

## Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



**Okanagan Basin**  
WATER BOARD

**DATE:** Tuesday, October 3, 2023

**TIME:** 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**PLACE:** Online

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1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

1.1 Acknowledgement of First Nations Traditional Territory

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

2. **INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of September 8, 2023 held at the Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna, B.C. (page 1)

5. **DIRECTOR ROUNDTABLE**

5.1 Updates from board directors on water-related topics from UBCM

6. **STAFF REPORTS**

6.1 Executive Director Report (page 5) (resolutions required)

6.1.1 Proposed 2024 OBWB meeting calendar

6.2 Deputy Administrator Report (page 9)

6.3 Office and Grants Manager Report (page 10)

6.4 Water Science Specialist Report (page 11)

6.5 Communications Director Report (page 14)

7. **NEXT MEETING**

7.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, Nov. 7 at 10 a.m.  
**ONLINE.**

8. **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 this online meeting, please contact our Communications Director Corinne Jackson at [corinne.jackson@obwb.ca](mailto:corinne.jackson@obwb.ca) for further details. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD SEPTEMBER 8, 2023 AT ROTARY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS,  
421 CAWSTON AVE., COLDSTREAM**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Christine Fraser	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt. Director Gord Lovegrove	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt. Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

**REGRETS**

Director Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Deputy Administrator
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m.

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

***"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 8, 2023 be approved."***

**CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 1, 2023, held at Regional District of North Okanagan.

***"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on August 1, 2023, held at Regional District of North Okanagan, be approved."***

**CARRIED**

**4. STAFF REPORTS**

#### 4.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears provided background on the annual Strategic Plan tracking measures memo, noting that the results shown are not cumulative and an overview looking at the lifespan of the plan will be provided next year.

The board was told of an upcoming clinic at the Union of B.C. Municipalities conference looking at building safely in floodplains, bridging the topics of flood mapping and the housing. The clinic, led by Dr. Sears, was to include representatives from City of Vernon, District of Squamish and City of Grand Forks.

Dr. Sears said staff are organizing a meeting regarding Mission Creek. As the largest tributary to Okanagan Lake, there are a number of competing goals and objectives when it comes to water management, including environmental flow needs, domestic and farm irrigation, logging and more. The executive director noted that she was invited and is planning to attend a transboundary mining conference in Osoyoos, hosted by the Lower Similkameen Indian Band in October.

Directors were told that the three recommendations OBWB provided to the B.C. provincial budget consultation have been included in the final report to the government. The recommendations included funding for prevention, early detection and rapid response for invasive mussels, increased funding for B.C.'s Watershed Security Fund (WSF) and funding to review the Okanagan Lake Regulation System and Operating Plan. Increased funding for the WSF was echoed in the OBWB's submission for the federal budget consultation.

Work is underway on the OBWB's 2024-25 budget which will be presented to the board at the November meeting.

There is a 95% chance of El Niño continuing through the winter, resulting in a warmer than normal fall and winter, and lower rainfall.

***"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated August 29, 2023, be received."***

**CARRIED**

#### 4.2 Deputy Administrator Report

Mr. Littley provided an update on the invasive mussel issue, noting that in response to OBWB lobbying efforts and the efforts of others, the province implemented an inspection program in 2012 and since then has conducted 250,000 inspections, and intercepted at least 150 infested watercraft. As well, the Water Board has pushed for greater partner cooperation, for example with Canada Border Services Agency which has led to stronger enforcement, and water monitoring which has also expanded. Looking at this year's inspection program, the board discussed additional action that could be taken. Dr. Sears said that was approved to have a meeting with Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture Kelly Greene at UBCM and invited directors to attend with her.

The board was updated on the milfoil control program and told that summer harvesting is complete. As well, repairs are underway to the milfoil shop following an inspection and in compliance with the lease agreement in place with RDNO.

***"THAT the Deputy Administrator's Report, dated August 28, 2023, be received."***

**CARRIED**

#### 4.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel told the board that Jennifer Vigano, Director of Watershed Strategies and Governance for the B.C. Ministry of B.C. Water, Land and Resource Stewardship would be presenting at the next Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting.

Dir. Fyke provided an update as OWSC Chair and as Coordinator at Environment and Climate Change Canada, noting that August was the warmest month on record since recording began. El Niño warms and is also drier, so this has been amplified, he added, saying that we can expect to see this more every 4-6 years.

Directors noted that they have several meetings at UBCM with Premier Eby and various ministries, and the possibility of raising various water issues. Dr. Sears offered to attend and support directors in these discussions.

The board was told about plans for a second Environmental Flow Needs conference, March 13-15, 2024, building on the one held in 2018.

Work on the Hydrometric Monitoring Program is continuing, providing important information on water flows, helping water managers make decisions that meet the needs of fish, farmers, and domestic users. Dr. Jatel explained that these data can also play an important role in land-use decisions, infrastructure planning, and promoting sustainable practices in the community. Dir. Fraser noted that despite efforts by the Township of Spallumcheen to improve Deep Creek for fish, low water levels led the province to issue sec. 88 fish protection orders this summer to some area licencees. However, some water users refused to follow the order, referring to First in Time, First in Right. Dr. Jatel explained that the B.C. Water Sustainability Act allows for a Water Sustainability Plan to be developed that would supersede FITFIR.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, August 29, 2023, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

#### 6.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson gave an update on the ongoing Level 5 drought and communication efforts, including the development and delivery of a drought bulletin on Aug. 4 announcing the Government of B.C.’s declaration of Level 4 drought for the Okanagan, and then on Aug. 17 when the region was declared at Level 5. The bulletin is provided to local government electeds, MLAs and MPs, utility staff, OWSC members and media. They provide an update on current water supplies, helping policy-makers make water management decisions, and encouraging agriculture customers and residents to conserve. The bulletins are also posted on the OBWB’s social media channels. Drought ads were also created and are airing on local TV and radio, encouraging residents to follow local watering restrictions and find conservation tips at [www.MakeWaterWork.ca](http://www.MakeWaterWork.ca).

Directors were also told the Don’t Move a Mussel campaign will continue until mid-October, with two more long-weekends around the corner. The latest B.C. inspection numbers show that the greatest number of visitors with mussel-infested watercraft name the Okanagan as their destination. Dir. Lezard noted the importance of keeping the mussels out of the region and the potential impact on fish and the syilx community, adding that contact should be made about making a presentation to the Okanagan Nation Alliance’s Chief Executive Council. Staff agreed to follow up.

***“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated August 29, 2023, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

**5. IN-CAMERA**

5.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(k) and 90 (1) e) of the Community Charter)

1:47 p.m. Came out of in-camera.

**6. NEXT MEETING**

6.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, Oct. 3 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, or online TBD.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

***“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 8, 2023 be adjourned at 1:48 p.m.”***

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
October 3, 2023  
Agenda No: 6.1

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Anna Warwick Sears  
Date: September 27, 2023  
Subject: **Executive Director Report**

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### Union of B.C. Municipalities Wrap Up

OBWB's local government-appointed directors made a strong showing for the meetings on invasive mussels. Chair McKortoff attended the City of West Kelowna's Tuesday meeting with B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (LWRS) Nathan Cullen. West Kelowna Mayor Gord Milsom attended the OBWB's Thursday meeting with Min. Cullen and Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture Kelly Greene – where we had the entire board represented. It was excellent to have a united front from the entire valley. We have followed up with LWRS Deputy Minister Lori Halls' request for more information and recommendations for next steps for the government, and will do a verbal update at the OBWB meeting.

Our clinic, Building Housing (Safely) in Floodplains was very well-received, with an estimated 60 people in attendance. I had great feedback from attendees about the range of examples – Squamish with coastal and riverine flooding, Vernon with lakeshore and creek flooding, and Regional District of Kootenay Boundary/Grand Forks with riverine flooding in a small town and rural area.

I think the board and staff would all benefit from a roundtable update about each community's UBCM meetings with ministers on water-related issues (including wildfire management in watersheds). I've included a space for this on the agenda.

### OBWB 2023 Meeting Schedule

I've provided an attachment with the proposed OBWB meeting schedule for 2024. Note:

- The January meeting is cancelled because it is difficult to get the agenda out over the holidays.
- Meetings during the winter months will be held online.
- Typically, there is one day in the year when the OBWB meeting is cancelled because it is the day after a STAT holiday. This year there are FOUR meetings that are the day after a STAT (highlighted in yellow). I recommend cancelling the July meeting, and keeping the other meetings on the days scheduled, but I'm open to board suggestions.
- We are holding the September meeting on a Friday, in expectation that we will have an in-person public meeting – and we have better attendance on that day.
- This also shows other significant dates for board approvals on the calendar, including grant awards, and approval of the annual audited financial statements.

**Recommended motion: *That the OBWB adopts the 2024 meeting schedule as presented.***

#### **OBWB Budget Preparation**

I have begun work with RDCO accounting staff to prepare the OBWB's 2025 budget (for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025). This will be presented to the Board for review and approval at our November 7<sup>th</sup> regular meeting. Per our Supplementary Letters Patent, the OBWB's final budget must be approved by the Board no later than our December 5<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

#### **RDCO Office Lease Renewal**

Our lease with RDCO for office space and services (accounting, IT, etc.) is up for renewal for a new five-year term. Our current lease expires on December 31, 2023. Our next term will be from January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2028. They have proposed a 2.25% increase, from \$9,302.75/month to \$9,512.37/month, all inclusive. This is very reasonable for the space and services that we receive.

**Recommended motion: *That the OBWB accept in principle the term and rate of the OBWB office lease renewal proposed by RDCO, to be finalized by staff.***

#### **Milfoil Yard Lease Renewal**

I've been in contact with Zee Marcolin, General Manager for Utilities at RDNO. They are offering us a 5-year lease with an automatic 5-year renewal on the condition of a favorable environmental inspection report by a qualified professional. Our previous lease was from 2009 – 2019, with a five-year extension to 2024. I am comfortable with the lease term they have offered, given that it balances stability for the OBWB's program, with flexibility for the RDNO's utility and land management.

Last year, based on the terms of the original lease, our annual rent was \$14,560 (up from \$12,500 in 2009). This was a very low rate, given inflation over the past 15 years. RDNO has done a survey of current fair market lease rates, and has determined that the range is \$2,150 - \$3,250/month. They are asking for the mid-point of this range, so that our proposed new rate is \$2,700/month or \$32,400/year, minus \$1,000/year for snow plowing. The rate will be increased at 2.5%/year for the first five years, and adjusted up or down for the next five years, depending on inflation.

**Recommended motion: *That the OBWB accept in principle the term and rate of the OBWB milfoil yard lease renewal proposed by RDNO, to be finalized by staff.***

#### **Proposed Workshop on Mission Creek**

OBWB staff are continuing to develop plans for an invitation-only workshop on the challenges and opportunities for Mission Creek. The workshop will be December 1<sup>st</sup>. We are hoping to bring together a range of parties and groups who live or work directly in or along the creek. We are currently in the process of getting quotes from facilitators.

#### **Transboundary Mining Conference**

I will be attending a conference on transboundary mining issues on September 27–28, hosted by the Upper Columbia United Tribes and the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, held in Osoyoos, B.C. It will include U.S. and Canadian state and federal agency partners, and Indigenous representatives of



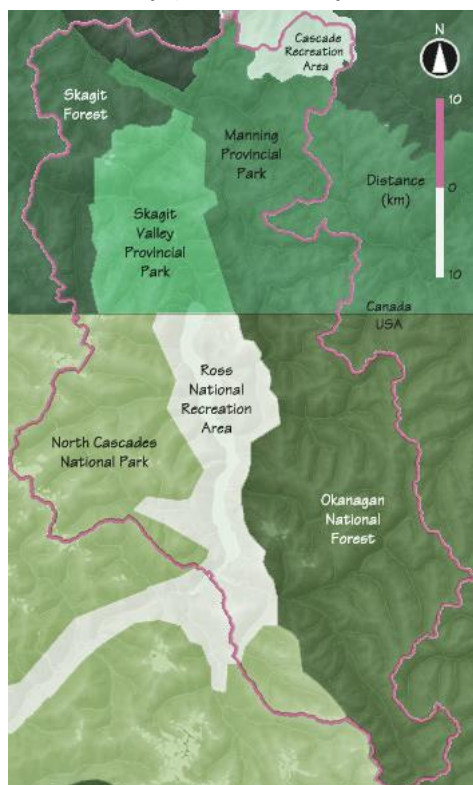
Columbia River tribes and First Nations. I will make a verbal report on this gathering at the OBWB meeting.

### **International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control Annual Meeting**

The Osoyoos Board ([IOLBC](https://www.ioslbc.org/)) will hold its annual meeting at the Sonora Centre in Osoyoos on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The IOLBC is an international organization, with members appointed from the U.S. and Canada. There is a board meeting during the day, and a public meeting at 6 p.m. The public meeting will have a Zoom option, for anyone who wishes to attend remotely (<https://ijc.org/en/olbc>). Chair McKortoff and I are both board members, representing the local area on the Canadian side. The International Joint Commission (IJC), that oversees all transboundary boards, is doing an investigation to evaluate a change of mandate, converting the Osoyoos “control board” to a “watershed board.” Control boards have a narrow mandate focused on dam operations. Watershed boards have broader mandates, depending on local issues. If the IOLBC becomes a watershed board it will complement, but not duplicate, the work of the OBWB. The IJC is particularly interested in increasing Indigenous representation on the Osoyoos board.

### **Skagit Board Appointment**

Personally (outside of my OBWB work), I've been appointed to the [Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission](https://www.skagitcommission.org/). This is another transboundary organization, with members from the US and Canada, that was established under an agreement between the Province of B.C. and the City of Seattle as a condition of the Ross Lake/Seven Mile Reservoir Treaty between the United States and Canada signed in 1984. Its mission is “*To ensure the preservation and protection of the natural and cultural resources and recreational opportunities of the Upper Skagit Watershed to the highest North American management standards through advocacy, promoting international collaboration and strategic partnerships and investments.*” The City of Seattle’s [Ross Dam](https://www.seattle.gov/util/ross-dam) on the Skagit River created Ross Lake, which backs up into B.C., making it a transboundary water. The IJC is not a party to the treaty. I anticipate that my experience on the commission will help inform my work on the Osoyoos board and at the OBWB.



### **Weather Report**

The province-wide drought continues, although most Okanagan purveyors have been able to manage their water supplies. Seasonal forecasts continue to project a warmer-and-drier-than-normal fall and winter due to continued El Niño conditions.

Okanagan Lake is below normal, in the lower quartile (between the zero/lowest recorded and 25<sup>th</sup> percentile). Given the El Niño conditions, there is some possibility of the drought continuing into 2024.



### Board Meeting Schedule for 2024

Month	Date	Location	Notes
January	Tuesday, Jan 2	<b>CANCELLED</b>	Conflicts with holiday schedules
February	Tuesday, Feb 6	ONLINE	
March	Tuesday, March 5	ONLINE	
April	<b>Tuesday, April 2</b>	RDNO, Coldstream	WCQI grant approvals
May	Tuesday, May 7	RDCO or other Kelowna venue	Joint OBWB/Stewardship Council meeting
June	Tuesday, June 4	RDOS, Penticton	Adopt audited financial statements
July	<b>Tuesday, July 2</b>	<b>Cancelled</b>	Avoiding day after Canada Day STAT
August	<b>Tuesday, August 6</b>	RDNO, Coldstream	
September	<b><u>Friday</u></b> , September 6	Kelowna venue TBD	Annual Public Meeting/OBWB regular meeting
October	<b>Tuesday, October 1</b>	RDOS, Penticton	
November	Tuesday, November 5	ONLINE	First opportunity to adopt 2025-26 OBWB budget
December	Tuesday, December 3	ONLINE	Adopt 2025-26 OBWB Budget

**TBD = To be determined.**

## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Oct. 3, 2023  
Agenda No: 6.2

To: OBWB Directors  
From: James Littley  
Date: September 26, 2023  
Subject: Deputy Administrator Report

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### **Invasive Mussel Larvae Found in Snake River, Idaho (tributary to Columbia River)**

On Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture issued a [press release](#) that invasive quagga mussel larvae had been found in multiple water samples in the Snake River at Twin Falls, ID. There is very limited information available so far, but I will provide a detailed analysis at the board meeting based on available facts and observations from other areas.

### **Milfoil Control Program**

The milfoil crew is busy preparing equipment for the winter and expects to launch rototillers starting in early October. This is our last authorized season under the current permit, and I have been working closely with Ecoscape Environmental to prepare our next 5-year permit notification for the province. We are proposing a new approach that would allow us to treat milfoil as needed based on the density of milfoil in a given area and respecting all environmental conditions and work windows. The major change is that we would work with a professional-reliance model where new areas could be added under direction and monitoring by Ecoscape under a provincially pre-approved process, rather than being required to re-apply to the province for every new milfoil bed. Our next step is to meet with the province and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to discuss the proposal before submitting a formal notification.

Technically, the province has 45 days to respond to a notification or the work can proceed using standard provincial Terms and Conditions for work in and around water. However, we are still six months from the end of the current permit, so we are providing as much time as possible to collaborate with provincial staff on our proposal.

## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Oct. 3, 2023  
Agenda No: 6.3

To: OBWB Board of Directors  
From: Carolina Restrepo  
Date: September 27, 2023  
Subject: Office and Grants Manager

### Environmental Flows Conference, March 13 – 15, 2024

Since Dr. Jatel's September board report, planning for the 2024 Environmental Flows Conference has progressed significantly. The conference website was launched Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> and registration is now open. Sponsorship and communications plans are also in place.

The OBWB and the Canadian Water Resources Association B.C. branch are partnering with the Okanagan Nation Alliance, local, provincial and federal governments, academia and others, to plan and host the ***siwłkʷ (WATER) FOR ALL – CO-CREATING FUTURES Environmental Flows Conference 2024***. The conference will be held March 13-15, 2024, at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna.

This conference will bring together representatives from national and international organizations who are engaged in water management or research, including fisheries and water managers, First Nations, regulators, policy-makers, academia, funders and NGOs. The conference will cover several themes and focus on the state of knowledge for setting environmental flows in B.C. and recent environmental-related work in the Okanagan and elsewhere in Canada and the United States.

Find information, including registration, agenda, and more at <https://environmentalflows2024.ca/>. Early bird registration is until November 30, 2023.



## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Oct. 3, 2023  
Agenda No: 6.4

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Sandra K. Schira, Water Science Specialist  
Date: September 25, 2023  
Subject: **Climate Change Indicators Project**

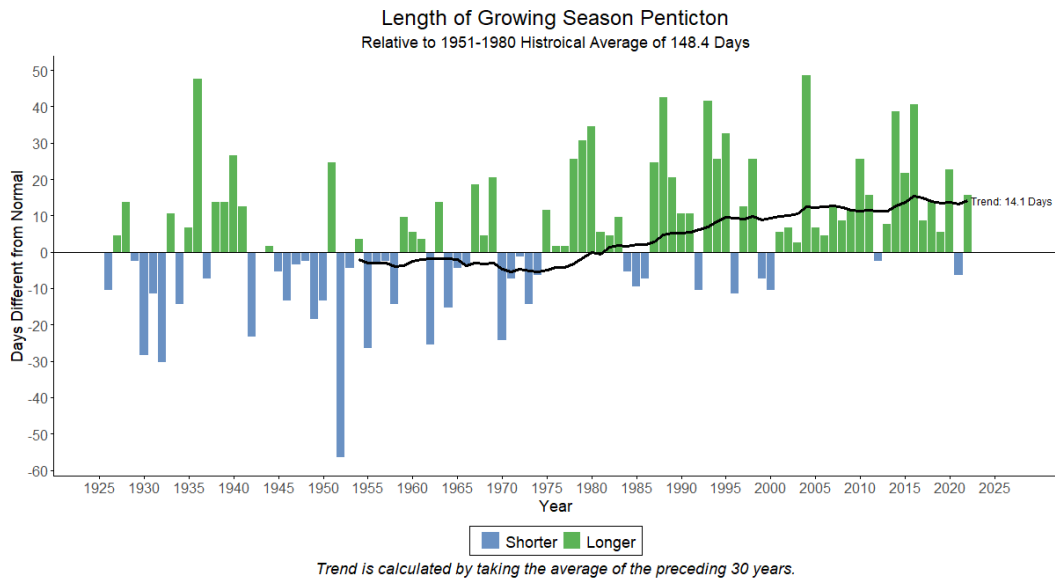
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So far, 2023 has been a record-breaking year. Globally, this is the hottest year on record. Canada is experiencing its worst wildfire season, and most of Okanagan is still in Level 5 drought. The preliminary results for the indicators project show that these extremely warm temperatures have become the norm in the Okanagan. As summer transitions into fall, I am reporting this month on autumn trends. And as the OBWB meeting is typically held in RDOS in October, I have shown graphs featuring the City of Penticton.

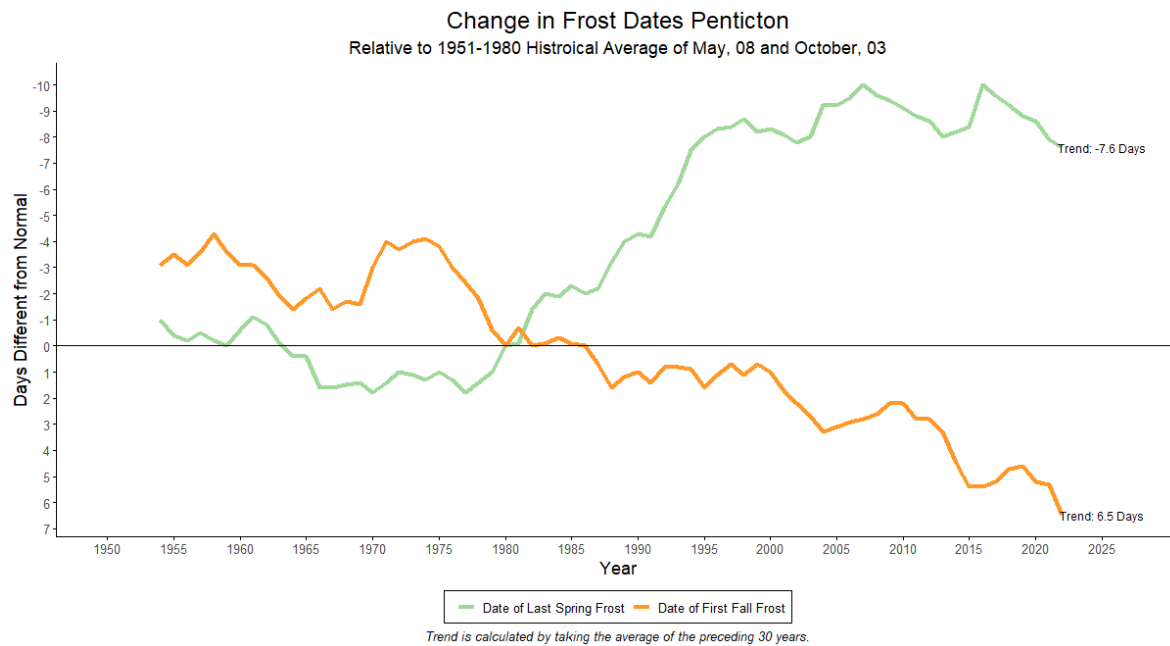
Out of the four seasons, fall (defined as September, October, and November) has the smallest observed increase in temperature compared to the 1951 – 1980 historical average. Over this time period, the observed change in fall average daily temperature was 0.9 C in Vernon, 0.8 C in Kelowna, and 0.5 C in Penticton. While not as large an increase as seen in other seasons, this temperature change has had some significant impacts. In all three cities, there is now typically at least one fall day every year with a maximum temperature over 30 C, which was not the case historically. The number of days with a minimum temperature below 0 C decreased by about five days in each location.

Five fewer days above freezing has contributed to an observed two-week lengthening of the growing season (Figure 1). In Penticton, the last spring frost occurs about a week earlier and the first fall frost about a week later than normal (Figure 2). The exact dates are still quite variable from year to year or from location to location, but the two-week longer growing season is consistent across the Okanagan (Table 1). As a note, the frost dates in Kelowna are notably different from the other two cities, this may be an artifact of the stations location or because the station has moved several times.

Trends are not as constant for precipitation as for temperature, but precipitation has increased slightly in the fall. Recent years have seen lower-than-normal total precipitation, but the per cent of the total that arrived in fall has increased. Fall precipitation has gone up by 18 mm in Vernon, 10 mm in Kelowna, and 22 mm in Penticton. The observed increase in fall rain may be the result of less snow accumulation in the winter. I am working on analyzing the precipitation indicators and hope to report back soon with more detailed findings. This means that while droughts may become more common, the trend shows that fall rains may provide some short-term relief.



**Figure 1: Length of growing season for Pentiction from 1925 to 2022.** Frost-free season is defined as the number of consecutive days between the last spring frost and first fall frost. **The figure shows a clear overall shift to a longer frost-free period.**



**Figure 2: Trend in date of last spring frost and first fall frost in Pentiction from 1955 to 2022.** The lines show the difference in days from the normal date for spring (green) and fall (orange) frost. Negative values indicate an earlier frost than normal and positive values a later frost. **The figure shows that the last spring frost has shifted up a week and the first fall frost occur a week later.**

*Table 1 Trend for the average date of the last spring frost, first fall frost, and length of consecutive frost-free days for Vernon, Penticton, and Kelowna. The trend is the 30-year rolling average for 2022. The change is the number of days from that date with a positive value being a later frost and a negative value an earlier frost.*

	Indicator	1951-1980 Average	Trend	Change	Units
Vernon	Growing Season Length	153.8	169.7	15.9	Days
	Spring Frost	07-May	26-Apr	-11.4	Date
	Fall Frost	08-Oct	13-Oct	4.6	Date
Kelowna	Growing Season Length	128.1	139	10.9	Days
	Spring Frost	19-May	14-May	-4.6	Date
	Fall Frost	24-Sep	30-Sep	6.2	Date
Penticton	Growing Season Length	148.4	162.5	14.1	Days
	Spring Frost	08-May	30-Apr	-7.6	Date
	Fall Frost	03-Oct	10-Oct	6.5	Date

## MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board  
Regular meeting  
Oct. 3, 2023  
Agenda No: 6.5

To: OBWB Directors  
From: Corinne Jackson  
Date: September 27, 2023  
Subject: Communications Director Report

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### Drought Communications & Make Water Work 2023

Based on information shared during today's Thompson Okanagan Regional Drought Team meeting, it was determined that despite recent rains and cooler weather, there hasn't been enough precipitation to downgrade the Okanagan from Drought Level 5. It was determined that the Okanagan would need to see much more precipitation before conditions improve. Level 5 drought indicates "exceptionally dry" where impacts are almost certain.

During the meeting it was noted that Spallumcheen's Hullcar well (409) has been very low but has been increasing since Sept. 13. Oliver's well (407) is still low but showing some improvement.

Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Fisheries Department staff noted a number of creeks are showing an increase in flows and kokanee have been returning to spawn, however there are concerns that flows aren't high enough for other species, including sockeye. Of particular concern are Coldstream Creek (which is running below Environmental Flow Needs [EFNs] and even Critical Flow Needs), McDougall Creek, Shuttleworth, Vaseux, and Inkaneep creeks. The ONA is watching these streams closely, along with Shingle Creek and Mission Creek.

As temperatures cool, irrigation demands fall, and if forecasted rains arrive, it is hoped that conditions will improve. The next meeting of the drought team is set for Oct. 4 when conditions will be reviewed again.

In response to the ongoing drought, we have continued to use our [Make Water Work](#) (MWW) campaign to communicate the need for conservation with radio and TV ads, as well as social media posts. I have also remained in regular contact with our local government/utility partners, ensuring they have the support required to promote conservation. We have also promoted recent plant sales by the Okanagan Xeriscape Association and Summerland Ornamental Gardens who have featured WaterWise material, encouraging people to change out their landscape to require less water. Interestingly, due to the recent fires, there has been a lot of interest and discussion about removing cedars and replacing them with something that requires less water and is Firesmart. Recent discussion around the District of Lake Country council table about a ban on new cedar hedges seems to have further prompted this discussion where we are seeing it play out on our social media feeds. MWW will continue into mid-October, and possibly longer if required.

The B.C. Government has set up a new web page, answering frequently asked questions related to drought, water licencing, Temporary Protection Orders for fish, and First-in-time, First-in-right (FITFIR). You




can find it here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/drought-flooding-dikes-dams/drought-information/wsa-tpo>.

### **Invasive Mussel Communications & Don't Move A Mussel 2023**

Since May, we have been delivering our annual [Don't Move A Mussel](#) campaign to raise awareness regarding invasive zebra and quagga mussels, encouraging people to learn about the risks to the Okanagan, and how to prevent their spread. Prevention has included encouraging those bringing watercraft into B.C. to stop at all inspection stations along their route, and to “clean, drain, dry” when moving between bodies of water.

We have normally increased this messaging during long weekends. Now, with last week's announcement that invasive quagga mussel larvae have been discovered in Idaho, we have been amplifying this message, especially with two more long weekends ahead (Sept. 30-Oct. 2, and Oct. 7-9). A sample of the messaging is provided below, and found at <https://tinyurl.com/3wyjfdey>.

**Okanagan WaterWise** is with **Christina Lake Stewardship Society** and 21 others.  
Published by Corinne Jackson · September 19 at 5:31 PM · 🌐

🚩 **#DontMoveAMussel** - PLEASE SHARE WIDELY! 📢

Some very disturbing news coming out of Idaho today. According to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), quagga mussel larvae have been confirmed in multiple samples in the Twin Falls and Centennial Waterfront Park area of the Snake River... a tributary to the Columbia River which of course also connects to the Okanagan River.

While Idaho state officials jump into containment mode, asking people to stay out of the park, and neighbouring jurisdictions review their inspection station programs, we need water recreationists to do their part too!

With 2 more long weekends around the corner, Oct. 2 and 9, and people still launching watercraft in lakes in the Okanagan and beyond, we need people to be on HIGH ALERT.

🔴 IF YOU ARE BRINGING ANY WATER RECREATION EQUIPMENT (boat, kayak, paddleboard, fishing gear) INTO B.C. YOU MUST STOP AT ALL INSPECTION STATIONS ALONG YOUR ROUTE. 🚣

🔴 **!! DO NOT LAUNCH WITHOUT BEING INSPECTED. !!**

Find prevention information, the B.C. mussel inspection station map and more at [www.DontMoveAMussel.ca/prevention](http://www.DontMoveAMussel.ca/prevention).

“These invasive pests will clog pipes that deliver water for drinking, energy, agriculture and recreation,” Idaho Gov. Brad Little said at a press conference Tuesday. “This is a very high priority for Idaho and for me, given the gravity of the risk. If we are not successful, an unchecked spread – which we are doing all we can to stop – has the potential to cost Idaho hundreds of millions of actual and indirect costs.”

Find the ISDA news release and more info here: <https://agri.idaho.gov/.../snake-river-quagga-mussel.../>

[#CleanDrainDry](#) [#stopAIS](#) [#invasivemussels](#) [#quaggamussels](#) [#DontMoveAMussel](#)



Photo 1: Kayakers at Centennial Waterfront Park in Aug. 2023, courtesy Tony Harris. Photo 2: Map of suspected quagga mussel-infested area, courtesy Idaho State Department of Agriculture. Photo 3: Quagga mussel clogged pipe, courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service. Photo 4: Quagga mussels (*Dreissena bugensis*) in hand for size comparison, courtesy Tahoe Boat Inspections.

### **Other communication initiatives**

Yesterday, I attended the first gathering to mark the start of Year 3 in **UBCO's School of Education Co-Curricular-Making Project**. This is a five-year project of which the OBWB is a collaborator. The aim is to help Okanagan educators de-colonize and Indigenize curriculum, much of it through a water lens. Leaders in this project include a number of people who helped with the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise's development of the "[Our Relationship with Water in the Okanagan](#)" education guides. The gathering included approximately 100 people, mostly teachers from throughout the Central Okanagan School District, and a water ceremony led by local syilx elders.

The **OBWB's annual report** "Tapping into Water Solutions" is now on our website and available for download at [www.obwb.ca/overview/annual-reports/](http://www.obwb.ca/overview/annual-reports/). Some of the highlights from the meeting have also been compiled and uploaded to our YouTube channel where it can be found at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFkAjtM\\_ydY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFkAjtM_ydY).

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### Summary of OBWB-Related News Coverage

There has been a lot of media attention to water issues since the last time I provided a report on this in July. I've hyperlinked some of the stories below, showing some of the issues that have garnered attention.

- Aug. 2 "Column – Gardening with Nature: Why it's nuts to litter your landscape with fabric," *Castanet.net*
- Aug. 2 "[Vernon Creek naturalization channels healthier ecosystem](#)," *Vernon Morning Star, Eagle Valley News*
- Aug. 3 "Drought deepens in Kamloops and the Okanagan," *InfoNews.ca*
- Aug. 4 "[Drought conditions intensify in British Columbia](#)," *Vernon Morning Star, Summerland Review, Kelowna Capital News, Terrace Standard, Tofino-Ucluelet Westerly News*
- Aug. 4 "'Exceptionally dry': Thompson-Okanagan upgraded to level 4 and 5 drought," *KelownaNow.com*
- Aug. 4 "[Okanagan drought level increases, call for further water conservation](#)," *VernonMatters.ca*
- Aug. 8 "[Climate Change: Okanagan has steadily heated up over the last few decades](#)," *InfoNews.ca*
- Aug. 9 "[Okanagan has one of the highest water use rates per person in Canada - Spallumcheen asks residents to do what they can to be water warriors and conserve](#)," *Vernon Morning Star, Kelowna Capital News, Quesnel Cariboo Observer, Victoria News, Cowichan Valley Citizen, Nelson Star, Fernie Free Press, Grand Forks Gazette*
- Aug. 10 "Community stresses need for water conservation," *VernonMatters.ca*
- Aug. 11 "The Okanagan Water Basin has now been declared to be drought level 4," *Castanet.net*
- Aug. 15 "[Okanagan residents asked to conserve water amid level 4 drought](#)," *Global Okanagan*
- Aug. 15 "Osoyoos Lake mussel query shows public education working," *Castanet.net*
- Aug. 15 "Okanagan bakes in Drought Level 4 conditions," *Penticton Western News, Summerland Review, Vernon Morning Star, Eagle Valley News, Salmon Arm Observer*
- Aug. 16 "Column – Gardening with Nature: Plants need strategies to deal with the heat too," *Castanet.net*
- Aug. 17 "[Multiple mussel infested watercraft intercepted on their way to the Okanagan](#)," *KelownaNow.com*
- Aug. 17 "Water Board releases calls to action as Okanagan-bound invasive mussel-infested watercraft intercept," *iHeartRadio - AM1150*
- Aug. 17 "Okanagan drought rating heats up to highest, level 5," *Kelowna Capital News, Vernon Morning Star, Lake Country Calendar, Summerland Review, Penticton Western News, Trail Times, Castlegar News, Fernie Free Press, Williams Lake Tribune, Chilliwack Progress, Maple Ridge News, Victoria News, North Island Gazette*
- Aug. 17 "Work to enhance Armstrong wetland begins," *Vernon Morning Star*
- Aug. 18 "Okanagan reaches highest drought level," *VernonMatters.ca*
- Aug. 18 "[Stranded fish due to low creeks turns up some B.C. water restrictions](#)," *Vernon Morning Star, Grand Forks Gazette, Victoria News, Vancouver Island Free Daily, Maple Ridge News*
- Aug. 18 "Province urged to strengthen mussel program," *Penticton Herald*
- Aug. 19 "Half the boats carrying invasive mussels into BC heading to Thompson Okanagan," *InfoNews.ca*
- Aug. 21 "Wildfires triggering evacuations and highway closures around Southern Interior," *InfoNews.ca*

Aug. 21      "[Armstrong Wetlands Association begins work on wetland project](#)," *Castanet.net*

Aug. 22      "Okanagan elevated to most severe drought level," *Penticton Herald*

Aug. 28      "[OBWB issues updated calls to action on invasive mussels in B.C.](#)," *Water Canada*

Aug. 30      "Column – Gardening with Nature: It's time to set water priorities in your garden,"  
*Castanet.net*

Sept. 1      "[Vernon Creek can't keep up to climate change: naturalization to foster return of salmon](#),"  
*Castanet*

Sept. 4      "Alarm sounds over low water in Shingle Creek," *Penticton Herald*

Sept. 5      "[Pull-the-plug laws considered for boaters](#)," *Penticton Herald*

Sept. 7      "[From drought to wildfire: Water challenges front and centre at Okanagan water board AGM](#)," *InfoNews.ca*

Sept. 7      "Okanagan Water Board annual meeting taps into water solutions to address climate & other challenges," *iHeartRadio - AM1150*

Sept. 9      "[The magnitude of loss due to wildfire in B.C. on par with Australia, the Western U.S. and the Mediterranean](#)," *Castanet.net*

Sept 17      "[Lake Country mayor declares war on... cedar hedges](#)," *InfoNews.ca*

Sept. 19      "[Water conservation encouraged as drought conditions persist](#)," *VernonMatters.ca*

Sept. 21      "[Armstrong named Make Water Work community champion for 6th time](#)," *Castanet.net*