

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

DATE: Tuesday, April 1, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Regional District of North Okanagan office,
9848 Aberdeen Road, Coldstream.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

- 1.1 Acknowledgement of First Nations Traditional Territory

We acknowledge that we work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm̓x̓w̓úlaʔx̓w̓ (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honour and respect this land and the siw̓łk̓ (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.

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 March 4, 2025 held online.

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5. DELEGATION

6. STAFF REPORTS

- 6.1 Executive Director Report P. 8
6.2 Chief Operating Officer Report P. 9
6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report P. 10
6.4 Water Science Specialist Report P. 14
6.5 Communications Manager Report P. 19

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8. CORRESPONDENCE

- 8.1 Letter from OBWB Chair Blair Ireland to the province to provide input on the proposed amendments to the Wildlife Act, dated March 21, 2025.

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- 8.2 Email reply to the OBWB letter regarding changes to the Wildlife Act from Lori Halls, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, dated March 26, 2025.

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9. IN-CAMERA

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

10. NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be an abbreviated meeting on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 9 a.m. at the Coast Capri Hotel, 1171 Harvey Ave, Kelowna, followed by a joint Board-Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting.

11. 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 for further details.*

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD MARCH 4, 2025, ONLINE**

PRESENT

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt-Director Matt Taylor	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt-Director Kevin Kraft	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C

REGRETS

Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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STAFF

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
James Littley	Deputy Administrator
Dr. Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Carmen Weld	Communications Manager
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 10:03 a.m.

He respectfully acknowledged that we work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm̓x̓w̓úlaʔx̓w̓ (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honour and respect this land and the siwl̓k̓ (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

Due to time constraints, the Board has postponed the original scheduled delegation for a later date.

An in-camera session was announced by Dr. Sears and added as item number 9, which is reflected in the minutes.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“ THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 4, 2025 be approved. ”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of February 4, 2025, held online.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on February 4, 2025, held online, be approved."

CARRIED

5. DELEGATION

Due to time constraints, the Board has postponed the original scheduled delegation for a later date.

6. STAFF REPORTS**6.1 Executive Director Report – Dr. Anna Warwick Sears**

Dr. Sears briefly introduced Carmen Weld, OBWB's new Communications Manager.

Dr. Sears presented the Board with a resolution regarding the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides in Okanagan waters.

"For over 50 years, the Okanagan Basin Water Board has played a crucial role in safeguarding water quality, ensuring access to clean drinking water, supporting healthy agriculture, and maintaining thriving aquatic ecosystems and advocating for source protection. Okanagan communities deeply value and depend on their water, not only drinking water, but for clean, safe water for the environment, recreation and tourism. Our communities strongly oppose the use of chemical pesticides and aquatic herbicides in our lakes, streams, and reservoirs. The Okanagan Basin Water Board stands firmly against the application of these and any other chemicals in Okanagan waters."

"That the OBWB adopts the Statement Against the Application of Chemical Pesticides and Herbicides in Okanagan Waters as presented by staff."

CARRIED

The Board received Dr. Sears' Executive Director Report.

"THAT the Executive Director's report, dated February 25, 2025, be received."

CARRIED

6.2 Communications Manager Report – Carmen Weld

The Board received the Carmen Weld's Communications Manager Report.

"THAT the Communication Director's report, dated February 24, 2025 be received."

CARRIED

6.3 Deputy Administrator Report – James Littlely

Mr. Littlely presented the Board with the Recommendation concerning the Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) request for clarification on the Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) program Terms of Reference, paragraph 4.8.5, pertaining to the allowance of accessory dwellings on lots below 1.0 Ha.

While paragraph 4.8.5 allows for an exclusion for "the creation of new lots," it doesn't explicitly

include accessory dwellings that connect to systems under the Municipal Wastewater Regulation. he recommended amending paragraph 4.8.5 to make this exclusion explicit:

“4.8.5 OBWB discourages the creation of new private wastewater systems to serve as community sewer. However, the creation of lots below 1.0 Ha, and/or the allowance of accessory dwellings on lots below 1.0 Ha that connect to systems created and managed in accordance with the Municipal Wastewater Regulation will not affect a local government’s eligibility for SFA grants.”

“THAT the Board approve the amendment to paragraph 4.8.5 of the SFA program Terms of Reference as outlined above and that staff communicate the change to all eligible local governments.”

CARRIED

The Board received Mr. Littley’s Deputy Administrator Report.

“THAT the Deputy Administrator’s report, dated February 25, 2025 be received.”

CARRIED.

6.4 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel

Dr. Jatel presented the Board with a Recommendation to approve the members of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC), for the upcoming new term. The OWSC is made up of member organizations, which are invited to participate in the OWSC by designating a primary representative and an alternate. These organizations serve two-year terms on the OWSC. The Water Board Directors are asked to approve the participating organizations for the years 2025 – 2027. Unchanged from the previous term, these organizations are as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada | 18. Ministry of Forests |
| 2. Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC | 19. Ministry of Land, Water & Resource Stewardship |
| 3. BC Agriculture Council | 20. Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program |
| 4. BC Fruit Growers Association | 21. Okanagan College |
| 5. BC Groundwater Association | 22. Okanagan Nation Alliance |
| 6. BC Water Supply Association | 23. Osoyoos Indian Band |
| 7. BCWF - Okanagan region 8 | 24. Penticton Indian Band |
| 8. Canadian Water Resources Association | 25. Regional District of Central Okanagan |
| 9. City of Kelowna | 26. Regional District of North Okanagan |
| 10. City of Penticton | 27. Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen |
| 11. City of Vernon | 28. Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association |
| 12. Denise Neilsen, Emerita | 29. University of British Columbia Okanagan |
| 13. Environment Canada - Pacific and Yukon Region | 30. Westbank First Nation |
| 14. Fisheries and Oceans Canada | 31. Okanagan Indian Band |
| 15. Interior Health Authority | 32. Kelowna Chamber of Commerce |
| 16. Ministry of Agriculture | |
| 17. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy | |

Directors asked questions about OWSC membership participation, noting some missing local Chambers of Commerce, and why other local governments (for example, Lake Country) are not represented on the board. Dr. Jatel informed the Board that invitations were extended to all Okanagan Chambers, and those organizations expressing interest in participation are included on the OWSC. With respect to local governments, municipalities who wish to be formally represented should reach out to Dr. Jatel.

“THAT the OBWB approve the 2025-2027 Water Stewardship Council membership list

consisting of the above organizations.”

CARRIED.

The Board received Dr. Jatel’s Water Stewardship Report included in the March Agenda Package.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s report, dated February 24, 2025 be received.”

CARRIED.

6.5 Water Science Specialist Report – Sandra Schira

Ms. Schira provided the Board with a brief report on the lower-than-normal snowpacks. The Board received Ms. Schira’s full Water Science Specialist Report.

“THAT the Water Science Specialist’s report, dated February 24, 2025 be received.”

CARRIED.

6.6 Office and Grants Manager Report – Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo

The Board received Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo’s Office and Grants Manager Report.

“THAT the Office and Grants Manager report, dated February 26, 2025 be received.”

CARRIED.

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No new or unfinished business.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Following the Board’s letter to Hon. Minister Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Lands, and Resource Stewardship, the following individuals and organizations have sent the OBWB their letters of support for our updated calls to action sent in February to the Okanagan Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group:

- Boundary-Similkameen MLA, Donegal Wilson
- Health Officer’s Council of B.C., Chair, Dr. Mark Lysyshyn
- District of Coldstream, Mayor and Council
- District of Lake Country, Mayor and Council
- Penticton and Wine Country Chamber of Commerce, President Jordan Knox and Executive Director Michael Magnusson
- City of Kelowna, Mayor Tom Dyas
- Tourism Revelstoke, Taniell Hamilton, Destination & Sustainability Manager
- Thomson Okanagan Tourism Association, CEO Ellen Walker-Matthews

8.2 Letter from Christopher Garrish, Senior Manager of Planning Services at the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen regarding clarification of Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) Grants Program Terms of Reference “1.0 Ha Policy” – Accessory Dwellings.

“THAT the correspondence to the OBWB outlined above be received.”

CARRIED

9. IN CAMERA

The Board entered an in-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(a) and 90(2)(b) of the Community Charter) at 10:18 a.m.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board enter into an in-camera session.”

CARRIED.

The board exited the in-camera session at 10:40 a.m.

Following the in-camera session, the board rose and reported the following motion.

“THAT the board establish the position of Chief Operating Officer, reporting to the Executive Director, with responsibilities outlined in the attached job description;

AND THAT Mr. Littley be promoted to Chief Operating Officer consistent with Sections 151 and 152 of the Local Government Act, and consistent with the intention of the officer position established in the OBWB Governance Manual.”

CARRIED

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 10:00 a.m., at the Regional District of North Okanagan office 9848 Aberdeen Road, Coldstream.

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 for further details.

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Anna Warwick Sears
Date: March 26, 2025
Subject: **Executive Director Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting April 1, 2025 Agenda No: 6.1
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I am in the process of wrapping up my work for the board, working closely with James Littlely and Melissa Tesche on the transition. As Ms. Tesche does not begin until April 22, I will continue to work as needed until she is established. With Mr. Littlely's experience and new responsibilities as Chief Operating Officer, everything will go very smoothly.



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: James Littley, Chief Operating Officer
Date: March 25, 2025
Subject: Chief Operating Officer Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting April 1, 2025 Agenda No: 6.2
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Drought Affecting Milfoil Control

Ongoing low water conditions in the Okanagan are affecting milfoil control operations this winter. While de-rooting is complete in Okanagan and Wood Lakes, Osoyoos Lake levels have been too low to launch our machine there. With rains this week it is possible that we can launch before April 1, putting us a few weeks behind schedule in Osoyoos. I have directed operators to prioritize public beach areas as per board policy. Areas adjacent to public property may not receive treatment this winter.

Drought is also affecting our operations in Kalamalka Lake, as de-rooting causes short-term turbidity spikes at Greater Vernon Water's (GVW) Kalamalka Lake intake. Kalamalka Lake drains during freshet, most of the turbidity is carried away from the intake and toward Vernon Creek, however, with the current low flows in Vernon Creek, the turbidity is moving toward the intake. We continue to coordinate closely with GVW to do as much milfoil control as possible without affecting drinking water quality.

Invasive Mussel Update

Wildlife Act Review: On March 21 we submitted feedback to the BC Wildlife Act Review as they work to amend the Act to enable future regulations requiring all watercraft entering the province to be inspected prior to launching in B.C. waters. This step will help prevent invasive mussels and also whirling disease and other aquatic invasives and pathogens. I have attached our letter to the province in correspondence, and a letter we received March 26 in response to our recent Calls to Action.

Alberta Mussel Program: Alberta has improved its invasive mussel defence program again by committing \$18.2 million over five years to enhance their prevention efforts. This is equivalent to \$3.64 million per year, and the money will be spent on inspection stations, and to add two mussel-sniffing dog teams, and a pilot tank decontamination project.

UBCO Engineering Capstone Project: Since September I have been working with UBCO students in the engineering program as an industry partner on their 4th year capstone project. The students designed a modular drive-through watercraft decontamination tank, with their final report including all components, costs, maintenance etc. needed to create a working pilot. The final project (and other engineering capstone projects) will be showcased at the KF Centre for Excellence on April 19 between 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Nelson Jatel
Date: March 24, 2025
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting April 1, 2025 Agenda No: 6.3
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Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) – a technical advisory body to the OBWB

Meeting Summary – March 13, 2025

At the March meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), members heard two important presentations that highlighted the significant role research and prevention play in protecting our water.

Mission Creek and Groundwater – Student Research by Zailie Hoff (UBCO)

Zailie Hoff, a university student at UBCO, shared her research on how underground water (called groundwater) and surface water in Mission Creek are connected. Her project examined how pumping groundwater—especially during the summer—can affect water flow in the creek.

She studied 12 wells along Mission Creek and used scientific models to understand how water moves between underground layers. She found:

- Groundwater and Mission Creek are connected.
- Pumping water from wells near the creek can lower the water level.
- Too much pumping during summer could reduce creek flows—this is a big deal when water levels are already low later in the season.

Her work helps us understand how the use of groundwater can impact fish, ecosystems, and even community water supplies.

Invasive Mussels – Risk Report by James Littley (OBWB)

James Littley, OBWB's Chief Operating Officer, talked about the threat of invasive mussels, like zebra and quagga mussels, getting into B.C. lakes and rivers. He reviewed past boat inspection data and estimated that in 2023, more than 52,000 boats may have entered B.C. without inspection, and approximately 21 may have been carrying invasive mussels. Without strong prevention programs, these mussels could have arrived in B.C. as early as 2018. Even more worrying, a new type, known as the golden mussel, is spreading worldwide and could be even more challenging to manage.

Mr. Littley explained that if we continue to invest in prevention—like mandatory boat inspections—we could save more than \$3.5 billion by 2050. That money would otherwise be spent on damage to water systems, fish habitats, and recreational areas.

April Council Meeting Preview

The upcoming OWSC meeting will feature **Deborah Curran**, Executive Director of the Environmental Law Centre and Hakai Professor in Environmental Law and Sustainability at the University of Victoria. Ms. Curran is a national leader in freshwater governance, watershed law, and integrated planning. She will explain how Canadian legal systems better support community-led watershed governance and how legislative reform might advance ecological resilience. Her work emphasizes how Indigenous, and settler legal traditions can co-exist to protect water as a shared responsibility and life source. This promises to be a timely and engaging session that will make a direct contribution to current Okanagan watershed governance conversations.

Project Updates

Okanagan Algae Monitoring Network – Blue-Green Algae Project

The OBWB is working closely with the City of Kelowna and Westbank First Nation Utilities & Public Works to address a growing problem in Okanagan lakes—harmful algal blooms (HABs). These blooms can impact drinking water, wildlife, and even our enjoyment of the lake for swimming and boating.

To support this critical work, the OBWB is including it within our Water Quality program and is applying for a grant from Environment and Climate Change Canada. The project aims to establish a team-based approach to tracking algae and cyanobacteria, the bacteria that cause HABs. It also includes a new data system to help water suppliers get early warnings before a bloom becomes a serious problem.

Some of the key features include:

- A shared database that collects water test results, reports of bad taste or smell, and predictions about algae levels at drinking water intakes.
- Comparing satellite images and special water sensors with lab tests to catch HABs earlier and faster.
- Emergency plans and decision guides to help each water system respond quickly if there's a bloom risk.
- A guide to show how well different treatment methods (like UV, chlorine, or ozone) work against certain types of harmful algae.
- A training program to help water suppliers learn how to detect and respond to HABs.

This project is supported by a team of about 40 experts and local water professionals. If it works well in the Okanagan, the system could be utilized in other parts of Canada that face similar issues.

Economic Analysis of Irrigation Water in the Okanagan: Project Update

The economic analysis and Cost-Benefit Assessment (CBA) of Irrigation Water in the Okanagan is progressing well under the leadership of postdoctoral researcher Dr. Alberto Ceccacci and supervisor Dr. John Janmaat. This project is a collaborative, bottom-up initiative aimed at enhancing the understanding of the economic value and management implications of irrigation water in the region. At its core is a newly developed survey.

The new survey is now live, aiming to gather practical insights from the agricultural community, local governments, and key stakeholders in water management. The focus is on identifying realistic and impactful ideas for improving irrigation practices and overall water use in the Okanagan. The results will inform future policy and water management strategies.

Survey participants are invited to:

- Propose innovative water management ideas and explain their potential impacts on agriculture and the environment.
- Estimate the benefits and possible trade-offs associated with their ideas.
- Offer thoughts on how these solutions could be scaled or adapted across the Okanagan Valley.

The information collected will be used to evaluate and model cost-benefit scenarios, helping to identify water management plans that offer the best value and long-term sustainability for the region.

The project team extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has participated so far, including Board members whose input is valued. Your contributions are vital to developing more innovative, more resilient approaches to water stewardship.

Okanagan Water Supply Webinar – April 11, 2025

Join us for the 13th annual Okanagan Water Supply Webinar on Friday, April 11, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., hosted by Nelson Jatel on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87220337173>.

Each year, this webinar offers timely, science-based updates to inform water decisions in the Okanagan. We'll explore key topics, including reservoir levels, snowpack, groundwater conditions, and seasonal weather forecasts.

With the growing impact of extreme events, such as drought and flooding, staying informed is more important than ever. This session brings together local governments, farmers, businesses, and the public to better prepare for the year ahead.

Everyone is welcome—join us and be part of the collective effort to protect and manage our region's water resources.

2025 Okanagan Water Supply Webinar

Friday, April 11th 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Join us for this year's water webinar exploring water supply in the Okanagan including:

- Reservoir levels
- Snowpack
- Groundwater
- Weather forecast

Past participants have included: Local government, agricultural community, water managers, public, business owners, and water professionals. *Nelson Jatel*

Zoom webinar link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87220337173>

For more info contact Nelson at:
nelson.jatel@obwb.ca | (250) 469.6295





MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Sandra Schira, Water Science Specialist
Date: March 26, 2025
Subject: **Weather and Water Rates Survey Update**

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
April 1, 2025
Agenda No: 6.4

Weather Update

Snowpack was low at the start of March, but some small recovery was seen. As of March 1, the Okanagan snowpack was at 82% of normal¹ – the third lowest in the last ten years (Figure 1). This followed a normal snowpack in January (102%) and a low snowpack in February (84%) for the Okanagan. The March 1 value matched the overall low snowpack conditions across the province. Since March 1 the Okanagan has received precipitation which translated to a small recovery in the snowpack for some locations (Figure 2)². By March 24, Brenda Mines and Silver Star Mountain had both seen a slight recovery in snowpack compared to March 1. Mission Creek had not seen much of a recovery. Snowpack across the Okanagan remains on the lower end but is no longer currently near historical lows.

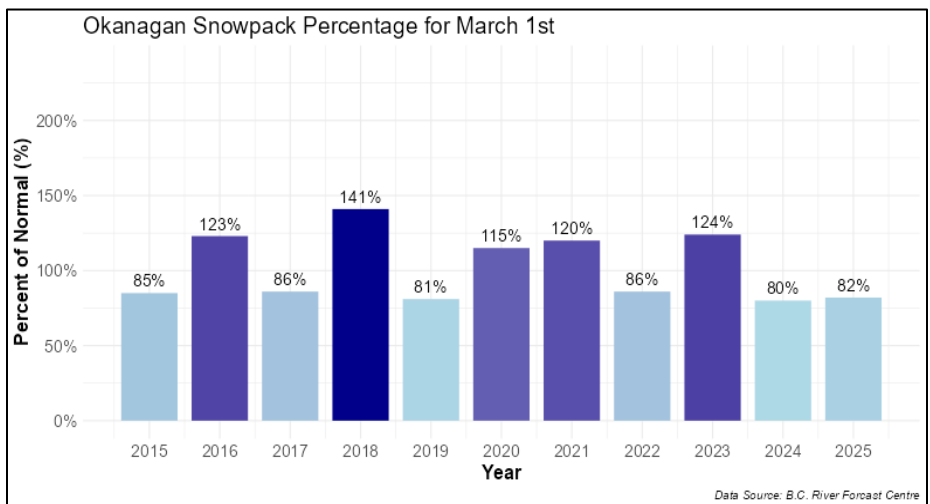
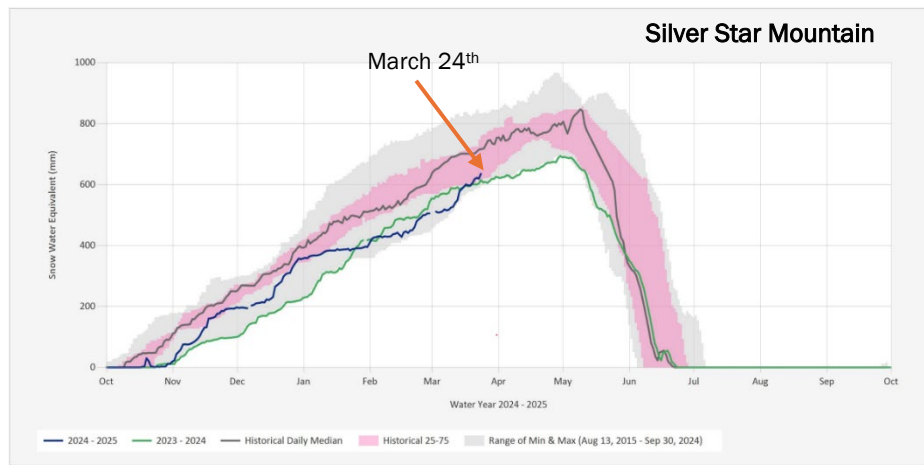


Figure 1 Comparison of March 1 snow index over the last ten years in the Okanagan. Graph from the February Snow Supply Bulletin.

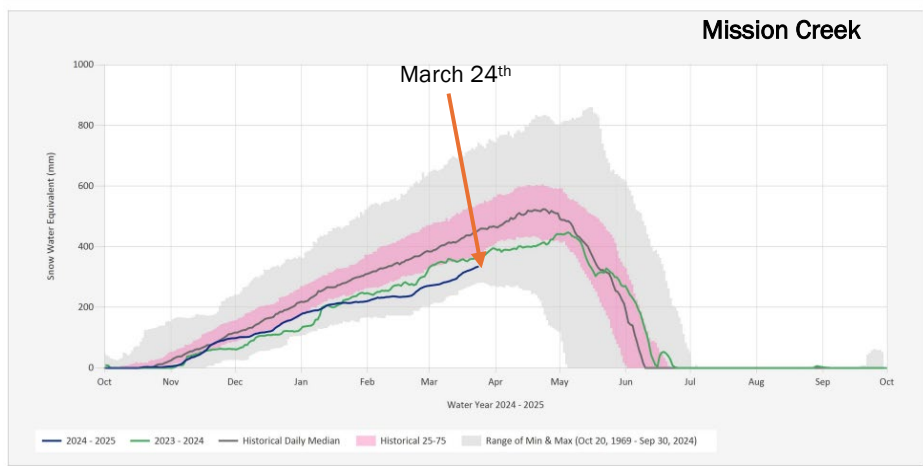
¹ March 2025 Provincial Snow Bulletin. B.C. River Forecast Centre. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/water/river-forecast/2025_mar1.pdf (Accessed 24.03.2025)

² Snow Survey Interactive Map. B.C. River Forecast Centre. <https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c15768bf73494f5da04b1aac6793bd2e> (Accessed 24.03.2025)

Source Data: SW.Daily@2F10P
 Location: Silver Star Mountain, Latitude: 50.37136, Longitude: -119.06211, Elevation: : 1840 m



Source Data: SW.Daily@2F05P
 Location: Mission Creek, Latitude: 49.94467, Longitude: -118.9497, Elevation: : 1780 m



Source Data: SW.Daily@2F18P
 Location: Brenda Mine, Latitude: 49.8623611, Longitude: -119.9821111, Elevation: : 1460 m

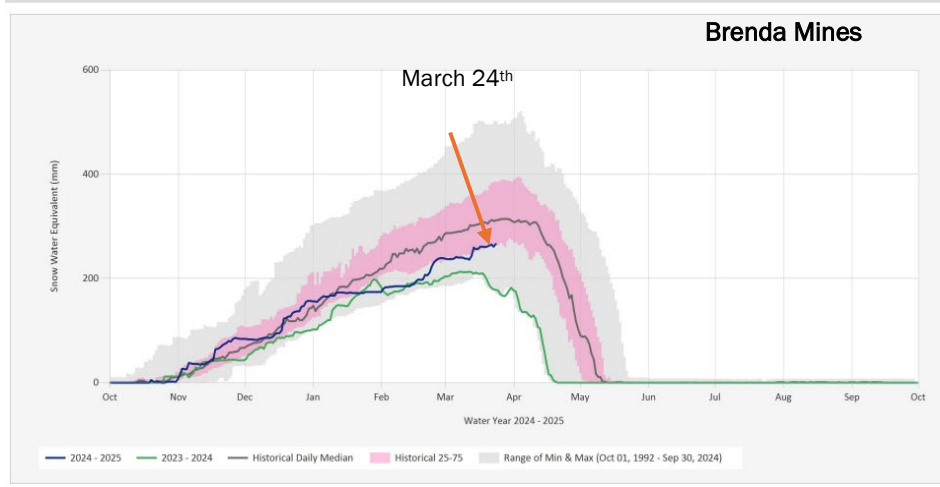


Figure 4 Weekly Snowpack Accumulation Across the Okanagan as of March 24. Data from the Province of B.C.

Precipitation was higher in March. As of March 24, the major cities across the Okanagan had already surpassed the average precipitation for March (Figure 3). In particular, Vernon and Kelowna were well over the 1991-2020 average. Additionally, after a dry start to February – as reported at last month’s meeting – the final week of February saw enough precipitation to put the February totals in line with average values. It is still too early to know the drought outlook for the spring and summer, but after several years of dry conditions, significant and long-term precipitation is needed to fully recharge the watershed. It is also too early for freshet and flood outlook; however, by next month, that should be clearer.

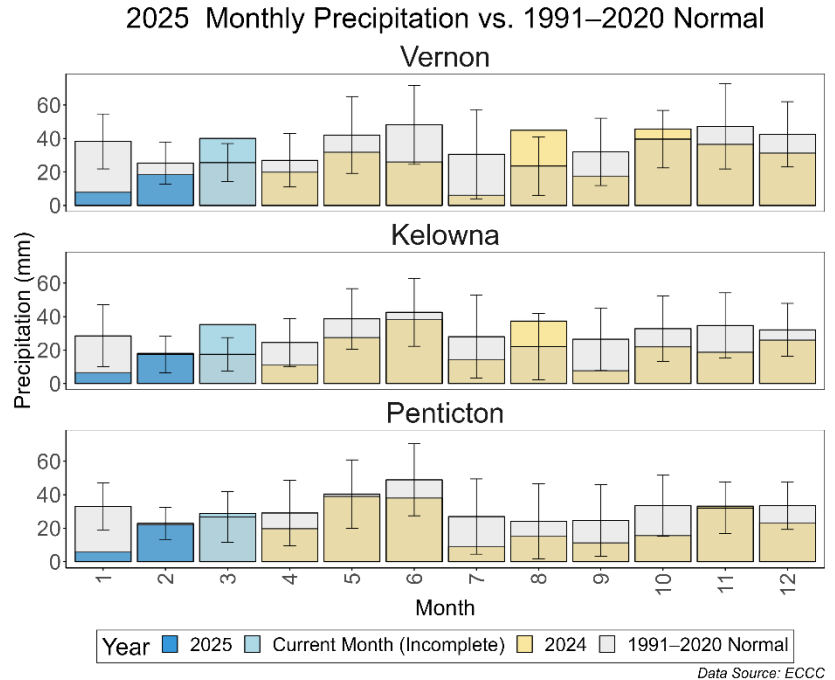


Figure 3 Monthly Precipitation in the Okanagan as of March 24. Compared to 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada

Temperatures across the Okanagan are slightly above or around normal. After the cold spell in February, temperatures returned to warmer than usual for several weeks (Figure 4). The week of the 18th saw near-normal or cool temperatures as precipitation hit the region.

Seasonal forecasts indicate no clear trend for the Okanagan. Long-term forecasts suggest that we will likely move out of the weak la Niña to a more neutral ENSO condition in the next few months. The Environment and Climate Change Canada³ long-term seasonal forecast shows a slight possibility of temperatures above normal in Okanagan over the next three months. For precipitation, no clear trend was present in the forecast, with all scenarios having an equal likelihood (Figure 5). Seasonal forecasting is highly challenging, so disagreement between models or variations from projections is not uncommon. Seasonal forecasts are, therefore, used to provide a sense of likely future conditions but should not be taken as 100% certain.

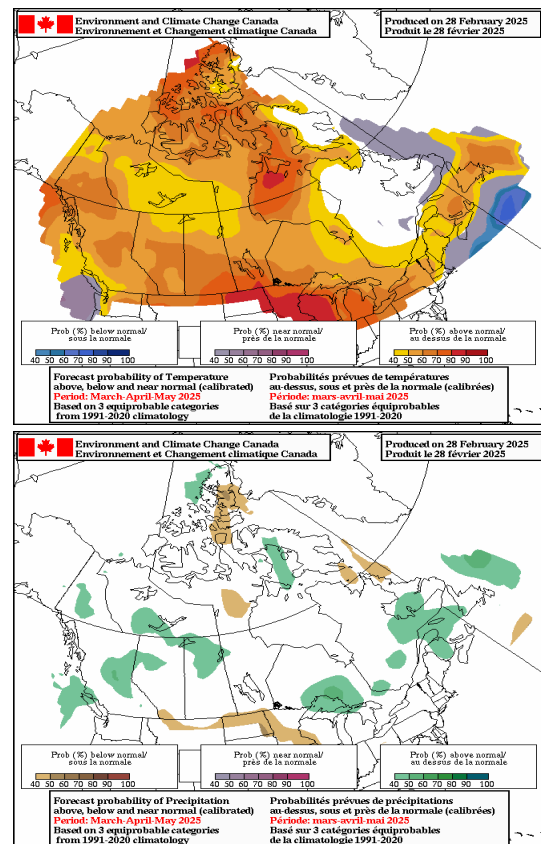
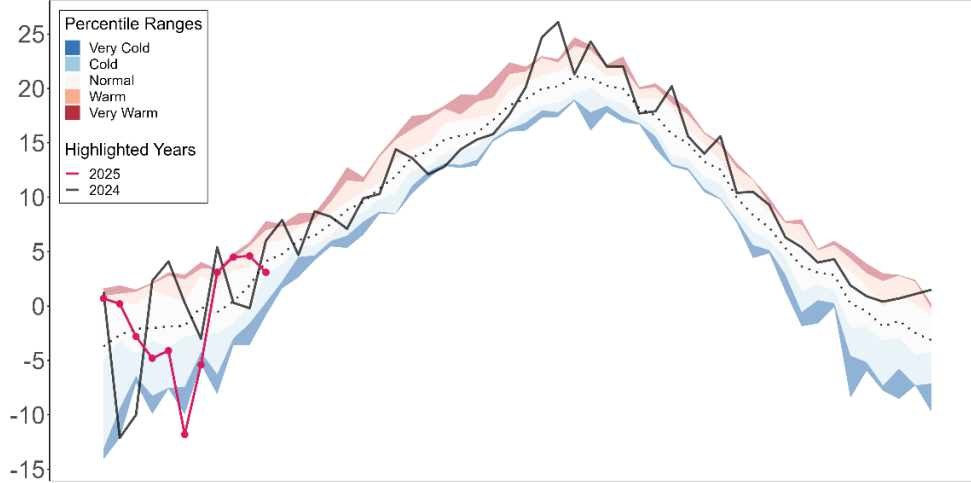


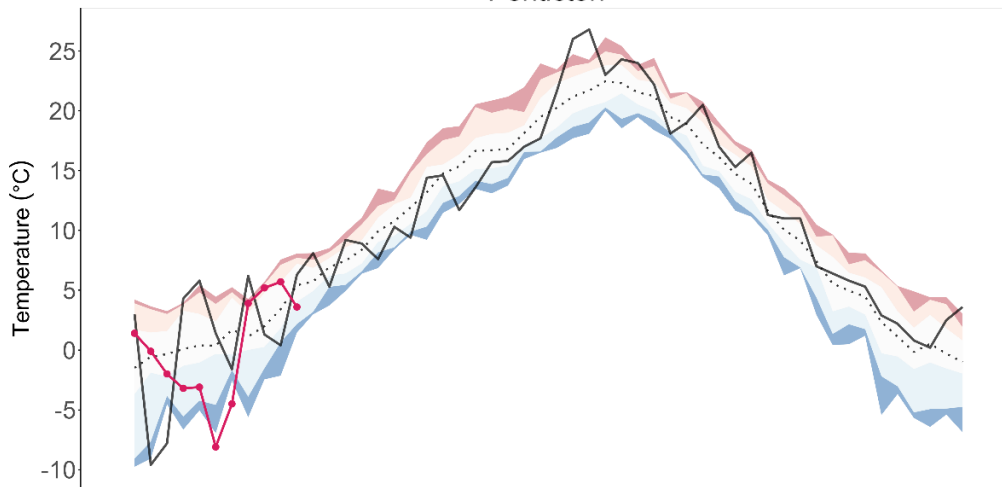
Figure 5 Three-Month Seasonal Forecast from ECC³ (Mar-May).

³ ECC3 Seasonal forecasts. <https://climate-scenarios.canada.ca/?page=cansips-prob> (Accessed 24.03.2025)

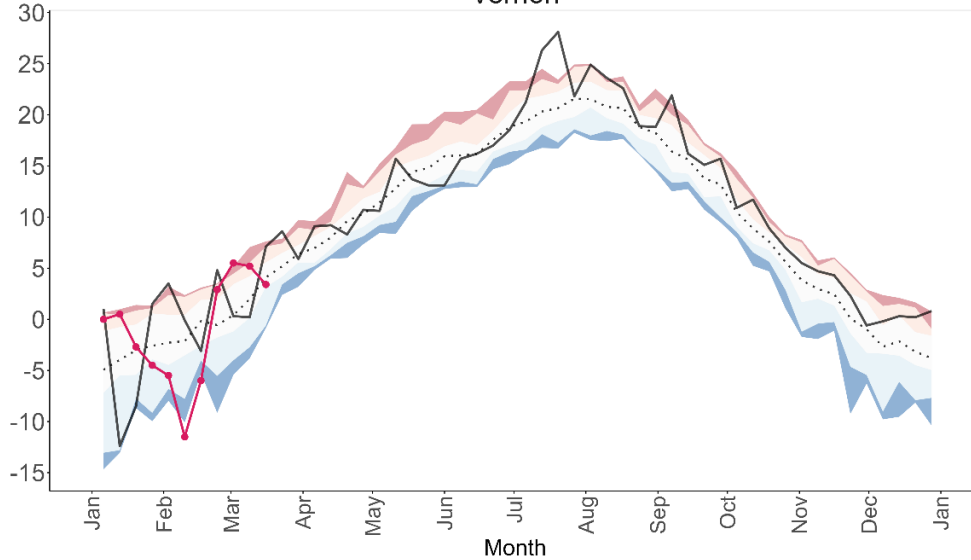
Weekly Mean Temperature vs. 1991–2020 Normal Kelowna



Penticton



Vernon



Data Source: ECCC

Figure 4 Weekly Average Temperature Across the Okanagan as of March 24th compared to 2024 and 1991 to 2020 range. Data retrieved from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Okanagan Lake levels remain around normal. As of March 24, lake levels were slightly above the mean but within the normal range (Figure 6), managed by the operator of the Okanagan Dam in Penticton. With the precipitation seen across the valley, a slight increase in lake levels is viable, but as the lake is managed by the province, changes tend to be smoothed out.

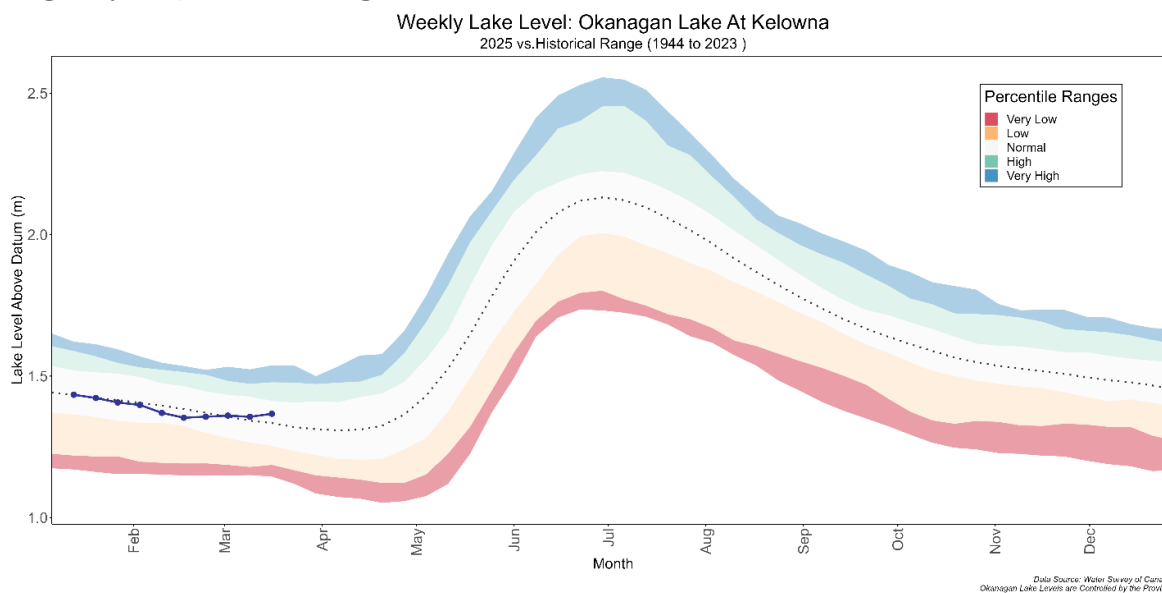


Figure 6 Weekly Lake levels for Okanagan Lake at Kelowna compared to the 1944 – 2023 range. Data is retrieved from the Water Survey of Canada

Water Rates Survey Update

I am writing a report on the types of water rates used by significant water providers across the Okanagan. The report will provide an update to a similar survey conducted in 2017. I contacted 15 water suppliers to participate in the survey. The results are intended to provide an understanding of the metering practices and pricing structures of residential and agricultural water across the valley. Of the utilities contacted, 11 participated in the survey, and for the additional 4, OBWB staff reviewed the current relevant water rates Bylaw. The full report is still in progress, but some preliminary findings are presented here.

Since 2017, almost all water providers have shifted to metering their residential customers. Once meters were in place, the providers have typically moved to some form of consumption-based pricing. The exact rate and consumption structure vary significantly between providers, but there were some trends. The most common form of residential water pricing is for a provider to charge a flat base fee and an additional charge per m³ consumption rate. In some cases, the per m³ increases with consumption; in others, it is flat. No communities had a specific drought pricing policy but used the consumption rate to encourage water conservation.

Agricultural metering was more varied, with not all suppliers metering their farming customers. Only five of the suppliers had 100% metering in place for agricultural users. Here, too, pricing varied, but the most common form was to charge a per-acre allocation rate once a year and then an overconsumption rate should the customer surpass their allotment. The most common billing rate was quarterly, but this varied by location.



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Carmen Weld
Date: March 24, 2025
Subject: **Communications Manager Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting April 1, 2025 Agenda No: 6.5
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Clear, concise, cohesive and authentic branding

As we're getting ready for strategic planning, I am seeking some feedback about how the Okanagan Basin Water Board looks and feels – basically, our current branding. I'm hoping to get your thoughts on how we can present ourselves better.

Right now, the OBWB and therefore obwb.ca is the key resource for understanding and engaging with water-related issues in the Okanagan, but our reach and recognition beyond key partners, government, and engaged circles could be significantly improved.

When you think about the OBWB, what comes to mind? The "brand" of the OBWB from a high level is environmental stewardship, advocacy and action, collaboration, and local expertise. Those are all great things, but maybe we can show them off in a way that clicks more.

One thing I've noticed is that our different logos, websites, fonts, colours, and templates don't always match up. This can kind of muddy our overall image and make it harder for people to really get what we're about.

To help us create a clearer and stronger branding and strategic communications plan, I'm seeking initial feedback from directors about how we look right now. Having a consistent and impactful brand will be key to hitting our goals, getting more people involved, and making sure we're successful down the road. For our discussion, I've included some quick notes on branding below, and I'll also do a short presentation.

What is branding?

Branding encompasses more than just our logo or visual identity. It is the overall perception of our organization – what we stand for, our values, how we communicate, and the experience we deliver. A strong brand tells our story in a way that resonates with our target audience and differentiates us from others.

The importance of branding:

- Clear branding helps partners and stakeholders easily recognize and remember our organization, boosting overall awareness within the community and beyond.
- When our brand identity is clear and well-defined, key partners, stakeholders and the community can readily understand our mission, values, and offerings, making informed decisions about engaging with us.

- A clear and consistent brand identity fosters a stronger emotional connection with our audience.
- A cohesive brand provides a foundation for all our communications, ensuring that our messaging is consistent, persuasive, and resonates effectively across various channels and with different partners and stakeholder groups.

The cons of poor branding:

- Inconsistent or ambiguous branding can confuse our audience, leading to a lack of trust and making our message less impactful.
- Without a cohesive visual and messaging strategy, our organization may struggle to stand out, hindering brand recognition and recall.

The impact of a consistent and clear branding:

- Consistent and professional branding signals reliability and attention to detail, inspiring confidence among our partners and stakeholders.
- Consistent use of logos, colours, typography, and messaging across all platforms makes it easier for people to associate materials with our organization.
- A strong brand fosters deeper engagement and loyalty, as partners and stakeholders feel a stronger connection to our mission and values.

I believe that investing time in defining and strengthening our brand will yield significant long-term benefits for the OBWB and assist in strategic planning going forward.

Make Water Work 2025 Save the Date

We are getting ready to kick off our 2025 Make Water Work campaign. We will be sending save the date email invites this month for the launch event to be held during the third week of May, May 21 or 22. This year’s event will be held at the City of Armstrong’s beautiful xeriscape garden.

Media Tracking

Please find monthly media tracking below, listing articles from February 25 to March 24, 2025, in reverse chronological order.

Date	Headline	Source	Link
March 24, 2025	Milfoil rototilling reduced on Kal Lake to avoid Vernon water quality advisory	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/539916/Milfoil-rototilling-reduced-on-Kal-Lake-to-avoid-Vernon-water-quality-advisory#539916
March 21, 2025	Okanagan Water Basin Board welcomes new executive director	Capital News	https://www.kelownacapnews.com/local-news/okanagan-water-basin-board-welcomes-new-executive-director-7894262
March 21, 2025	Golden mussels found in California on the radar for the Okanagan Basin Water Board	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/539752/Golden-mussels-found-in-California-on-the-radar-for-the-Okanagan-Basin-Water-Board#539752

March 20, 2025	Okanagan Yard Works Wins 2025 ThreeBestRated® Award – Redefining Landscaping Excellence in The Okanagan	24/7 Business Reporter	https://www.247businessreporter.com/article/795823637-okanagan-yard-works-wins-2025-threebest-rated-award-redefining-landscaping-excellence-in-the-okanagan
March 20, 2025	THOMPSON OKANAGAN MOVERS & SHAKERS MARCH 20, 2025	Business Examiner	https://businessexaminer.ca/thompson-okanagan-articles/item/thompson-okanagan-movers-shakers-march-20-2025/
March 19, 2025	OKANAGAN BASIN WATER board Melissa Tesche Named New OBWB Executive Director	The Municipal Information Network	https://municipalinfonet.com/article/municipal/category/appointments/62/1131245/melissa-tesche-named-new-obwb-executive-director.html
March 19, 2025	Okanagan Basin Water Board names new executive director, first-ever chief operating officer	KelownaNow	https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Okanagan/Okanagan_Basin_Water_Board_names_new_executive_director_first_ever_chief_operating_officer/
March 18, 2025	New executive director at Okanagan Basin Water Board	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/539353/New-executive-director-at-Okanagan-Basin-Water-Board#539353
March 16, 2025	Okanagan Basin Water Board names Littley its first chief operating officer	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/538789/Okanagan-Basin-Water-Board-names-Littley-its-first-chief-operating-officer#538789
March 13, 2025	Columbia River Treaty talks on hold amid Trump attacks on Canadian sovereignty	Kimberley Daily Bulletin	https://www.kimberleybulletin.com/news/columbia-river-treaty-talks-on-hold-amid-trump-attacks-on-canadian-sovereignty-7880003
March 12, 2025	Seedy Sunday is a sure sign that spring is just around the corner	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/537980/Seedy-Sunday-is-a-sure-sign-that-spring-is-just-around-the-corner#537980
March 12, 2025	'Capturing all the water that we can': Minimal outflows from Okanagan Lake with dry conditions, low snowpack	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Penticton/538007/Capturing-all-the-water-that-we-can-Minimal-outflows-from-Okanagan-Lake-with-dry-conditions-low-snowpack#538007
March 12, 2025	For the record	Kelowna Daily Courier (Print Edition)	Print
March 11, 2025	Minimal outflows from Okanagan Lake	YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wFyAXzLdlw
March 10, 2025	PHOTOS: All systems go for crucial new salmon passage at Okanagan Lake Dam	KelownaNow	https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Penticton/PHOTOS_New_salmon_passage

			at Okanagan Lake Dam ready to go/
March 10, 2025	Generations break ground for salmon passage to Okanagan Lake in Penticton	Eagle Valley News	https://www.eaglevalleynews.com/local-news/generations-break-ground-for-salmon-passage-to-okanagan-lake-in-penticton-7868488
March 10, 2025	OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD OBWB reignites decades-long fight against chemicals in Okanagan Lakes	The Municipal Information Network	https://municipalinfonet.com/article/municipal/category/environment/18/1129135/obwb-reignites-decades-long-fight-against-chemicals-in-okanagan-lakes.html
March 9, 2025	'Not acceptable': OBWB sounding alarm over approval of chemical use in Okanagan lakes	VernonNow	https://www.vernonnow.com/watercooler/news/news/Okanagan/Not_acceptable_OBWB_sounding_alarm_over_approval_of_chemical_use_in_Okanagan_lakes/
March 8, 2025	New boss for water board	Okanagan Weekend (Print Edition)	Print
March 7, 2025	Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights for March 4	AM 1150 (CKFR-AM)	https://www.am1150.ca/news/okanagan-basin-water-board-meeting-highlights-for-march-4.html
March 7, 2025	Okanagan Basin Water Board appoints first chief operating officer	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/537024/Okanagan-Basin-Water-Board-appoints-first-chief-operating-officer
March 6, 2025	Conditions show high drought risk this summer	Vernon Matters	https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/03/06/conditions-show-high-drought-risk-this-summer/
March 6, 2025	OBWB reignites decades-long fight against chemicals in Okanagan Lakes	AM 1150 (CKFR-AM)	https://www.am1150.ca/news/obwb-reignites-decades-long-fight-against-chemicals-in-okanagan-lakes.html
March 6, 2025	Okanagan Basin Water Board renews opposition to aquatic herbicides, pesticides	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/537033/Okanagan-Basin-Water-Board-renews-opposition-to-aquatic-herbicides-pesticides#537033
March 5, 2025	Federal investments supporting water species recovery and protections in the Okanagan	Vernon Matters	https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/03/05/federal-investments-supporting-water-species-recovery-and-protections-in-the-okanagan/
March 5, 2025	Concerns raised about lack of investment in water protections in B.C. Budget	Vernon Matters	https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/03/05/concerns-raised-about-lack-of-investment-in-water-protections-in-b-c-budget/
March 5, 2025	North Okanagan water levels low entering spring freshet	Castanet	https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/536615/North-Okanagan-water-levels-low-entering-spring-freshet#536615

March 2, 2025	WA is seeing a dry winter, including fifth-driest January on record. Here's why it matters	Walla Walla Union-Bulletin	https://www.union-bulletin.com/news/northwest/wa-is-seeing-a-dry-winter-including-fifth-driest-january-on-record-heres-why-it/article_70121ca8-f7a7-11ef-8754-237f43df8127.html
March 1, 2025	How a Bursary Empowered a Revelstoke Student to Chase Outdoor Dreams Right from Home	newz9.com	https://newz9.com/how-a-bursary-empowered-a-revelstoke-student-to-chase-outdoor-dreams-right-from-home/
March 1, 2025	Changing climate presents fiscal risk to hazard-area Thompson-Okanagan new homes	Keremeos Review	https://www.keremeosreview.com/local-news/changing-climate-presents-fiscal-risk-to-hazard-area-thompson-okanagan-new-homes-7849252
March 1, 2025	Invasive species threaten Arizona's land and water. What to know about keeping them away	MSN.com	https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/invasive-species-threaten-arizona-s-land-and-water-what-to-know-about-keeping-them-away/ar-AA1A2v76
February 28, 2025	Tribute to Rick Knodel	Penticton Herald (Print Edition)	Print
February 27, 2025	Water briefs: Staff changes for Okanagan Basin Water Board	Penticton Western News	https://www.pentictonwesternnews.com/local-news/water-briefs-staff-changes-for-okanagan-basin-water-board-7849994
February 27, 2025	Public asked to help reduce invasive mussel risk in the Okanagan	Vernon Matters	https://vernonmatters.ca/2025/02/27/public-asked-to-help-reduce-invasive-mussel-risk-in-the-okanagan/
February 26, 2025	Plan your garden plantings to help pollinators survive	Castanet Kamloops	https://www.castanetkamloops.net/edition/news-story-535425-1152-hm
February 26, 2025	Google thinks Okanagan parks are 'state parks'	Penticton Herald (Print Edition)	Print



Pam Doerksen
Director of Strategic Initiative, Wildlife Act Review
Wildlife Branch
Resource Stewardship Division

Manjit Kerr-Upal
Director, Aquatic Conservation Science
Aquatic Ecosystems Branch
Water, Fisheries and Coast Division

21 March 2025

Re: Wildlife Act Review Comments

Dear Ms. Doerksen and Ms. Kerr-Upal,

The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the proposed amendments to the Wildlife Act. We strongly support these changes, particularly the enabling of future regulations requiring inspection of all watercrafts entering B.C. from another jurisdiction before being launched in B.C.'s waters. These measures align with OBWB's long-standing commitment to preventing the introduction of invasive mussels and other aquatic invasive species in B.C.

To ensure the legislation provides a strong foundation for effective enforcement and long-term adaptability, we urge you to ensure that the amendments:

1. Enable flexible regulatory options – The legislation should allow for different operational models, enforcement mechanisms, and funding options for mandatory inspections to ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness.
2. Include provisions for in-province watercraft inspections – Future regulations should allow for mandatory inspections of B.C.-based watercraft in the event of a mussel introduction, enabling authorities to quarantine affected waterbodies or regions.
3. Allow for emergency waterbody closures – The legislation should explicitly provide authority to close waterbody access when invasive mussels are discovered, ensuring rapid containment.
4. Expand inspection authority – The Minister should be empowered to delegate inspection and enforcement responsibilities to “authorized persons,” including fisheries and law enforcement officers, local bylaw officers, and others with relevant jurisdiction.

We appreciate the Ministry's efforts to strengthen aquatic invasive species prevention and would welcome the opportunity to discuss implementation considerations based on our experience coordinating prevention efforts in the region.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Blair Ireland, Chair

Re: Funding and Inter-Provincial Cooperation to Prevent Invasive Mussels

From WLRS DMO WLRS:EX <WLRS.DMO@gov.bc.ca>

Date Tue 2025-03-25 2:59 PM

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Reference: 44980

March 25, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Thank you for your letter regarding funding and inter-provincial cooperation to prevent invasive mussels. The British Columbia (B.C.) government remains committed to preventing mussels from establishing in B.C. through the ongoing delivery of the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP).

1. Immediate Funding for IMDP – \$5.5 million

The IMDP is delivered by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Parks' Conservation Officer Service, program funding partners, and neighbouring jurisdictions across Canada and the United States (US). The IMDP funding level is determined each year in response to known and probable funding partners, lessons learned from previous years, and to emerging threats. Funding largely comes from Columbia Basin Trust, Columbia Power, B.C. Hydro, Fortis B.C. and the Province. In direct response to reductions in partner funding in recent years, the B.C. has increased support to maintain base operations. For the 2025 season, we are increasing the budget to maintain IMDP operations at existing levels. We understand the importance of providing a stable presence along our provincial borders.

2. Mandatory Inspections for All Watercraft

We recognize the longstanding requests from the Okanagan Basin Water Board, First Nations, local governments and other partners for stronger regulatory tools to address the threat of invasive mussels. In response, WLRS is proposing amendments to the *Wildlife Act* to establish authorities to:

- Enable and enforce "Pull the Plug" (which requires all drain-plugs on vessels to be pulled before moving from the waterbody),
- Require motorists to stop at open watercraft inspection stations, and
- Enable the requirement of mandatory inspection of watercraft entering B.C. from another jurisdiction prior to launching in B.C. waters.

If passed, the proposed amendments for the "Pull the Plug" requirement and mandatory stops at open watercraft inspection stations are planned for implementation for the 2025 summer boating season. Building a regulation requiring mandatory inspection for watercrafts entering B.C. from another jurisdiction

prior to launch in B.C. waters, will occur at a later date, after the necessary analysis and consultation is complete. We encourage feedback on these proposed amendments to WildlifeActReview@gov.bc.ca.

3. Federal Action

Invasive species do not respect borders, hence cross-border jurisdictional collaboration, and partnerships with all levels of government, academia, and non-government organizations, is a key to our collective success. The federal government plays an important role in preventing the introduction of invasive species through regulating and monitoring trade. While aquatic invasive species (AIS) are provincially and federally regulated, the Canada-US border is federal jurisdiction. Despite federal jurisdiction, B.C. provides IMDP services and works with the Canadian Border Services Agency, responding to notifications of watercraft entering Canada. We continue to request the federal government resume funding the Program's work at federal ports of entry and support our response preparedness should invasive mussels be detected in B.C. waters.

4. Western Canada Invasive Mussel-Free Zone

Given the nature of invasive species, effective management takes collaboration across all governments. In 2016, B.C. signed the Interprovincial Territorial Agreement for Coordinated Regional Defence Against Invasive Species. Through this agreement, B.C. collaborates with Alberta, Yukon, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba regularly to enhance our collective coordination for preventing and managing AIS; our top priority is invasive mussels. B.C. collaborates with these provinces to refine and improve the annual delivery of the IMDP.

A mussel-free zone is not something that B.C. has considered, but exploring new approaches to enhance and improve existing prevention efforts is always a priority. Finally, B.C. is in close contact with our Alberta counterparts who are implementing the recommendations of the Alberta Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force.

5. Align Penalties Across Provinces

We commend Alberta on their recent increases to the penalties associated with failing to stop at a watercraft inspection station and pull the plug. B.C. also recently increased penalties associated with failing to stop at a watercraft inspection station. Through recent updates to the *Wildlife Act*, the fine has doubled from \$345 to \$690, for failing to stop at a watercraft inspection station and this applies to all types of watercraft. Furthermore, in July 2024 a fine of \$403 was established for the new Pull the Plug order under the *Animal Health Act*. As you note, these important regulatory tools to encourage boaters to comply with Provincial requirements.

6. Create Clear Policy to Limit Chemical Use as a "Rapid Response"

Early detection rapid response to new invasive species incursions is widely accepted as the most cost-effective method to control invasive species. An important step is to determine if eradication is feasible. This is done through detailed analysis that considers the geographic scale for containment, site complexity, species biology, available methods and costs, risk to biodiversity, and socio-economic impacts.

In Canada, pesticides must undergo extensive testing for potential environmental and human health impacts before approval. Many treatments may not be appropriate, or feasible, for response in open-water systems (specifically, for large systems with complex, native-species assemblages). However, in the event of an invasive mussel incursion, a suite of chemical and non-chemical control options is critical. The province continues to work with western provinces and the federal government to address the lack of registered pesticides to control for AIS in western Canadian waters. While access to new invasive species response tools is important, prevention remains the top priority.

We look forward to continuing to work with our partners to strengthen existing prevention efforts to mitigate the threat of invasive mussels in B.C.

Again, thank you for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

Lori Halls
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship