

# Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



**DATE:** Friday, September 6, 2024

**TIME:** 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m.

**PLACE:** Rotary Centre for the Arts, Kelowna, B.C.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

1.1 Acknowledgement of First Nations Traditional Territory

*We acknowledge that we are holding this meeting on the unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.*

**2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 6, 2024 held at Regional District of North Okanagan [Page 2](#)

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

5.1 Executive Director Report [Page 8](#)

5.2 Deputy Administrator Report [Page 9](#)

5.3 Communications Director Report [Page 10](#)

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

6.1 Letter from Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard to OBWB re: invasive mussels [Page 15](#)

6.2 Letter from the OBWB to BC Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, Nathan Cullen, and to the Province of Alberta MLA, Grant Hunter, Chair of the Alberta Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force [Page 17](#)

**7. IN-CAMERA**

7.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(c) of the Community Charter).

**8. NEXT MEETING**

8.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, October 1 at 10:00 a.m., at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**\* NOTE:** Meetings of the Okanagan Basin Water Board are open to the public, and only closed for in-camera sessions as set out in the B.C. Community Charter. From time-to-time, the board will be holding its meeting online. If you are interested in attending an online meeting, please contact [communications@obwb.ca](mailto:communications@obwb.ca) for further details.



Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
September 6, 2024  
Agenda No: 4.1

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD AUGUST 6, 2024, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN  
9848 Aberdeen Rd., Coldstream, B.C.**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice Chair – Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Flemming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt-Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt-Director Shirley Fowler	Regional District North Okanagan
Alt Director Adrienne Fedrigo	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.

**REGRETS**

Jeremy Fyke Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

**DELEGATIONS**

Nicole Pyett B.C. Ministry of Water, Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Water Resources Section Head; Thompson-Okanagan Region

**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littlely	Deputy Administrator
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

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

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

**2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

None

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*“ THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 6, 2024 be approved. ”*

**CARRIED**

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 6, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan.

***"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on August 6, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan, be approved."***

**CARRIED**

**5. DELEGATION**

- 5.1 Presentation by Nicole Pyett, B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS), Water Resources Section Head; Thompson-Okanagan Region

Ms. Pyett presented to Board Directors about her role within the provincial government with authorizations and water licences, as well as her department's work in watershed scale decision making, the provincial drought and water scarcity response plan. She also presented on the Ministry of WLRS's increased focus on preparing, planning and communicating around the province's more regular drought conditions, as well as the efforts being made to improve communication on drought management under the Water Sustainability Act.

Concluding her presentation, Ms. Pyette answered questions from OBWB directors, and took information to follow up with individuals.

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

Dr. Sears updated the Board on two changes to OBWB directors appointed by the Okanagan's regional districts. Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) Dirs. Fleming and Fraser have exchanged places with each other for OBWB director and alternate, and Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) has reduced their number of alternates to one.

Dr. Sears spoke about the approaching completion of the 2024 Annual Report, in preparation for the upcoming OBWB Annual Public Meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup>, in Kelowna. She provided the board with an update on her work with the tracking measures report for the 2024 fiscal year.

The Board received information from Dr. Sears about the UBCO Endowment Fund, which began in 2010. At the request of the Okanagan Regional Districts, the OBWB began funding \$100,000 annually for five years to secure a provincial grant for a BC Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Management at UBC Okanagan. The 2023-2024 Report for the fund was provided to the Board.

Dr. Sears also spoke about the final report on the November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 truck fire in West Kelowna. A high-level remediation plan has been prepared to address the known areas of impact and to further delineate any unidentified impacted areas. During remediation, discoloured soils along the roadway and culvert were removed and samples collected. Water sampling in Trepanier Creek did not exceed standards or guidelines except for some metals that are consistent with a standard upstream background sample.

***"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received."***

**CARRIED**

## 6.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel reported that the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (WSC) is on summer break with no meetings during July and August. The next WSC meeting is scheduled for Sept. 12, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna.

Dr. Jatel also reported on the OBWB's Hydrometric Monitoring Program's work to track stream flows throughout the summer. Throughout the summer, the team measured stream flows and water levels, executed new installations, and updated the hydrometric station map to close data gaps for future water management planning.

In partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Fisheries Department, OBWB continues to improve on a communication tool that provides real-time hydrometric data, including stream-specific information on fish and environmental flows. During July, this data showed that there was extreme stress in several Okanagan streams, underscoring the value of accurate and real-time flow data for informing water management decisions.

Dr. Jatel announced the appointment of Alberto Ceccacci, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Bologna, as the recipient of a MITACS grant for a two-year project with UBC Okanagan. Ceccacci's expertise in ecosystem services and climate change adaptation will contribute significantly to evaluating the economic value of irrigated agriculture in the Okanagan. The project, which is a partnership involving UBCO, RDCO, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, the BC Fruit Growers Association, and several local governments, will deliver critical insights into agricultural water needs today and in the future.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

## 6.3 Deputy Administrator’s Report

Mr. Littley provided an update to the board about invasive mussels, including that he attended the PNWER summit, where he highlighted the OBWB's efforts against invasive mussels by distributing about 80 copies of the OBWB's Vulnerability Assessment Guide.

Mr. Littley recommended that the board write to Minister Cullen and AB MLA Grant Hunter to encourage cross-provincial collaboration to establish Western-Canada ‘Mussel Free Zone’ and consider a ban on watercraft outside of the current mussel free provinces (Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C.). He suggested renewing calls for mandatory watercraft inspections, supplemented with certified inspectors from the private sector who could offer this as a paid service to watercraft owners. There is also a need to secure financial supports for Western Canadian provinces from the federal government to increase invasive mussel defence work and for western provinces to align invasive mussel related policies and fines.

***“THAT the OBWB send letters to Minister Cullen, Minister Hunter, and the ONA respectively, as outlined above.”***

**CARRIED**

Mr. Littley answered Board questions regarding mussel sniffing dogs, specifically about the OBWB seeking opportunities to facilitate funding for senior levels of government to add a new invasive mussel defence dog to the B.C. program. The Board proposed encouraging B.C. Hydro to invest in the B.C. invasive mussel sniffer-dog program. Staff estimate that to invest in a sniffer-dog could cost upwards of \$50,000. Mr. Littley also provided an update on the Snake River invasive mussel situation in Idaho, stating that after applying pesticides to the river, there have not been any

positive samples of quagga mussels found yet, but that 5-years of mussel-free samples would be needed to consider the Snake River mussel-free again.

A Milfoil program update was provided to the Board, where the Board heard about the conclusion of summer harvesting in Wood and Osoyoos Lakes, with work continuing around Vernon in Okanagan Lake. It was noted that ongoing surveys of milfoil growth throughout the valley showed little milfoil growth in most areas, likely due to cooler spring weather.

In regards to the naming contest for the new amphibious milfoil harvester, Mr. Littley provided the board with a list of the name submissions. After reviewing all submissions, the board voted on and selected “Hippo” as the new name for the new milfoil harvester. Hippos are amphibious and also eat aquatic plants.

***“THAT the Board vote to accept the name ‘Hippo’ for the new amphibious milfoil harvester.”***

***CARRIED.***

Mr. Littley provided an update on the milfoil harvesting equipment. He relayed that during the spring maintenance cycle, corrosion-induced holes were found in the hull of the 1978 harvester, indicating that it may be unsafe for use beyond this summer without major repairs estimated to cost between \$25,000 and \$35,000. This cost would only extend its use for approximately 10 more years, and other components may still require attention. Notably, the harvester is thought to be the oldest in operation in Canada, at 46 years, surpassing usual equipment lifespans as outlined by the BC Government.

As an alternative to repairs, acquiring a new harvester at a cost of \$350,000 to \$385,000 CAD was proposed, with delivery by summer 2025. This aligns with the original Asset Replacement Plan, which recommended replacing both harvesters by 2023-24, though the plan was amended to delay replacement in favor of a new amphibious harvester, intending to operate the old harvester until at least summer 2027.

Mr. Littley recommended that the board authorize the purchase of a new standard harvester for summer 2025 to circumvent repair costs and account for inflation, adjusting the milfoil equipment budget to a minimum of \$200,000 and maintaining a minimum equipment reserve of \$100,000.

***“THAT staff include a minimum \$200,000 milfoil equipment reserve transfer in the upcoming budget cycle, pending final budget approval, AND THAT staff issue an RFP to procure a new standard harvester for summer 2025 with a maximum contract price of \$385,000 CAD (Excluding GST).”***

***CARRIED***

Mr. Littley reported to the board on his attendance at a technical exchange and field tour in Oroville, Wash. in regards to the use of aquatic herbicides on the U.S. side of Osoyoos Lake.

***“THAT staff work to create a position paper as an official statement of OBWB’s position against the use of aquatic herbicides in Okanagan lakes.”***

***CARRIED***

Mr. Littley also reported that he will be hosting the upcoming Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) grants information session for Local Governments on Aug. 8<sup>th</sup>. The session will provide updates and clarifications on recent changes in the OBWB's SFA program. During this session, Mr. Littley

will present on new funding opportunities for older lots, developments in Liquid Waste Management Plans, changes to the 1.0 Hectare Policy, and application processes. Madelaine Martin, from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, will discuss provincial infrastructure grants related to the 1.0 Hectare Policy. Cassandra Counce, from the Ministry of Environment, will explain the Liquid Waste Management Plans and provincial approval guidelines. All eligible local governments have been invited, and there are 44 registered attendees so far.

***“THAT the Deputy Administrator’s Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received.”***  
***CARRIED.***

Director Lezard exited the meeting 12:56 p.m.

#### 6.4 Water Science Specialist Report

Ms. Schira presented a 2024 Drought Timeline. She noted that the Okanagan region has spent more than half of 2023 in persistent drought conditions. The winter's below-normal snowpack, coupled with above-normal temperatures, caused early snowmelt and led to early freshet concerns about the water supply.

Ms. Shira shared that in May, after some precipitation, the region's drought level was momentarily lowered. However, a July heatwave with temperatures between 35 C and 40 C exacerbated the situation, escalating the drought to level 3 by July 25, indicating severely dry conditions with potential for significant ecological and socio-economic impacts.

***“THAT the Water Science Specialist Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received.”***  
***CARRIED.***

#### 6.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson outlined the Water Board's response to the current drought, mentioning ongoing collaboration with the Thompson Okanagan Regional Technical Drought Working Group to monitor conditions. She highlighted the issuance of two "Drought Bulletins" following changes in provincial drought levels, aiming to keep stakeholders informed.

Additionally, the "Make Water Work" campaign was a focal point, with efforts to boost outdoor water conservation through updates to the campaign's website, marketing across various media, and local outreach initiatives. Jackson encouraged board members and the community to actively participate in water conservation efforts by pledging on the campaign's website.

Ms. Jackson also provided the Board with a report on the "Don't Move A Mussel" outreach efforts focusing on peak watercraft launching season from May to October. She noted updates to the campaign's website, including details on B.C.'s inspection stations for 2024, new regulations, and recent mussel discoveries in other regions. Similar to the "Make Water Work" campaign, extensive advertising through billboards, radio, and digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube was employed, targeting terms related to local boat launches. Filming also took place to showcase potential risks to local ecosystems and infrastructure from mussel infestations.

Additionally, Ms. Jackson informed the Board about the news conference for the launch of a new milfoil harvesting machine and supported the media launch of the OBWB's new Climate Indicators Dashboard.

***“THAT the Communications Director Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received.”***  
***CARRIED.***

7 OBWB FINANCIAL RESERVES MEMO

*“THAT the OBWB Financial Reserves Memo, dated August 6, 2024, be received.”  
CARRIED.*

8 CORRESPONDENCE

There were two official correspondences received. One letter from Minister Nathan Cullen of the B.C. Ministry of WLRs regarding the Water Security Fund, and one email from Director Eric Nicholls of the B.C. Ministry of Planning and Land Use Management regarding the Homes for People Plan. Both letters can be found in the August Agenda Package.

*“THAT Correspondence to the OBWB, dated August 6, 2024, be received.”  
CARRIED.*

9 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be following the Annual Public Meeting, on Friday, Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at Mary Irwin Theatre, Rotary Centre for the Arts, in Kelowna at 12:30 p.m.

10 ADJOURNMENT

*“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 6, 2024 be adjourned at 2:03 p.m.”  
CARRIED*

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director



## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
September 6, 2024  
Agenda No: 5.1

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Anna Warwick Sears  
Date: August 27, 2024  
Subject: Executive Director Report

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### Tracking Measures for the Strategic Plan

Each year for the past five years, we have been evaluating our annual progress on the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan. This year, I'm collating across years, looking at where we have made good progress, and where we have not. Some of the tracking measures appear to be redundant, and some goals are difficult to achieve as they depend on partnerships with other organizations. For some goals we have gone far beyond expectations. I will provide the board the finished report as soon as possible. We will plan to complete the Strategic Plan towards the end of this year, or the beginning of 2025.

### Collaborative Leadership Initiative

I've been told to expect an invitation from the ONA to the Collaborative Leadership Initiative workshop on September 11, to provide information about the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control. I'm not certain yet about whether I will be there for the whole day, or just providing a presentation. I know that many of the OBWB directors are participating.

### Weather Report

The declared drought level (level 3) in the Okanagan has held over the last few weeks. The occasional rain events have led to high enough flows to prevent drought levels from increasing, but so far have not remained high enough for long enough to justify moving down a level. Water management remains especially important as salmon return to the valley, and making sure there are enough flows and low enough water temperatures for them is important. Water is also important for agriculture as many producers enter the last month of their licensed irrigation season. Stream flows remain variable, with regulated streams doing better, and some unregulated streams being dry despite recent rains.

Shaun Reimer is releasing extra water from Okanagan Lake over the next few days to help the Okanagan sockeye salmon get up past Zosel dam and travel into their Canadian spawning areas. It's a very significant fish return year, and it's fortunate that the weather and water temperatures have cooled.



## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
September 6, 2024  
Agenda No: 5.2

To: OBWB Directors  
From: James Littley  
Date: August 28, 2024  
Subject: Deputy Administrator Report

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### **Milfoil program update**

Milfoil harvesting is complete for the summer, following treatment in Osoyoos, Okanagan, Wood, and Vaseux Lakes. This year we did a survey along the shorelines of Peachland and Summerland and found less growth than in past years. We also received calls from Skaha Lake and will do a follow-up survey in the late summer to assess the need for treatment there.

Last month I also reported a potential liability to replace a damaged water intake pipe. The damage was ultimately covered under our liability insurance and so will not affect our equipment reserves.

### **Sewer Grant Information Session for Local Governments**

On August 8<sup>th</sup> we hosted an online information session about the changes to the OBWB Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) grants program. The meeting was well attended, and included presentations from OBWB, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. A recording of the meeting, the slides for each presentation, and all the updated SFA documents (notification, application and annual report forms, and program guide) have been posted to our SFA grants page at: <https://obwb.ca/overview-grants/sfa/>

The information session was intended as part of ongoing consultation with local governments. This included:

- Advisory committee guided comprehensive program review. Fall 2022 – Spring 2024
- Letter to LGs with draft TOR and 8-week review and feedback period. Mar 26 – May 17, 2024.
- Information session and Q&A. August 8<sup>th</sup> – ongoing.

We are in contact with a few Okanagan local governments with follow up questions about the program that were not raised until the information session. I will keep working with the province and local governments on any issues that arise and report back to the board with any recommendations for adjustments as I receive provincial feedback.

## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Sept. 6, 2024  
Agenda No: 5.3

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Corinne Jackson  
Date: Aug. 28, 2024  
Subject: **Communications Director Report**

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As some of you may be aware, after careful consideration I tendered my resignation as Communications Director on Aug. 19 with my last day being Oct. 18. With this being one of my final reports to the board, I will provide some reflections on the last 15 years here with the OBWB at the end of my memo. But first, an update on activities since last month's report.

### **Drought & Make Water Work 2024 Update**

As noted in previous board memos, OBWB staff have been participating in weekly calls with the B.C. Regional Technical Drought Working Group to review water supply conditions and drought levels. Last week, on Aug. 21, after reviewing precipitation and stream flows, it was decided to keep the Okanagan overall at a Level 3 (where it has been since July 25, and where adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are *possible*). At Level 3, local water restrictions are encouraged where appropriate. While it was decided to keep the Okanagan region at Level 3, the South Okanagan's Inkaneep Creek was moved from Level 2 to 3, and Vaseux Creek was moved up from 3 to 5, the highest level (where adverse impacts are *almost certain*).

We have not put out a Drought Bulletin since the Okanagan was moved up to Level 3 on July 25. However, we have continued to communicate the importance of conservation and the benefits of transitioning yards to be more WaterWise, for example by using the tips at [MakeWaterWork.ca](http://MakeWaterWork.ca).

Over the summer, as part of the Make Water Work (MWW) campaign, we developed a series of videos. Two of these feature local meteorologist and media personality Wesla English. In one video, she interviews people on the streets of Kelowna about how WaterWise they are, and in the other she speaks with Okanagan Master Gardener Pat Zander about ways to maintain a beautiful yard that uses less water. Please find the video links below.



*“How WaterWise Are You?” Street Quiz*  
<https://youtu.be/llCpCRDgSHE?si=TRoAouiyDhWoRcOR>



*“WaterWise Gardening Tips From Okanagan Master Gardener Pat Zander”*  
<https://youtu.be/2VCH5xJu2JI>

We also created a video, profiling Westbank First Nation Coun. Jordan Coble, Paynter’s Market owner Jennay Oliver, and Lake Country Fire Chief Darren Lee, speaking to the importance of ensuring enough water in the summer for fish & local ecosystems, food crops, and firefighting. You can find the video, *“Make Water Work Smarter... for food, fish and firefighting”* at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MzmXz-tquh8lfr-nlsUNYfOZ4-eWOGTp/view>.

I’m very pleased with how these turned out and think they will be helpful in promoting WaterWise behaviours in the valley.

Also, as you may recall, I reached out to FireSmartBC in the spring to see if we could partner and include the FireSmart designation on our “Make Water Work Plant Collection.” We were successful in this effort and then in August, we were invited to attend a joint Make Water Work-FireSmart event at Kel-Lake Garden Centre (photos below). Interest in this partnership has continued to grow and I was recently contacted by FireSmartBC to discuss some options to bridge and strengthen our mutual efforts. My hope is that my replacement will continue to build this successful program, including with FireSmart.

Some photos of the Kel-Lake Garden Centre event are provided below.



Left to right: Lake Country Deputy Fire Chief Brent Penner, Okanagan Xeriscape Assoc. Exec. Dir. Sigrie Kendrick, OBWB’s Corinne Jackson, Kel-Lake Garden Centre Manager Sarah Patton with staff member Brooke Turner, Kelowna Assist. Fire Chief Dennis Craig, and Lake Country Fire Insp. Pete Whitfield.





The water conservation campaign has normally run until mid-October, when people start to turn off their irrigation. With a few weeks to go, we are continuing to encourage people to go to [www.MakeWaterWork.ca](http://www.MakeWaterWork.ca) to find tips to maintain their yard using less water, to find water restrictions, and to take the pledge to conserve. We will be announcing our “Make Water Work Community Champion” – the community with the most pledges collected per capita – at our Annual Meeting on Sept. 6.

And, residents can continue to pledge to be entered to win one of two \$500 gift cards to WaterWise their yard, until Sept. 29.

### **Don't Move A Mussel 2024**

Work on the Don't Move A Mussel (DMM) campaign has continued throughout the summer. This has included helping guide the creative designs and messaging for the campaign's website, advertising, handout materials and more.

Just as with the Make Water Work campaign, we are developing a series of videos for DMM which will be used as part of the campaign's outreach efforts. I look forward to sharing these with you in the weeks ahead.

In response to requests from local government partners, we have produced new boat launch signs – both for motorized boats and non-motorized recreation. The signs have been updated them with the new “pull-the-plug” information and we have ensured that they are consistent with the Province of B.C.'s messaging. You can see samples below. The signs are now in production and should be ready by the end of September.

As noted previously, we have a contract with the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) to help extend the reach of our mussel campaign. Communications Coordinator Amanda Burnett and I had a wrap-up call with them today. Some of the highlights was their participation in Penticton's Peach Fest and Osoyoos' Cherry Festival parades with the invasive mussel trailer, and hundreds of people lining the streets yelling “Don't Move A Mussel!” Staff also expanded their outreach with an information table at stores that specialize in water recreation (e.g. Trout Waters and Canadian Tire), and dissemination of information at aquarium and pet stores. The importance of outreach to pet stores became clear in 2021 when it was discovered that invasive-mussel infested moss balls had been distributed throughout the U.S. and Canada. On Aug. 8, we learned that Washington state had another report of mussel-infested moss balls at a pet store. At the time, B.C. provincial staff announced that they were also looking to see if any had reached into B.C. It's a good reminder of the need to continue to

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alert to the various ways mussels can find their way in. OASISS will be available to provide a more fulsome update on their summer outreach efforts in the new year.

# ATTENTION BOATERS

Protect our waters from invasive mussels

**CLEAN** off plant parts, animals, and mud from boat and equipment (e.g. boots, waders, fishing gear). Use a power wash station if available.

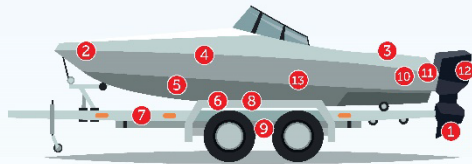
**DRAIN** onto dry land all items that can hold water (e.g. buckets, wells, bilge and ballast).

**DRY** all items completely before launching into another body of water.



Check these spots for common hiding spots for invasive species.

- |               |              |           |               |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1 Prop        | 4 Dock Lines | 7 Trailer | 10 Live Wells |
| 2 Anchor      | 5 Hull       | 8 Bunks   | 11 Bilge      |
| 3 Bait Bucket | 6 Rollers    | 9 Axel    | 12 Motor      |
|               |              |           | 13 Ballast    |



**PULL THE PLUG - IT'S THE LAW!**  
 IN B.C., IT IS ILLEGAL TO TRANSPORT YOUR WATERCRAFT WITH THE DRAIN PLUG IN PLACE.  
 REPORT INVASIVE MUSSELS TO 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP)



**DONTMOVEAMUSSEL.CA**



# ATTENTION PADDLERS & ANGLERS

Protect our waters from invasive mussels



Once you leave the water...

**CLEAN** off plant parts, animals, and mud from boat and equipment (e.g. boots, waders, fishing gear). Use a power wash station if available.

**DRAIN** onto dry land all items that can hold water (e.g. kayaks, coolers, life jackets)

**DRY** all items completely before launching into another body of water.

**PULL THE PLUG - IT'S THE LAW!**  
 IN B.C., IT IS ILLEGAL TO TRANSPORT YOUR WATERCRAFT WITH THE DRAIN PLUG IN PLACE.  
 REPORT INVASIVE MUSSELS TO 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP)



**DONTMOVEAMUSSEL.CA**



## Reflections on 15 years at the OBWB

Throughout my working life, I have been drawn to social issues, whether it was as a reporter for 10 years, or in communications for 22 years. When I moved out of journalism and into communications, I said I would only work with an organization that was involved in something that I believed in and was passionate about. That's exactly what I got when I was hired at the OBWB.

I am proud of the work that has been accomplished since I began in December 2009, growing the OBWB's profile and its important work to protect the valley's waters and all life that depends on them. I am also thankful for having had the opportunity to grow my skill set in communications and marketing, and my network of equally passionate and concerned water and environmental warriors.

Shortly after I started here, in early 2010, the OBWB delivered the results of its Water Supply and Demand Study which found the Okanagan was facing serious challenges with water availability as the valley's

population continued to grow and in light of climate change. Months later, after meeting with local government and water utility staff in the region, I launched the board's public outreach and education program, *Okanagan WaterWise*, as well as our social media presence.

This was followed by the launch of our outdoor water conservation campaign, "Make Water Work," in 2011, aimed at tackling the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest use of water, outdoor residential use. Today, the campaign is delivered in partnership with 17 of the valley's largest local governments and water utilities, as well as numerous businesses, including several of its largest garden centres, all promoting water conservation and WaterWise landscaping.

In 2012, a study was conducted that found the Okanagan was at high risk for an invasive mussel infestation. In response, I led the development and execution of the "Don't Move A Mussel" campaign in 2013 – a program that has achieved widespread awareness in the Okanagan, and far beyond, for its efforts to raise the level of awareness and response to the threat of zebra and quagga mussels.

Since then, I have managed the development of place-based resources for teachers and students, including the Choose your Watershed poster, Okanagan Climate Infographic and the "Our Relationship with Water in the Okanagan" curriculum series.

The next two months will be dedicated to completing a few projects, including the exciting launch of an updated Okanagan WaterWise website, and a *syilx siwłkʷ* (water) education guide, created with the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the fourth in the "Our Relationship with Water in the Okanagan" series.

As already discussed with Exec. Dir. Sears, I am happy to assist with this transition as needed.

There is still much to be done, and I will miss being a part of it, but I believe I'm leaving the Water Board's communications program with a strong foundation for the agency to continue to build on, helping protect the water of this precious and special place for years to come. Thank you for the opportunity I've been given to help in this important work.



August 9, 2024

Mr. Blair Ireland  
Chair  
Okanagan Basin Water Board  
c/o Ms. Corinne Jackson  
< [corinne.jackson@obwb.ca](mailto:corinne.jackson@obwb.ca) >

Dear Mr. Ireland,

I am writing in response to correspondence dated January 18, 2024, from Ms. Sue McKortoff, former chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, regarding the prevention of invasive zebra and quagga mussels from entering British Columbia (BC) waters.

Effective management of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is a shared priority and responsibility across federal, provincial, and territorial governments. The Province of British Columbia is the lead for the management of AIS within BC's freshwaters.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) agrees that prevention is key to addressing the threat of zebra and quagga mussels to BC. DFO and the Canada Border Services Agency work closely together to implement protocols, training, tools, and procedures for the enforcement of the *Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations* at international borders, including with respect to recreational watercraft entering Canada at land crossings (such as trailered boats), and illegal imports.

In May 2023, DFO announced that it was investing \$36.6 million over five years to fight AIS in Canada, including \$8.75 million in contribution funding for the newly created Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Fund (AISPF). Thanks to these resources, DFO can undertake new activities focused on detecting and responding to reports of imminent invasions, including at international borders, and facilitating on-the-ground preventative action through partnerships. In addition, on February 14, 2024, I announced that DFO is funding through the AISPF, up to \$540,000 from 2023 to 2025 for the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, to add to the ongoing efforts to prevent the introduction of zebra and quagga mussels in BC.

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I have forwarded your correspondence to my Senior Regional Advisor for British Columbia, Mr. Joshua Lindner, who can be reached at < [joshua.lindner@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:joshua.lindner@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) >. Thank you for bringing the Okanagan Basin Water Board's concerns to DFO's attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Diane LeBouthillier', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Diane LeBouthillier, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., K.C., M.P.  
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions  
and Intergovernmental Affairs  
The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Honourable Nathan Cullen  
B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship  
PO Box 9012 Stn Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, BC V8M 9L6

August 28, 2024

Honorable Grant Hunter  
Chair, Alberta Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force  
513-F Legislature Building  
10800 97<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

**Re: Inter-provincial cooperation to prevent invasive mussels**

Dear Minister Cullen and MLA Hunter,

On behalf of the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), I am writing to thank you for your engagement with our staff at the recent Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) summit in Whistler, B.C. in July. We believe PNWER is an excellent forum to engage on aquatic invasive species prevention and to discuss inter-jurisdictional cooperation in greater detail. We ask that you continue the work started at PNWER by collaborating at the political level on several opportunities to strengthen the prevention of invasive mussels into Western Canada.

**Call for federal action**

We ask that both provinces call on the federal government to provide resources for provincial invasive mussel programs, including direct federal funding to watercraft inspection programs. Federal funding for invasive mussels has largely been limited to detection, rather than prevention. As we know from Lake Winnipeg and countless other lakes, once a detection occurs, it is already too late.

As shown in the attached recent correspondence from Hon. Diane LeBouthillier, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, although the federal government recognizes that “effective management of aquatic invasive species is a shared priority and responsibility,” provinces are left to lead these management efforts within their boundaries. This apparent federal abdication of responsibility has helped invasive mussels continue their spread west. The spread has led to closed lakes in national parks, increased cost to drinking water and hydropower facilities, reduced commercial and recreational fisheries, and harmed water quality and quality of life for residents in affected watersheds. The federal government must do more to prevent, not just monitor, the spread of invasive mussels.

**Create “Western Canada Invasive Mussel-Free Zone”**

We also ask you to consider the development of a “Western Canada Invasive Mussel-Free Zone” including B.C., Alberta, and potentially Saskatchewan. Participating provinces could act together to make inspections mandatory for all watercraft entering the zone, creating common policy and penalties between provinces. Further, private industries like marinas and environmental firms inside the zone could be certified to provide approved inspections when watercraft are not stopped at provincially run seasonal stations. This approach would not increase provincial enforcement costs but would provide a second layer of inspections that would

make mandatory inspections more achievable. Industry partners could charge a fee for this service and make it available year-round. A similar model is used in Arizona.

As an alternative to mandatory inspections, provinces in the Western Canada Invasive Mussel-Free Zone could work together to ban watercraft from outside the zone. While there may be effects on tourism, it could mean less restrictive travel within the zone, and support for industries such as watercraft rentals and local watercraft sales. Rules for mandatory inspections would remain in place for anyone travelling with watercraft out of the zone and then returning.

#### **Align penalties and fines across provinces**

Finally, we ask that the provinces work together to have consistent policies, fines and penalties whenever possible across Western Canada. Alberta has demonstrated a commitment to enhancing these efforts, recently introducing the highest fines in North America with the fine for failing to stop at an inspection station at \$4,200 and failure to pull the drain plug at \$600. We urge B.C. to match these levels. Large powered watercraft represent the highest risk of transporting invasive mussels, and those who can afford to own these craft and transport them between provinces may not be deterred by a fine of a few hundred dollars – less than a tank of fuel for their boat.

#### **Public support**

In March, OBWB convened the Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group, attended by more than 100 people representing 58 local governments, First Nations, marinas and yacht clubs, businesses, tourism associations, chambers of commerce, invasive species and conservation groups and other organizations. This level of participation shows the seriousness of the issue, and that as legislators, you have the public support and social capital to protect our western waters from this significant threat. OBWB will continue to provide advice and support within our mandate, and we look forward to increased collaboration and continued leadership from both your governments on this vital issue.

Sincerely,



Blair Ireland, Chair  
Okanagan Basin Water Board

CC:

- Okanagan MLAs: Harwinder Sandhu, Norm Letnick, Renee Merrifield, Ben Stewart, Dan Ashton, Roly Russell
- Okanagan Nation Alliance, Chiefs Executive Council and Natural Resources Council
- Okanagan Indian Band
- Westbank First Nation
- Penticton Indian Band
- Osoyoos Indian Band
- Lower Similkameen Indian Band



- Okanagan Local Government Chairs and Mayors
- Okanagan MPs: Mel Arnold, Tracy Gray, Dan Albas, Richard Cannings
- Pacific NorthWest Economic Region: Matt Morrison, Chief Executive Officer
- Invasive Species Council of B.C.: Gail Wallin, Executive Director
- Okanagan Chambers of Commerce
- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
- Union of BC Municipalities
- Shuswap Watershed Council
- Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society
- Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group members