

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

DATE: Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2026

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

- 1.1 Acknowledgement of First Nations Traditional Territory

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

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommendation:

THAT the agenda of the meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 6, 2026, be approved.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 11, 2026, held at the Manteo at Eldorado Resort, 3762 Lakeshore Rd., in Kelowna, B.C.

Recommendation:

THAT the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 11, 2026 held at the Manteo at Eldorado Resort in Kelowna, B.C., be approved.

P. 3

5. BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

6. DELEGATION

- 6.1 Rob Cupello, CMC, Chief Strategy Officer, Csek Creative: *What we're hearing: Informing the website and communications review.*

7. STAFF REPORTS

- 7.1 Executive Director Report

P. 8

Recommendation:

THAT the Executive Director Report, dated Sept. 29, 2026, be received.

- 7.2 Chief Operating Officer Report

P. 10

- 7.2.1 Canada Water Agency and Philanthropic Partners Sign Agreement to Advance Water Security news release

P. 12

Recommendation:

THAT the Chief Operating Officer Report, dated Sept. 29, 2026, be received.

- 7.3 Water Science & Stewardship Report P. 14
Recommendation:
THAT the Water Science & Stewardship Report, dated Sept. 29, 2026, be received.
- 7.4 Communication Manager Report P. 16
Recommendation:
THAT the Communications Manager's Report, dated Sept. 28, 2026, be received.
- 7.5 Drought Report (to be circulated) P.
Recommendation:
THAT the Drought Report dated Oct. 2, 2026, be received.
8. **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
- 8.1 Administrative Amendments to Signing Authority Memo P. 24
Recommendation:
THAT the Board adopt the updated Signing Authority Resolution as presented.

AND THAT the Administrative Amendments to Signing Authority Memo dated Sept. 29, 2026, be received.
9. **CORRESPONDENCE**
10. **NEXT MEETING**
- 10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2027 at 10 a.m. at a location to be determined once the new Board of Directors is appointed.
11. **ADJOURNMENT**
Recommendation:
THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 6, 2026 be adjourned at ____.

* **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 SEPT. 11, 2026 AT THE MANTEO AT ELDORADO RESORT, KELOWNA, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Brian Guy	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director Kevin Kraft	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Ron Cannan	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sheena Spencer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance

REGRETS

Vice Chair Doug Holmes	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District of North Okanagan

STAFF

Melissa Tesche	Executive Director
James Littley	Chief Operating Officer
Nelson Jatel	Senior Director of Water Science & Stewardship
Carolina Restrepo Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Carmen Weld	Communications Manager
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m.

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

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

Executive Director Melissa Tesche introduced a late item under Correspondence regarding federal engagement on Canada's First National Water Security Strategy.

"THAT item 9.1 be added to the agenda."

CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 11, 2026 be approved."

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held July 7, 2026 at the Regional District of North Okanagan, 9848 Aberdeen Rd., Coldstream, B.C., V1B 2K9.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on July 7, 2026, held at the Regional District of North Okanagan, Coldstream B.C., be approved."

CARRIED

5. BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

Chair Ireland thanked Director Sue McKortoff, Mayor of Osoyoos for her years of service to the Board, noting her leadership, advocacy for water issues, and extensive institutional knowledge. He also acknowledged Director Rick Fairbairn's contributions to the Board and congratulated Dr. Nelson Jatel on his appointment as Senior Director of Water Science & Stewardship.

6. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION

No delegation.

7. STAFF REPORTS

- 7.1 Executive Director Report – Melissa Tesche

Ms. Tesche advised that the 2026 Annual Report had been completed, noting that publication of the special edition timeline recognizing the 20-year history of the Water Management Program would be delayed until the rescheduled celebration. The Board was advised that the Water Management Program's 20th Anniversary Celebration had been rescheduled to May 2027.

Ms. Tesche reported on a recent meeting with the Honourable Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, regarding key Okanagan water issues. Discussion focused on current drought conditions and preparedness, invasive mussel prevention, needed water infrastructure investment, and the need for continued provincial support to maintain the regional monitoring network.

The Board received an update on floodplain mapping work being coordinated by the Fraser Basin Council. Directors discussed recent flood mapping updates, impacts on development and floodplain management, public response to new flood construction requirements, and associated challenges facing local governments.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Sept. 3, 2026, be received."

CARRIED

- 7.2 Chief Operating Officer Report - James Littlely

Mr. Littlely requested authorization to replace the Board's aging milfoil survey and safety boat, as outlined in the approved 2022–2027 Milfoil Control Program Asset Replacement Plan, explaining that the existing vessel, purchased in 1978, has reached the end of its useful life and requires increasing maintenance.

"THAT the board authorize staff to procure a replacement milfoil boat and trailer at a maximum cost of \$150,000 plus tax;

AND THAT replacement of the OBWB staff car be deferred to a future year;

AND THAT proceeds from the disposal of retired milfoil equipment be returned to the milfoil equipment reserve."

CARRIED

Mr. Littley reported that 2026 saw unusually low milfoil harvesting volumes throughout the valley despite the presence of milfoil in many locations. Possible contributing factors discussed included prolonged drought conditions, reduced nutrient inputs, and heavy smoke conditions during the growing season.

Mr. Littley also provided an update on invasive mussel prevention. He summarized emerging concerns related to the spread of invasive golden mussels in California and outlined recent developments in invasive mussel management and research across western North America.

Mr. Littley provided an update on invasive mussel prevention efforts and advised the Board of growing concerns regarding invasive golden mussels in California. He reported that recent information shared through the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Invasive Species Working Group suggested the species may pose a more significant threat than previously understood due to its specific shell morphology, and potential to create greater management challenges than zebra/quagga mussels.

The Board also received an update on Idaho's ongoing quagga mussel eradication efforts and on construction contracts awarded for the development of the prototype of the modular invasive mussel decontamination station project.

"THAT the Chief Operating Officer Report, dated Sept. 3, 2026, be received."
CARRIED

7.3 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel

Dr. Jatel reported on the Sept. 10 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) that focused on drought impacts experienced across the valley during the summer of 2026 and preparations for expected continued drought into 2027.

Dr. Sheena Spencer, Chair of the OWSC, provided additional comments regarding presentations delivered at the meeting, including information from Environment and Climate Change Canada regarding a forecasted Super El Niño event and potential implications for water conditions in the Okanagan in the year ahead.

The Board discussed drought preparedness, water utility operations, and the importance of real-time hydrometric data in supporting water management decisions during periods of extreme conditions.

11:00 a.m. – Director Hrasko exited the meeting.

11:10 a.m. – Director Hrasko re-entered the meeting.

Dr. Jatel also highlighted the upcoming Environmental Flows 2026 conference and encouraged participation from local governments and water managers.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report, dated Sept. 2, 2026, be received."
CARRIED.

7.4 Communications Manager Report – Carmen Weld

Ms. Weld provided updates on the 2026 Make Water Work campaign, including the introduction of a new Community Champion ranking system. She noted that public participation in the campaign remains strong, with communities continuing to compete for the Community Champion title based on per-capita pledges.

The Board received updates regarding the Okanagan Xeriscape Association's upcoming fall plant sale, the Indigenous Youth Logo Contest winner for Environmental Flows 2026, and media coverage generated through the launch of the Board's new milfoil harvester, Millie Manatee. Ms.

Weld also reported on progress related to the eDNA invasive mussel detection project, expansion of the Don't Move a Mussel stencil program to other boat launches in the Okanagan, and ongoing redevelopment of the OBWB website.

"THAT the Communication Manager Report, dated Sept. 2, 2026, be received."
CARRIED.

7.5 Drought Report – Melissa Tesche, Dr. Nelson Jatel, and Sandra Schira

Staff presented a comprehensive overview of drought conditions across the Okanagan. The Board reviewed information regarding precipitation deficits, streamflows, stream temperatures, groundwater conditions, lake levels, and net inflows. Staff advised that substantial water deficits remain despite recent rainfall events.

Discussion focused on record and near-record low lake levels, including dead-pooling conditions at Kalamalka Lake, declining groundwater levels, and continued concerns regarding water availability heading into 2027.

Staff also reviewed forecast information presented at the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting regarding the potential development of a Super El Niño event.

The Board discussed drought communication challenges, the provincial Water Scarcity Index, local drought management plans, and opportunities to support water suppliers through improved regional coordination and public education.

11:49 a.m. – Director Cannan exited the meeting.

11:53 a.m. – Director Cannan re-entered the meeting.

"THAT the Drought Report, dated Sept. 3, 2026, be received."
CARRIED.

Recess

Without objection, Chair Blair Ireland declared a recess for lunch at 12:37 p.m.

Acting Chair Sue McKortoff called the meeting back to order at 1:18 p.m.

8. Draft Budget for Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2028

8.1 Ms. Tesche circulated the draft Regional District Provisional Assessments, and draft OBWB Segmented Budget for the year ending on March 31, 2028.

"THAT the Board adopt the proposed Draft Budget for 2027/28 as presented."
CARRIED

8.2 The Board reviewed the proposed 2027 meeting schedule, including the rescheduled Water Management Program 20th Anniversary Celebration.

"THAT the Board approve the 2027 Meeting Schedule as presented."
CARRIED

9. CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Ms. Tesche advised that the federal government is seeking input on Canada's First National Water Security Strategy.

Staff will prepare and circulate key speaking points to directors and local governments.

Discussion emphasized the importance of invasive mussel prevention, water infrastructure investment, watershed security, and the role of water in supporting the Okanagan's economy, ecosystems, and communities.

10. **NEXT MEETING**

10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Oct. 6, 2026 at 10:00 a.m., held at the offices of the Regional District North Okanagan.

***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.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 11, 2026 be adjourned at 1:50 p.m."
CARRIED

Blair Ireland, OBWB Chairperson

Melissa Tesche, OBWB Executive Director



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Melissa Tesche, Executive Director
Date: Sept. 29, 2026
Subject: Executive Directors's Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting Oct. 6, 2026 Agenda No: 7.1

OBWB Invited to Present at International Joint Commission (IJC) Osoyoos Lake Board of Control Meeting

I was invited to present an update on OBWB at the annual board meeting of the International Joint Commission's International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (IOLBC) on Sept. 23, 2026 in Osoyoos. I also attended the IOLBC annual public meeting that evening in Oroville and participated in the field tour the next day. The IOLBC approved submission of an International Watershed Initiative project, *Improving Osoyoos Lake Binational Water Management for Fish Flow and Passage Coordination*.

The IOLBC heard an update on the Osoyoos International Watershed Board Feasibility Study. The draft report from the study will be released Oct. 12, 2026 and the public consultation period on the report will be open until Nov. 16, 2026. The final report, with the working group's recommendation on whether a watershed board should be established, will be submitted to the IJC Commissioners in spring 2027.

OBWB Staff Attend UBCM in Vancouver, Sept 13-19, 2026.

The annual convention continues to provide a valuable opportunity for OBWB staff to connect with elected officials, senior government staff, and water leaders from across the province. Water and watersheds were big topics at this year's convention, and participation at UBCM helps us strengthen relationships, advance the Board's advocacy priorities, and stay informed about emerging provincial policies, funding opportunities, and issues affecting other local governments. The concentration of provincial and local government representatives in one place also makes UBCM an efficient opportunity to advance conversations that would otherwise require numerous separate meetings throughout the year.

Unfortunately, our proposal for an invasive mussel workshop was not accepted for 2026, but we were able to distribute copies of the updated *Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure*.

Government of Canada Launches Public Engagement Towards a National Water Security Strategy

The Canada Water Agency has launched public engagement toward the development of Canada's National Water Security Strategy. The engagement period runs from Sept. 9 to Oct. 25, 2026. This presents an important opportunity to advocate for increased cooperation and funds for invasive mussel defense, for major investments in Okanagan water infrastructure, as well as the Okanagan's inclusion as a freshwater system of national significance.

OBWB will prepare a written submission as well as a short advocacy briefing with key messages that can be shared with other local government staff as well as the public.

OBWB Participates in Peachland Water Symposium Oct 3, 2026

I will be presenting and participating in a panel discussion this weekend at the Water Symposium hosted by the Peachland Watershed Protection Alliance. The event will be focussed on drought and water supply and runs from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. in the evening at the Peachland 50+ Centre.

MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: James Littley, Chief Operating Officer
Date: Sept. 29, 2026
Subject: COO's Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting Oct. 6, 2026 Agenda No: 7.2

OBWB participates in national water security funders collaboration

On Sept. 28, 2026, the Canada Water Agency and representatives of the Canada Water Security Funders Group signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) (attached to this memo) to strengthen cooperation on freshwater protection and water security. The group brings together foundations, community funders and other funding institutions from across Canada.

The agreement provides a framework for sharing knowledge, improving water literacy, exploring joint investments and supporting watershed planning and management. It will also provide a forum for the group's involvement in developing the National Water Security Strategy.

OBWB is a member of the funders group and has been involved since this work began in 2025. Although we were not a signatory to the MOU, our participation brings the Okanagan's priorities, and our experience with regional water funding, into these discussions. The collaboration offers an opportunity to build relationships with other funders and pursue better support for watershed protection in the Okanagan.

OBWB calls for provincial action on Sewer System Regulations, Municipal Wastewater Regulation on hold due to provincial election

At the July 2026 OBWB meeting, the board resolved to send a letter to appropriate provincial ministries requesting that the province undertake a comprehensive review and modernization of the Sewerage System Regulations. Staff subsequently gathered more information and engaged with experts including at UBCM in early September and drafted the letter for the board to review. However, given the snap provincial election call, we are planning to delay sending out the letter until new ministers are in place.

In addition to a letter to the province calling for a review, we have engaged a local government and sewer policy expert to consult and provide advice on this file. Working with the consultant, staff will explore ways to improve wastewater policy, management and knowledge in B.C., extending the work provided by the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council. We are identifying areas where the OBWB can support three inter-related goals:

1. Provincial legislative and regulatory reform: Push for review of the SSR, MWR and related authorities to improve system design standards and oversight of professional reliance, ensure ongoing maintenance, and enable decision makers to assess cumulative impacts across a watershed.
2. Local government supports: Support practical tools such as liquid waste management planning, risk-based inspection and maintenance programs, public education, bylaw toolkits, and identify pathways for targeted financial assistance where communities need to repair systems or move to shared servicing.
3. Enhanced data collection and sharing: Improve the completeness, accessibility and consistency of records on system location, type, capacity, servicing and performance, while protecting personal information, so agencies can map risk and measure progress.

OBWB supports and presents at North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) annual conference in November

OBWB staff are helping plan the North American Lake Management Society's 46th annual international symposium, "Swimming Upstream: Tackling Environmental Challenges through Partnership, Innovation, & Science," in Kelowna November 3–6, 2026. The conference will bring together researchers, lake managers and watershed organizations to share approaches to lake protection and management.

OBWB will also present an update on invasive mussels across North America and display our milfoil control equipment. With the conference taking place locally, staff have an opportunity to share our experience, learn from work elsewhere and strengthen connections with others addressing similar lake management challenges.

[Canada.ca](#) > [Canada Water Agency](#)

Canada Water Agency and Philanthropic Partners Sign Agreement to Advance Water Security

From: [Canada Water Agency](#).

News release

September 28, 2026 – Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada's vast freshwater resources underpin our economic prosperity, public health, energy security, food systems, and critical infrastructure. As climate-related impacts and rising demand place growing strain on Canada's water systems, water security has emerged as a matter of national importance.

Against this backdrop, the Canada Water Agency and representatives from the Canada Water Security Funders Group, which collectively steward over \$2.4 billion in assets, today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen collaboration on shared priorities related to water security in Canada.

The MOU recognizes the catalytic role that philanthropy can play in advancing freshwater stewardship and security, including by protecting and restoring freshwater ecosystems, supporting Indigenous-led stewardship, fostering innovation and data systems, and upholding collaborative watershed management. It reflects a shared commitment to working with Indigenous Peoples, diverse sectors, and jurisdictions to address the increasingly complex freshwater challenges facing Canadians.

The MOU also establishes a framework for collaboration that includes:

- **knowledge exchanges** on key issues such as water innovation, freshwater data, place-based and interdisciplinary water security issues and opportunities;
- **communications and water literacy** including the potential of education and outreach initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of water;
- **exploring mutual priorities and combined investment opportunities** including consideration of co-investment mechanisms to amplify impact; and
- **broader private/public collaboration to support watershed governance**, planning and management.

The MOU will also provide a key forum for engaging philanthropy in the development of the National Water Security Strategy. Development of a National Water Security Strategy is a part of the commitments included in A Force of Nature: Canada's Strategy to Protect Nature, which outlines how the federal government will invest in nature, mobilize capital, and build partnerships to protect nature across the country.

Quotes

"Canadian philanthropy is coming together to meet the unique challenges and threats to our water security in Canada. Working together with the Canada Water Agency, we look forward to catalyzing change at scale and increasing our collective impact throughout Canada. At a time when freshwater is becoming one of our most defining strategic resources, this partnership reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that Canada remains water-secure, resilient and prosperous for generations to come."

– **Marie-Paule Jeansonne, Executive Director of the de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation and co-chair of the Canada Water Security Funders Group**

"Water is life, and it is one Canada's greatest natural advantages. How we work together to protect and sustainably use fresh water is one of our greatest responsibilities. This partnership with the new Canada Water Security Funders Group, which brings together a number of leading funders from coast-to-coast-to-coast, presents an opportunity to share knowledge and effective stewardship solutions and to discuss collaborative approaches to financing initiatives that respond to one of the most pressing challenges of our time - ensuring the long-term health and resilience of freshwater ecosystems in Canada, which is necessary for building a strong, thriving, and prosperous Canada for future generations."

– **Mark Fisher, President, Canada Water Agency**

Quick facts

- Fresh water is essential to life in Canada. It shapes Canada's communities, environment, economy and well-being, making water security a national priority.
- The launch of efforts to develop a National Water Security Strategy was announced in March 2026. It builds on the Government of Canada's existing \$650 million commitment in the Freshwater Action Plan to manage, restore, and protect fresh water in Canada. The Canada Water Agency is leading the work to develop a national approach to water security, in collaboration with provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners across the country. The Canada Water Agency was established in 2024 as the federal focal point for fresh water. Its mandate is to improve freshwater management in Canada by providing leadership, effective collaboration federally, and improved coordination, collaboration and partnership with provinces, territories and Indigenous peoples.
- Canadians are invited to share their views on the development of a National Water Security Strategy through [an online platform on the Canada Water Agency's website](#). The survey launched on September 9 and is open until October 25, 2026.
- The Canadian philanthropic sector is a key partner in advancing efforts to improve water security across the country, Canadian foundations are already making significant investments in watershed planning and stewardship, community resilience, and water innovation.
- The [Canada Water Security Funders Group](#) is a non-partisan, pan-Canadian collaboration of funders that share a common interest in advancing long-term water security, bringing together philanthropic foundations, community funders, and other funding institutions across diverse sectors to align efforts, mobilize resources, and strengthen collective impact.
- The group was launched in 2025 at the initiative of the [Metcalf Foundation](#) and the [de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation](#).
- Participating members in the Funders Group collectively steward over \$2.4 billion in assets. Within their individual mandates, they have helped launch and scale transformative freshwater initiatives across Canada, including the [BC Watershed Security Fund](#), [AquaAction](#), [DataStream](#), Indigenous-led stewardship and fisheries programs, watershed restoration efforts, freshwater monitoring networks, and innovative solutions that strengthen climate resilience and water security.
- The Funders Group continues to explore ways to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples and other water leaders, and welcomes inquiries from philanthropic, private-sector, and community partners interested in advancing water security across Canada.

Contacts

Marie-Paule Jeansonne, Executive Director, de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation and co-chair of the Canada Water Security Funders Group
mp@fondationdegaspebeaubien.org

Amy Falkner
 Press Secretary
 Office of the Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature
 873-355-9725
Amy.Falkner@ec.gc.ca

Media Relations
 Canada Water Agency
media@cwa-aec.gc.ca

[Canada Water Agency's X page](#)
[Canada Water Agency's LinkedIn page](#)
[Environment and Natural Resources in Canada Facebook Page](#)

Search for related information by keyword: [Water conservation](#) | [Aquatic ecosystems](#) | [Canada Water Agency](#) | [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#) | [Canada](#) | [Sustainability](#) | [Water](#) | [general public](#) | [media](#) | [non-governmental organizations](#) | [news releases](#) | [Hon. Julie Dabrusin](#)

Date modified: 2026-10-01



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Nelson Jatel,
Senior Director of Water Science & Stewardship
Date: Sept. 29, 2026
Subject: **Water Science and Stewardship Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting Oct. 6, 2026 Agenda No: 7.3

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council: drought hit as a chain of problems, not just a water shortage

The Okanagan Water Stewardship Council met Sept. 10, 2026, for the first time since June. The theme of the meeting was drought. I presented our valley-wide drought data, after which the group heard from Dr. Haley Dosser, climate scientist with Environment and Climate Change Canada on the El Niño event expected this winter. OWSC members and guests then broke into small groups. Each group took on two questions: “What is your community or organization going through?” and “What do you need in hand before spring 2027?” A full “What We Heard” report will go out with the meeting notes at the next meeting.

Work begins to update the science behind Okanagan water use plans

Also on Sept. 10, 2026, we held an initial meeting with project advisors for our Union of BC Municipalities Strategic Priorities Fund project (file 25-0825-SPF). The \$390,000 grant, titled *Updating the necessary science to modernize Okanagan Water Use Plans to promote climate resilience and reduce conflict*, runs to March 31, 2028.

We are now working on a detailed scope of work that will help inform the request for proposals.

Environmental Flows Conference opens Oct. 7, 2026, OBWB Board Directors welcome

Next week, the OBWB, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, and the Canadian Water Resources Association host the 2026 Environmental Flows Conference, Oct. 7 – 9, 2026 at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna. As of Sept. 28, 2026 154 people had registered, close to our 160-seat limit, with delegates coming from across Canada and several other countries. Program highlights include:

- Dr. Eric Stein and Dr. Kristine Taniguchi-Quan (Southern California Coastal Water Research Project): how California sets environmental flows and uses them in real water decisions.

- Dr. Wendy Monk (Environment and Climate Change Canada and University of New Brunswick): connecting people and rivers through community-based science.
- Gerald de Jager (Gerald de Jager Pty Ltd): a risk-based way to balance competing water uses with the needs of the environment.
- Dr. Nathanael Bergbusch (University of Waterloo and University of Prince Edward Island): sustainable farming and water use in Prince Edward Island.
- Zoë Eyjolfson (Okanagan Nation Alliance): salmon passage and returns to Okanagan Lake. Chani Welch and Tessa Terbasket (Okanagan Nation Alliance) will also share how environmental flow needs were used during this year's water shortage.
- Dr. Rebecca Tharme (Riverfutures): bringing Indigenous and Western knowledge together to set environmental flows.
- On Friday, Chief Robert Louie and Councillor Tricia Brett, co-chairs of the Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table, share their perspectives.

Conference papers will feed a special issue of the Canadian Water Resources Journal. The full program is at www.ef2026.ca.

Directors who have not yet registered are more than welcome to take part. Please contact Carolina Restrepo at carolina.restrepo@obwb.ca for details. With seats nearly full, I encourage you to reach out soon.

**October Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting cancelled for the conference;
Council returns Nov. 12, 2026**

The OWSC's October meeting would have fallen on Oct. 8, 2026 in the middle of the conference. We have cancelled it and encouraged members to attend the conference instead. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 12, 2026.



MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Carmen Weld, Communications Manager
Date: Sept. 28, 2026
Subject: Communications Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
Oct. 6, 2026
Agenda No: 7.4

Make Water Work Community Champion to be Announced

We're in the final days to determine which community will take the Community Champion title this year.

While the pledge page will be open to pledges until Oct. 16, 2026, the competition for Community Champion will wrap this Friday, Oct. 2, 2026. We will announce the winner at our Board Meeting next week (Oct. 6, 2026).

As it stands today, Oliver is in the lead!

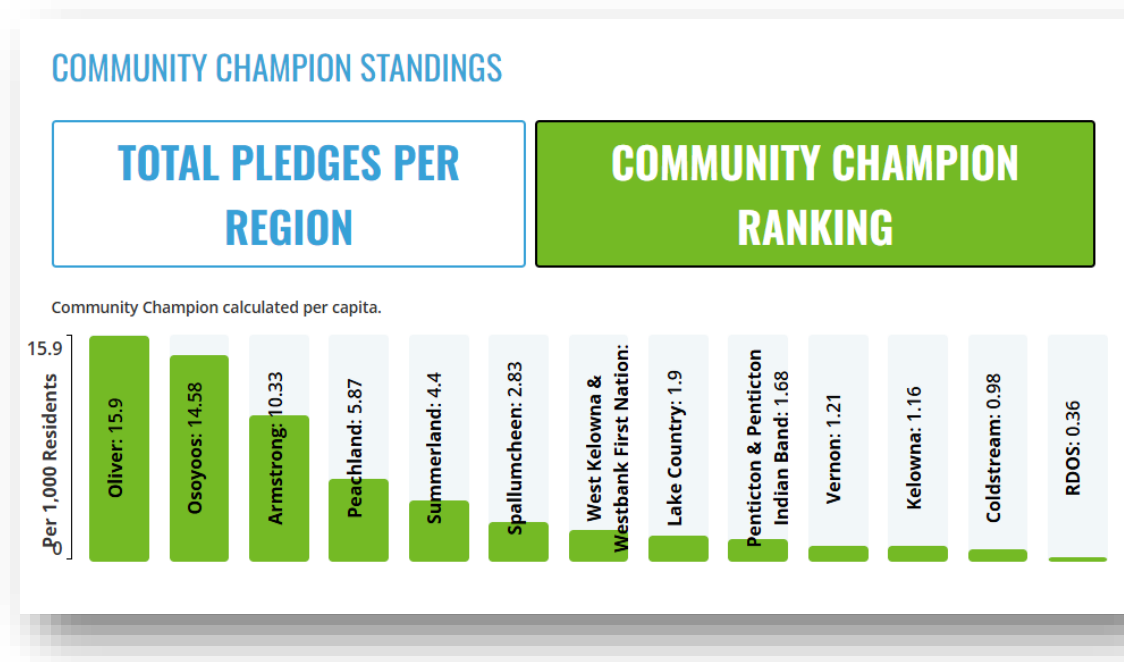


Figure 1: Screenshot from the Make Water Work Website showing the Community Champion ranking on Sept 28, 2026. The ranking is the total number of pledges per capita for each region.

As fall planting season is just around the corner, we're encouraging our partners to ask residents to take the pledge this week to help their community come out on top.

Okanagan residents are urged to visit www.MakeWaterWork.ca to find water-saving tips, view [the plant collection](#) as they plan their fall planting choices, and [take the pledge](#) to be **automatically entered to win \$1,000** to transform their outdoor space into a water-saving powerhouse.

As of Sept. 28, 2026, we're sitting at 755 pledges, beating last year's record-setting 686 pledges.

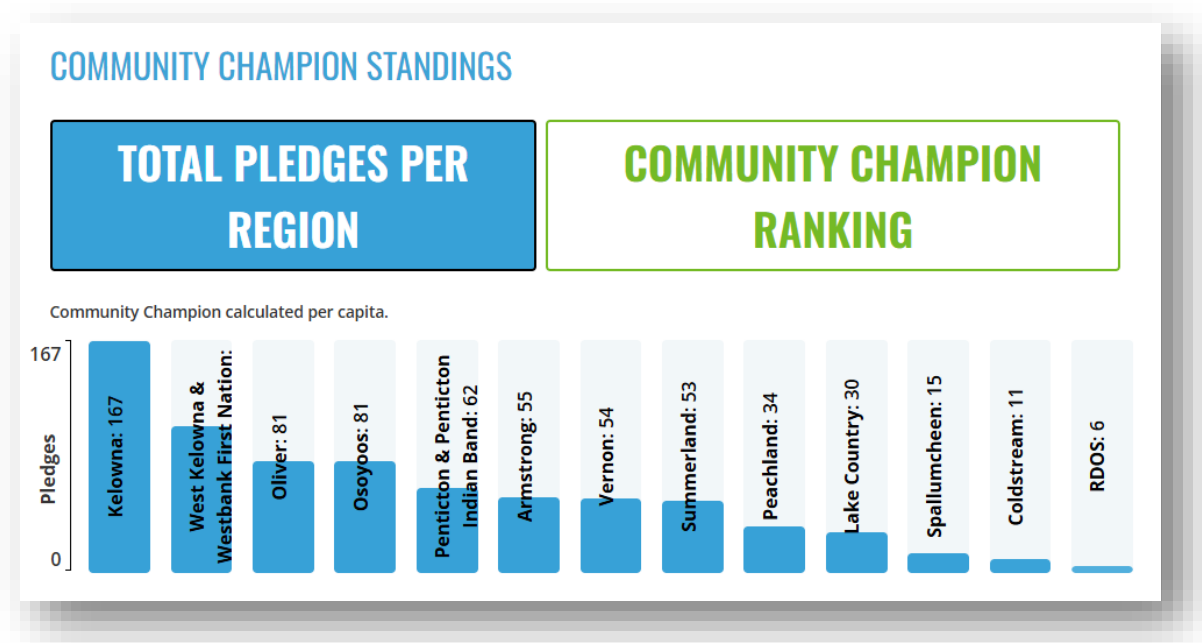


Figure 2: Screenshot from the Make Water Work Website showing the Total Pledges ranking on Sept 28, 2026. This ranking displayed the total individual pledges submitted per each region/community.

For the first time, Kelowna and West Kelowna are leading the roster in total pledges submitted. It is exciting to see some of our largest Okanagan communities getting behind this initiative. While Kelowna has the most pledges so far, the winner of Community Champion is based on pledges per capita, which bumps Oliver to top spot.

Make Water Work Social Media Seasonal Update

As we wrap up the final couple weeks of the 2026 Make Water Work Campaign, I am providing a snapshot on how it has performed on the OBWB social media channels.

This data is a significant improvement over the results in recent years and reflects how the content performed organically on the OBWB-managed channels. It is important to note that these stats do not include the paid ads or paid digital campaigns, those results will come



later. The five managed channels included below are the OBWB Facebook page, Instagram page, LinkedIn page, BlueSky and X account.

- **210** total Make Water Work posts including static, reels, stories, and shares
 - 933 total reactions
 - 64 comments
- **31** posts related to drought, water scarcity etc.
 - 652 total reactions
 - 70 comments

Make Water Work Delivery by the Okanagan Xeriscape Association

As our contracted Make Water Work delivery partner, the Okanagan Xeriscape Association has provided a six-month snapshot of their work under the Make Water Work banner.

- Eight nurseries visited for a “Day in the Nursery with Make Water Work”
 - Met with close to 350 people
- OXA presented in-person to 300 people at 10 events so far this year.
 - Presentations were at garden clubs, stratas etc.
- Make Water Work event booth at eight events this year
 - Engaged with 2,600 people
 - This includes a strong presence at the two OXA Plant Sales – Spring and Fall

Don't Move a Mussel Seasonal Update

As we wrap up the final couple weeks of boating season and the DMM 2026 Campaign, I am also providing a snapshot on how it has performed on the OBWB social media channels.

This data reflects how the content performed organically on the OBWB-managed channels which saw another good season of engagement including new content and the partnership with the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association. It is important to note that these stats do not include the paid ads or paid digital campaigns, those results will come later. The five managed channels included below are the OBWB Facebook page, Instagram page, LinkedIn page, BlueSky and X account.

- **131** total posts including static, reels, stories, and shares
 - 299 total reactions
 - 17 comments

Don't Move a Mussel Delivery by the Okanagan And Similkameen Invasive Species Society

As our contracted Don't Move a Mussel delivery partner, the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society has provided a six-month snapshot of their work under the Don't Move a Mussel banner.

- Total interactions with the public regarding Don't Move a Mussel: 3,532
 - Boat launch interactions: 1,208
 - Events attended: 21
 - Youth presentations: 22

Website project update

The OBWB is long overdue for a new website –the current site is over 20 years old. We have engaged Csek Creative to help us assess the current digital identity of OBWB as engaging specialized expertise at the beginning of the project will save time and money. As a part of this assessment, we conducted a survey with the Board and Okanagan Water Stewardship Council members regarding the OBWB, our digital presence, “brand” understanding and more. We received valuable insight about the perception of the OBWB and our communications.

The overwhelming sentiment was that the OBWB plays a unique and essential regional role.

Respondents repeatedly highlighted:

- Regional coordination and collaboration on water issues
- A basin-wide perspective ("One Water, One Valley")
- Science-based research, monitoring, and technical expertise
- Water Stewardship Council networking and knowledge sharing
- Advocacy and representation on water issues
- Public education and outreach
- Milfoil control and invasive mussel prevention programs
- Long-term institutional knowledge and continuity
- Funding support and grant administration

Many respondents described OBWB as one of the only organizations bringing together governments, First Nations, researchers, and water users around common water challenges.

The most common words used to describe OBWB were:

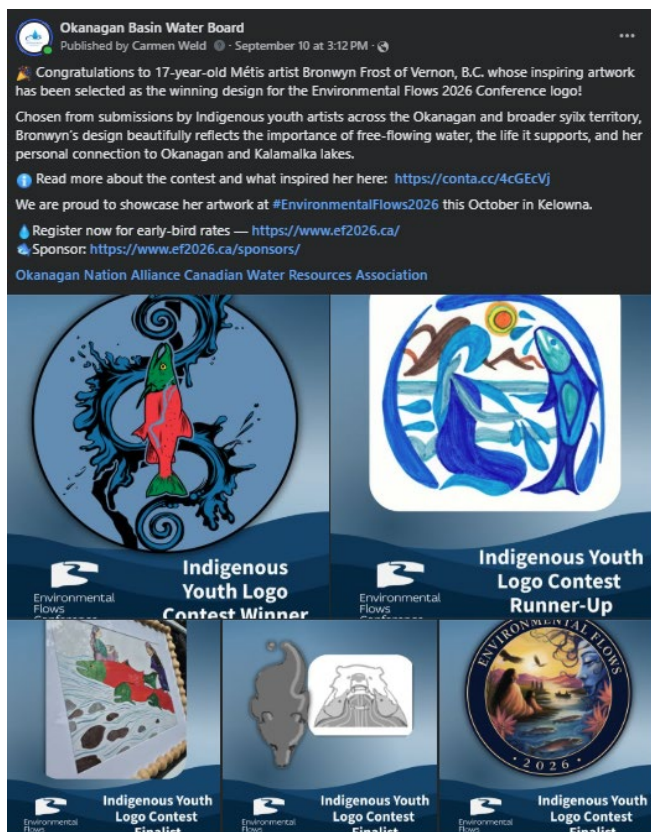
- Collaborative
- Science-based
- Knowledgeable

- Professional
- Trusted
- Respected
- Strategic
- Water-first
- Leadership
- Stewardship
- Regional voice

The Board will receive a high-level update from Csek Crestive at the October board meeting regarding the preliminary findings for board discussion.

Key communications since last report

- Sept. 10, 2026: [Vernon Teen Wins Environmental Flows 2026 Indigenous Youth Logo Contest](#)
- Sept. 17, 2026: [September Board Report](#)
- Key presentations/events;
 - Melissa Tesche, James Littlely and Carmen Weld attended the 2026 UBCM Convention, Sept. 14 – 18, 2026.



- Amanda Burnett represented the OBWB at the Okanagan Nation Alliance Salmon Fest, and the Penticton & District Community Arts Council *Artiverse*, on Sept. 19- and 20, 2026.
- Carmen attended the OXA Fall Plant Sale on Sept. 19, 2026.
- Melissa Tesche attended The International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control Sept. 22-25, 2026.
- Key social media posts with the most engagement since the last report include:
 - Sept. 17, 2026: [The Sept. Board Report is here](#) ↓
 - Sept. 10, 2026: 🎉 [Congratulations to 17-year-old Métis artist Bronwyn Frost](#) of Vernon, B.C. whose inspiring artwork has been selected as the winning design for the Environmental Flows 2026 Conference logo!

Media Tracking

Please find monthly media tracking below, listing articles from Aug. 31 to Sept. 28, 2026, in reverse chronological order.

Date	Source	Headline	Link
SEPT. 28, 2026	Castanet	One-on-one with Summerland mayoral incumbent Doug Holmes	https://www.castanet.net/news/Summerland/632453/One-on-one-with-Summerland-mayoral-incumbent-Doug-Holmes#632453
SEPT. 26, 2026	Castanet	Vernon Votes 2026: Former mayor Rob Sawatzky relying on previous municipal experience as he seeks seat on city council	https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/632214/Vernon-Votes-2026-Former-mayor-Rob-Sawatzky-relying-on-previous-municipal-experience-as-he-seeks-seat-on-city-council#632214
SEPT. 26, 2026	Castanet	New videos show how dry-climate gardening can thrive	https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-632077-1152-.htm#632077
SEPT. 21, 2026	VernonMatters	OBWB sounding alarm over growing risk of golden mussels	https://vernonmatters.ca/2026/09/21/obwb-sounding-alarm-over-growing-risk-of-golden-mussels
SEPT. 18, 2026	VernonMatters	Water advocacy group urges preparedness, warns of drought in 2027	https://vernonmatters.ca/2026/09/18/water-advocacy-group-urges-preparednesswarns-of-drought-in-2027
SEPT. 18, 2026	Castanet	Okanagan Basin Water Board warning of a warm and dry 2027	https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/631579/Okanagan-Basin-Water-Board-warning-of-a-warm-and-dry-2027
SEPT. 17, 2026	Black Press publications	Gardeners to gather in West Kelowna for annual Okanagan Xeriscape plant sale	https://kelownacapnews.com/2026/09/17/gardeners-to-gather-in-west-kelowna-for-annual-okanagan-xeriscape-plant-sale/
SEPT. 16, 2026	Kelowna <u>Daily Courier and Herald</u>	Young artist's work to be featured at environmental conference	Print editions
SEPT. 13, 2026	Black Press publications	Gardening advice to counter Okanagan drought	https://vernonmorningstar.com/2026/09/13/gardening-advice-to-counter-okanagan-drought/

SEPT. 13, 2026	Black Press publications	Water briefs: Okanagan drought focus already started for 2027	https://pentictonwesternnews.com/2026/09/13/water-briefs-okanagan-drought-focus-already-started-for-2027/
SEPT. 11, 2026	Black Press publications	Former North Westside fire chief seeks Vernon council seat	https://vernonmorningstar.com/2026/09/11/former-north-westside-fire-chief-seeks-vernon-council-seat/
SEPT. 11, 2026	Castanet	Vernon Teen Bronwyn Frost wins logo contest for major Okanagan water conference	https://www.castanet.net/news/Vernon/630977/Vernon-Teen-Bronwyn-Frost-wins-logo-contest-for-major-Okanagan-water-conference
SEPT. 11, 2026	VernonMatters	Vernon youth wins Environmental Flows Conference logo contest	https://vernonmatters.ca/2026/09/11/vernon-youth-wins-environmental-flows-conference-logo-contest
SEPT. 11, 2026	The Vernon Morning Star	Work completed on creek crossings, bike park, Polson Park path, more in Vernon	https://vernonmorningstar.com/2026/09/11/work-completed-on-creek-crossings-bike-park-polson-park-path-more-in-vernon/
SEPT. 11, 2026	IndigiNews	Chinook are going blind on the Salmon River amid worsening drought conditions	https://indiginews.com/features/chinook-are-going-blind-on-the-salmon-river-amid-worsening-drought-conditions/
SEPT. 10, 2026	Castanet	Letter to the Editor: Shore plan won't work	https://www.castanet.net/editon/news-story-630851-10-.htm#630851
SEPT. 9, 2026	Castanet	Plant your perennials in fall in the Okanagan	https://www.castanet.net/news/Gardening-with-nature/630645/Plant-your-perennials-in-fall-in-the-Okanagan
SEPT. 9, 2026	Kelowna <u>Daily Courier and Herald</u>	Resolutions not worth much, but advocacy might work	Print editions
SEPT. 9, 2026	Kelowna <u>Daily Courier and Herald</u>	Water conservation working, but we need to keep it up	Print editions
SEPT. 8, 2026	The Tyee	As Fish Go Blind, Experts Say BC Isn't Prepared for Droughts	https://thetyee.ca/News/2026/09/08/Fish-Go-Blind-BC-Droughts
SEPT. 5, 2026	Kelowna <u>Daily Courier and Herald</u>	Demand for water in Kelowna flattens out	Print editions

SEPT. 3, 2026	Kelowna News	Not watering your lawn during Okanagan drought helps but it's farms with water woes	Print editions
SEPT. 3, 2026	infoNews	Not watering your lawn during Okanagan drought helps but it's farms with water woes	https://infonews.ca/inwine/news/8663/not-watering-your-lawn-during-okanagan-drought-helps-but-its-farms-with-water-woes/
SEPT. 3, 2026	West Central Online CJYM-AM	Dunmore becomes home to Canada's first invasive-species dip tank	https://westcentralonline.com/articles/dunmore-becomes-home-to-canadas-first-invasive-species-dip-tank
SEPT. 3, 2026	Prairie Post	Canada's first dip tank takes on aquatic invaders: Aug. 27 announcement made near Dunmore	Print Edition
SEPT. 2, 2026	Brooks Bulletin	Former Bow River MP returned to second AIS task force	Print Edition

The Stats: Aug. 31 – Sept. 28, 2026

<i>Total individual articles mentioning OBWB work, projects etc. (includes multiple listings of the same article)</i>	<i>Total Estimated Views*</i>	<i>Total Reach*</i>
62	81,973	18.9M

***Total Estimated Views** is pulled from our media monitoring service Meltwater. According to Meltwater, Estimated Views is a metric that approximates the number of times an average article from a publication has been viewed. This is accomplished by dividing a publication's monthly page views by the number of articles it published in a given month.

***Total Reach** is pulled from our media monitoring service Meltwater. It's important to note that in Meltwater, "reach" is inflated as it represents the potential number of unique visitors who could have seen a specific article or piece of content. It's calculated based on the monthly unique visitors to the source publication, not the number of times the content was displayed. This metric helps organizations understand the potential audience size and reach of their content across various platforms.

MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Melissa Tesche, Executive Director
Date: Sept. 29, 2026
Subject: **Administrative Amendments to Signing Authority**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting Oct. 6, 2026 Agenda No: 8.1

Recommended Resolution:

THAT the Board adopt the updated Signing Authority Resolution as presented.

Background:

We received a request from RDCO Financial Services to review and update the OBWB's signing authority policy.

The OBWB Governance Manual establishes an Officer position that may carry out the responsibilities of the Executive Director in the Executive Director's absence and may be delegated signing authority by the Executive Director.

In March 2025, the Board established the Chief Operating Officer (COO) position as the Officer position contemplated by the Governance Manual.

The recommended update to the Signing Authority Resolution is solely to add an interpretation clause at the beginning of the resolution that explicitly recognizes the Chief Operating Officer as authorized to exercise the signing authorities assigned to the Executive Director when acting in the Executive Director's absence, or when delegated that authority by the Executive Director, consistent with the OBWB Governance Manual.

This update is administrative in nature and does not change any existing authorities, limits, controls, or approval processes.



Signing Authority Resolution

Oct. 6, 2026

Interpretation

For the purposes of this resolution, any authority assigned to the Executive Director may be exercised by the Chief Operating Officer when acting in the Executive Director's absence or when such authority has been delegated to the Chief Operating Officer by the Executive Director in accordance with the OBWB Governance Manual.

"WHEREAS it is desirable for the Okanagan Basin Water Board (the "Board" or "OBWB") to authorize certain of its officers to, inter alia, approve payments and contracts, deposit and receive cheques and electronic fund transfers, and obtain and deliver from the Board's bankers, copies of all or any stocks and bonds; NOW THEREFORE, the Board hereby enacts as follows:

Cheques/Orders to Pay (i.e. Wires):

1. The cheque signing officers for the OBWB are:
 - a. Any one of the Directors of the Board; and
 - b. One of the following: Chief Administrative Officer, Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO); Director of Financial Services, RDCO; Executive Director, OBWB.
2. All cheques/orders to pay over \$25,000 must be signed by two original signatures. Cheques of \$25,000 or less can be signed electronically.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFTs) via transfer generated by Regional District Central Okanagan staff:

3. For all EFTs:
 - a. Secure online banking procedures must be used.
 - b. The creator of the transfer cannot be the approver.
4. Payroll:
 - c. Documentation and all EFTs prepared by RDCO staff will be signed off and approved by any one of the following: Chair, OBWB; Vice-Chair, OBWB; Executive Director, OBWB; Chief Administrative Officer, RDCO; Director of Financial Services, RDCO; Finance Manager, RDCO.

5. Regular Accounts Payable:

- d. For transfers within vendor payments of \$35,000 or less each, documentation will be signed off and EFTs will be approved online by one of the following: Chair, OBWB; Vice-Chair, OBWB; Executive Director, OBWB; Chief Administrative Officer, RDCO; Director of Financial Services, RDCO; Finance Manager, RDCO.

For transfers with vendor payments over \$35,000, documentation will be signed off by: Any one of the Directors of the OBWB; and one of the following: Chief Administrative Officer, RDCO; Director of Financial Services, RDCO; Executive Director, OBWB.

- e. EFTs will be approved online for release by any one of the following: Chief Administrative Officer, RDCO; Director of Financial Services, RDCO; Executive Director, OBWB; Finance Manager, RDCO.

Government Remittances (i.e., Source deductions, CRA, WCB, GST, PST, etc...)

- 6. RDCO Finance staff are required to file information online with regards to periodic reporting and required remittances on behalf of the OBWB. Payment is made on filing the report, at which time the government entity is authorized by RDCO Finance staff to withdraw the amount owing or deposit any refund into the OBWB account.

- a. The RDCO Finance staff person filing the report is to provide a copy of the report with the balance to be paid/refunded and obtain the signature of the Executive Director of the OBWB or the Finance Manager of the RDCO.

Other Transfers:

- 7. The Finance Manager, RDCO, and the Executive Director, OBWB, are authorized to transfer funds between all OBWB bank accounts (including transfer of investments to and from the OBWB bank accounts).

And Furthermore:

- 8. That this resolution be communicated to the Bank and remain in force until written notice of change is given to the bank manager of the branch of the Bank at which the account of the Board is kept and receipt of such notice duly acknowledged in writing.
- 9. And that the Chair, OBWB; the OBWB Directors appointed to the Board by the RDCO; and the Executive Director, OBWB; have authority to sign contracts approved by the Okanagan Basin Water Board.
- 10. This resolution shall take effect on the 6th day of October, 2026.

Chair

Executive Director