clog infrastructure. The province is concerned about milfoil rototilling in the Shuswap and the potential to spread the clams.

The board was told that OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program and Don't Move A Mussel campaign is supporting an effort by Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society to sign up resident volunteers to survey Okanagan beaches for the clam.

Mr. Littley added that RFPs have gone out for a new milfoil equipment trailer and crane truck. He also noted that OBWB has partnered with RDCO (on their fleet purchase) to request proposals for three new shop pickup trucks, which will either be purchased in the current year, or next fiscal year. Once proposals are received, a report will be brought back to the board for approval. Funds had been set aside in reserve and the program should not require any further purchases for the next few years.

***"THAT the board approve the expenditure of up to \$50,000 plus tax for the purchase of a new milfoil equipment trailer, AND THAT the board approve the expenditure of up to \$250,000 for the purchase of a new milfoil crane truck, AND THAT the Executive Director be allowed to approve the final purchase contract following the competitive process."***

**CARRIED**

Directors were updated on an initiative to work with UBCO and review milfoil control operations with the goal of lessening siltation and preventing potential damage to Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels.

***"THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated Sept. 30, 2020, be received."***

**CARRIED**

In response to a question from the board, Dr. Sears noted that biological control, with weevils from the U.S., was reviewed several years ago. They were found to be difficult to rear, expensive, and there were issues getting them across the border. However, this is something that the OBWB could potentially look at again.

### 5.4 Communications Director Reports

Ms. Jackson provided some preliminary results from the Make Water Work (MWW) and Don't Move A Mussel (DMM) campaigns, with both wrapping up in early October. Final reports are being developed.

The board was told about a phone survey that is being developed to gauge Okanagan residents' understanding around water issues, the OBWB and its mandate, and some of its public outreach efforts. The survey is a repeat of similar surveys conducted in 2009 and 2014, to see if there has been any change, and will be conducted in October.

Ms. Jackson also provided an update on the development of new Okanagan water education guides for teachers in the valley.

***"THAT the Communications Director's Report, dated Sept. 30, 2020, be received."***

**CARRIED****5.5 Policy and Planning Specialist**

Ms. Garcia updated the board on various flood planning initiatives that OBWB staff are involved with. This includes assisting RDCO, as was requested, as it kicks off Phase 3 of its Regional Floodplain Management Plan. Staff are also planning a workshop in November of the valley-wide Okanagan Flood Planning Group, made up of planning, natural resources, public works, emergency services and GIS staff in local government and Indigenous communities. The workshop is intended to talk about current and future flood-related projects and how OBWB can support these, similar to the LiDAR and Aerial Image Acquisition project. Finally, staff are helping guide research by UBCO on its gap analysis of Okanagan flood policies, plans and regulatory tools.

The Source Water Protection Toolkit technical advisory committee's next meeting is at the end of October and will include a presentation by B.C. Forest Practices Board Manager of Audits and Investigations. He will speak to how source protection can be improved through partnerships, capacity-building and stronger regulation.

Ms. Garcia added that she attended an ONA-led session as part of the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Plan Initiative. Ms. Terbasket added that the sessions will inform the development of a lake protection strategy. The initiative, funded in part through the OBWB's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement program is being conducted in partnership with the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program and South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program. The conservation groups are applying for further funding from Vancouver Foundation to assist with the project.

***"THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist's Report, dated Sept. 29, 2020, be received."***

**CARRIED****5.6 Special Projects Coordinator**

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo reported on the OBWB's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary plans including a speaker series with Bob Sandford on Oct. 22, and with author Seth Seigel. The date of the second speaker is to be confirmed.

Planning for a Western Canada AquaHacking Challenge 2021 is underway. A kick-off is planned for early in the new year with the final event in Sept. 2021. The goal this year is to partner with universities and water organizations across the four western provinces, she explained.

An Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum is planned for 2021, following on forums held in 2007, 2011 and 2015. OBWB is the primary organizer and is working with the International Joint Commission.

Staff are planning an Okanagan Municipal Natural Assets (MNA) Workshop in mid-November to identify the current status and interest in these assets (e.g. wetlands) and determine how the OBWB can support these.

***"THAT the Special Projects Coordinator Report, dated Sept. 30, 2020, be received."***

**CARRIED**

Dir. Derrickson exited the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

**6. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

## 6.1 Floodplain Maps Datum

Dr. Sears presented the board with a proposal to revise the floodplain mapping datum to better meet the needs of Okanagan local governments. Federal funding for the maps required that the maps use up-to-date datum, she explained, adding that some local governments are still using older information. This update, while relatively simple, is important to ensure the maps can be used now. Staff recommended approving a contract with the original mapping contractor, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants, to complete this work ASAP.

***“That the OBWB approve a sole source contract to Northwest Hydraulic Consultants for up to \$39,940.00 to complete the “Development of CGVD28 Floodplain Mapping” as described in their proposal dated September 11, 2020.”***

**CARRIED**

***“THAT the Flood Maps Datum Memo, dated Oct. 6, 2020, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

7. NEXT MEETING

7.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tues. Nov. 3, 2020 at 10 a.m. at location TBD.

8. ADJOURNMENT

***“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 6, 2020 be adjourned at 12:03 p.m.”***

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director