



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD JULY 5, 2022, ONLINE
OKANAGAN, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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 Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Scott Boswell	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

REGRETS

Vice-Chair Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Colin Basran	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director to be appointed	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
Caitlyn Glasser	ONA Technical Staff
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Specialist
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Special Projects Coordinator

STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littlely	Operations and Grants Manager

GUESTS

Martina Beck	B.C. Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship
Dave Webster	B.C. Invasive Mussel Defense Program
Madeline Baker	Times Chronicle
Sierra Collins	Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

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

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of July 5, 2022 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 7, 2022 held online.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on June 7, 2022 held online be approved.”

CARRIED

5. DELEGATION

- 5.1 Martina Beck and Dave Webster, B.C. Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship, presenting on the B.C. Invasive Mussel Defense Program (IMDP) for 2022

Ms. Beck provided an overview of invasive mussels, how they were introduced to North America, how they spread, and their impact on ecology. She noted the province estimated potential impacts in 2013 at \$43 mill. for B.C., which included hydro power, agriculture, municipal water, and recreational boating, but it did not include impacts to fisheries, tourism, and property values. (This figure is not to be confused with the OBWB’s own 2013 study which estimated the cost to the Okanagan at \$42 mill. per year.) The province is in the process of updating its figures. Since inspections began in 2015, there have been more than 200,000 inspections conducted and over 400,000 interactions with people.

Inspector Webster updated the board on the perimeter defence effort and B.C. inspection staffing, noting there are 32 auxiliary conservation officers this season, as well as three sergeants – two of which each have a mussel-detection dog. There are six inspection stations and two roving crews. The inspection season began in April and will run to October 2022, with full staffing from June to late August. The program is being supported with funds from Columbia Basin Trust, Columbia Power, BC Hydro and Fortis BC, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

It was noted that as of July 3, there were five mussel-fouled watercraft intercepted. All were from Ontario with two headed to the Lower Mainland, two to the Okanagan and one to Vancouver Island. One of these was a large mussel-encrusted barge, the largest vessel staff have ever had to deal with. It was isolated and the Okanagan and Lower Mainland team decontaminated it and then it was quarantined for 30 days. Compared to last year, staff are so far seeing about half the number of watercraft being transported, likely due to fuel prices and weather, he added.

The board was told that hiring and retention has been an issue this year. Ms. Beck added that water sampling for mussels began in June, but high water flows and temperatures ended up delaying some of this work.

Ms. Beck noted that she is technical co-chair of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region’s Invasive Species Working Group which remains active on this issue. The province also continues to work with Canada Border Services Agency and held an incident command workshop with DFO in March. The province is also working with a University of Victoria researcher on eDNA primer validation for invasive mussels. And, the province has updated its website with a video about invasive mussels, their impacts, how the IMDP is responding and how people can clean, drain, dry their watercraft to help.

In response to questions, it was noted that although the mussels will not survive in salt water, the barge was destined for the Fraser River, and so was considered a risk. Regarding expanded inspection hours, Inspector Webster said that the province is working with CBSA on the southern border and, in talking with partners, expanded hours outside of peak times is not considered worth it. Regarding program sustainability, it was noted that it is a high priority for the province. Developing funding partners is important, as is continued education and outreach.

It was noted that inspection station numbers and staff are down this year, but that the province would like to see this back to 2019 levels and potentially increased. Dr. Sears noted that the OBWB provided a submission to the province's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services with a recommendation for inspection program funding. The OBWB has also provided letters to the federal government asking for more support. She added that local government can perhaps do more, for example through Union of BC Municipalities.

The OBWB was thanked for its support. The high level of awareness in the Okanagan and the rest of B.C. is unique and critical to the program's success, Inspector Webster added.

6. STAFF REPORTS

6.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears updated the board on the upcoming Annual Meeting on Sept. 9 at the Innovation Centre in Kelowna and said staff are currently working on the annual report and tracking measures.

The Water Management Program and equipment replacement plan will be going to regional district boards for approval in the coming weeks. Once completed, staff will complete the 2023-24 budget planning and bringing the budget to the board for approval at the September or October board meeting.

The board was provided a copy of the OBWB's submission to the B.C. Budget 2023 consultation which included recommendations for funding the Okanagan Lake Regulation System Plan of Study, the province's invasive mussel prevention program, and funding to establish a permanent B.C. Watershed Security Fund.

Ms. Collins exited the meeting at 11 a.m.

Directors were told that staff prepared an application to the Gas Tax Strategic Priorities Fund – Capacity Building Stream to undertake studies nine and 13 of the Plan of Study for Modernizing the Okanagan Lake Regulation System but it requires board support.

“That the OBWB supports the Gas Tax Strategic Priorities Fund application for the project: How climate change is affecting the Okanagan Lake Regulation System and what infrastructure and operating plan changes could be made to enhance community benefits and reduce.”

CARRIED

“THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated June 28, 2022, be received.”

CARRIED

6.2 Special Projects Coordinator

Dr. Sears presented the Special Projects Coordinator report with an update on the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum being held Oct. 27-29, 2022. Registration details are now on the OBWB website (OBWB.ca/olwsf).

“THAT the Special Projects Coordinator Report, dated June 28, 2022, be received.”

CARRIED

6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel provided an update on the June Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting and presentation by Deborah Curran on her 2019 published paper “Indigenous processes of consent: Repoliticizing water governance through legal pluralism.” Chair Scott Boswell will be presenting on Okanagan Lake Responsibility Plan at the meeting in September.

Work on the hydrometric service is continuing. It was noted that data collection during high flows has presented challenges with sediment and the team is doing water quality control work.

The board was also told of presentations Mr. Jatel gave at the recent Canadian Water Resources Association conference, on hydrometric monitoring and watershed governance.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report, dated June 28, 2022, be received.”
CARRIED

6.4 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley told the board that a milfoil survey on Swan Lake was postponed until high water levels drop and murky conditions improve. Staff have also received confirmation that the province is reviewing the OBWB’s permit application for Vaseux Lake harvesting this summer, and staff are waiting for a response from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Pending these reviews, it is possible that the milfoil crew will be able to start harvesting in a couple of weeks.

Staff will review the invasive mussel response update from the province, the letter from DFO Minister Joyce Murray, included in the agenda, and an update from the upcoming PNWER conference and provide an update to the board in September for further action.

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated June 28, 2022, be received.”
CARRIED

6.5 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Mr. Littley presented the Policy and Planning Specialist (PPS) memo and noted the boating workshop as the beginning to a longer conversation. Several board directors noted their concern about the number of boats on lakes in their communities and the impacts on water quality, for example on Kalmalka, Wood and Osoyoos lakes. Shoreline erosion was also raised as a concern.

The PPS memo also noted work on drought messaging, coordinating messages from OBWB and local utilities, the province, and the federal Canadian Drought Monitor. OBWB staff are participating in a Thompson Okanagan Drought Response Team communications sub-committee to work on this through the summer.

“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist Report, dated June 28, 2022, be received.”
CARRIED

6.6 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson presented an update on the Don’t Move A Mussel (DMM) campaign, explaining that some new creative has been developed for posters, rack cards, and more. The website has been updated, including new inspection station and mussel distribution maps. Billboards are posted and radio ads are running throughout the valley. Digital ads and social media ads are also running. Materials will be provided to the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society who we have a contract with to distribute DMM materials and to provide DMM public and boater outreach.

Staff are also working with the Okanagan Xeriscape Association to help deliver Make Water Work materials (e.g. bookmarks, yard and plant stakes, gardening gloves) to partner communities and businesses. The campaign is also using digital ads, social media and ads on Global Okanagan and Castanet. Ms. Jackson added that social media graphics and text have also been provided to partners to use on their own social media channels, which has been very effective.

“THAT the Communications Director Report, dated June 28, 2022, be received.”
CARRIED

7 CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard June 17, 2022 letter to OBWB regarding federal invasive mussel response



“THAT the letter from Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to OBWB regarding federal invasive mussel response be received.”
CARRIED

8 NEXT MEETING

8.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Friday, September 9, 2022 at 12:30 p.m., following the Annual Meeting at 9 a.m. at the Innovation Centre in Kelowna.

9 ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of July 5, 2022 be adjourned at 11:42 a.m.”
CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
		
Chair		Executive Director