

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

DATE: Tuesday, April 2, 2024

TIME: 10 a.m. to 2 p.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 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 March 5, 2024 held online ([page 1](#))

5. **DELEGATION**

5.1 Kandis Lipsett, Senior Environmental Emergency Response Officer with B.C. Environmental Emergency Program

6. **STAFF REPORTS**

- 6.1 Executive Director Report ([page 6](#))
 - 5.1.1 IJC Women in Water Diplomacy Event Program
- 6.2 Deputy Administrator Report ([page 13](#))
- 6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report ([page 15](#))
- 6.4 Office and Grants Manager Report ([page 19](#))
- 6.5 Communications Director Report ([page 21](#))

7. **IN-CAMERA**

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

8. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- 8.1 Letter from District of Coldstream to federal government, cc'd to OBWB, re: invasive mussels ([page 25](#))
- 8.2 Letter from B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship re: invasive mussel vulnerability guide ([page 27](#))

9. **NEXT MEETING**

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be an abbreviated meeting on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 9 a.m. at the Kelowna Yacht Club, followed by a joint Board-Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting.

10. **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 our Communications Director Corinne Jackson at 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 MARCH 5, 2024, ONLINE
OKANAGAN, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice-chair Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	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)

GUESTS

Lisa Scott	Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society
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STAFF

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

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

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

5.1 Lisa Scott, Executive Director of Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society presenting on invasive mussel outreach and monitoring efforts in 2023

8.1 Letter from Columbia Shuswap Regional District re: invasive mussels

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb.6, 2024 be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 6, 2023, held online.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Feb. 6, 2023, held online, be approved."

CARRIED

5. DELEGATION

- 5.1 Presentation by Lisa Scott, Executive Director of Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society on invasive mussel outreach and monitoring efforts in 2023

Ms. Scott provided an overview of OASISS' aquatic invasive species prevention program, noting that core funding comes from OBWB, allowing it to provide a much more extensive boater outreach program than elsewhere in B.C.

The society also works on invasive plants in the Similkameen and lake monitoring for invasive mussels and clams, she added. Additional funding partners include RDOS, Government of Canada's Summer Jobs, and federal/provincial funding through Habitat Conservation Trust Fund for lake monitoring.

Last year, OASISS had a program supervisor from April to November, as well as three aquatic program staff in the summer. Staff interacted with about 3,360 people and distributed Don't Move A Mussel materials to 178 water recreation-related businesses. They also attended 15 events and presented to 139 youth, and surveyed 1,237 people with watercraft at 18 launches, including those with kayaks, and seadoos.

In addition, OASISS developed outreach materials regarding invasive fish, providing materials to pet stores and conducting outreach at Penticton's Canadian Tire. Staff also did biweekly water sampling June to September. They collected 131 samples from five lakes and surveyed 12 substrate monitor sites. Testing of the samples came back from the lab indicating no invasive mussels detected. Nineteen residents also volunteered to put substrate monitors on their private docks. These also came back negative for the presence of mussels.

In conducting boat launch surveys, 89% of watercraft were coming from within B.C., 11% were out-of-province. Of those from out of B.C. 19% did not stop at a watercraft inspection station.

Board directors noted the importance of their call for pull-the-plug legislation and perhaps an increase in the fine for not stopping at inspection stations.

Dir. Fyke noted the federal government's recognition of the Fraser River as a 'waterbody of national significance' and its connection to the Shuswap. The Okanagan is only about an hour's drive to the Shuswap, he added, noting that protecting the Okanagan would help protect the Fraser.

Ms. Scott was thanked for her presentation and OASISS' work, and she exited the meeting.

6. STAFF REPORTS

- 6.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears updated the board on the annual audit, noting it is in progress and will be brought to the board in June. Planning is also underway for the joint board-Okanagan Water Stewardship

Council meeting in May, and staff are beginning to work on updating the OBWB Strategic Plan which ends in December 2024. The start of a staff service recognition program is also being reviewed.

The board also received an update on the water supply. It's still possible that the Okanagan will receive spring rains, but the forecast is for warmer and drier-than-normal conditions through the summer and water-related staff are preparing for another potential drought. The province's dam manager is holding back water on Okanagan Lake as much as he can while releasing as necessary for downstream needs, Dr. Sears added.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Feb. 28, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

6.2 Deputy Administrator Report

Mr. Littley noted the upcoming meeting of the Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group on Friday, including a presentation from B.C. province staff on the Invasive Mussel Defence Program. The board was also provided with an updated map indicating Okanagan waterways most at risk if invasive mussels arrived. The map will help authorities target resources to at-risk areas if needed.

Milfoil rototilling is being done in Wood and Osoyoos Lakes, but drought conditions have made such efforts difficult along some portions of Kal Beach, the board was told. The milfoil crew will be launching the rototiller in Osoyoos Lake in the coming days, and the new harvester should be arriving in a couple of weeks.

"THAT the Deputy Administrator Report, dated Feb. 28, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel reported that the last council meeting had presentations on watershed security planning and the OBWB's climate indicators project. Dir. Fyke added that one of the council's committees is researching funding opportunities for water quality stations.

The board was also told that plans for the upcoming Environmental Flows conference, March 13 to 15, are going well.

The Okanagan Hydrometric Program's technical committee, made up of representatives from OBWB, Okanagan Nation Alliance, and Environment and Climate Change Canada had its semi-annual meeting in February and discussions are now underway to work with Okanagan Indian Band to install three stream flow monitoring stations.

Finally, Dr. Jatel noted that he is continuing to work with UBC Okanagan and Mitacs on a collaborative project to hire a post-doc student to do an economic analysis of irrigated lands in the Okanagan.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Feb. 27, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

6.4 Office and Grants Manager Report

Ms. Restrepo Tamayo explained that the call for proposals to the board's Water Conservation and

Quality Improvement Grant Program closed Feb. 23. Staff received 23 applications with a total ask of \$631,726. A review of the proposals will begin soon and the board will funding receive recommendations in April.

Directors were provided a rundown of options to attend the upcoming Environmental Flow conference and invited to contact Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo if planning to attend.

“THAT the Office and Grants Manager’s Report, dated Feb. 28, 2024, be received.”

CARRIED

6.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson provided an overview of the 2023 Make Water Work campaign, noting new partners and new advertising efforts. In all, the campaign delivered 6.7 million impressions, with people seeing and hearing the water conservation message on billboards, radio, on social media, on wrapped vehicles, at garden centres, local government and utility offices, and at community events. With local governments and utilities contributing between \$1,500 and \$3,500, matched by the OBWB’s Okanagan WaterWise program, the campaign cost \$52,670. This was leveraged to attract another \$25,200 in in-kind support, delivering a campaign valued at \$77,867. The offer of matching funds for 2024 has been sent to partners, Ms. Jackson added.

The board was also updated on various communication efforts, including support to the EF conference and invasive mussel projects.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Feb. 28, 2024, be received.”

CARRIED

7. IN-CAMERA

6.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(k) and 90(2)(b) of the Community Charter)

The board exited the in-camera session at 12:11 p.m. to rise and report.

8. RISE AND REPORT

“THAT the board approve in principle the recommended changes to the SFA program terms of reference as provided, and that staff be directed to follow the process for continuing the SFA review as outlined above.

“AND THAT the board rise and report including the contents of this memo and the adopted resolution.”

CARRIED

9. CORRESPONDENCE

“THAT the letters regarding invasive mussel concerns from Westbank First Nations, District of Sicamous, Shuswap Watershed Council, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, and Thompson-Okanagan chambers to senior governments and cc’d to OBWB, and the letter from District of Invermere to OBWB, and the resolutions to SILGA from City of Kelowna and District of Sicamous, cc’d to OBWB, be received.”

CARRIED

10. NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tuesday, April 2, 2024

at 10 a.m. at the Regional District of North Okanagan in Coldstream.

11. ADJOURNMENT

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 5, 2024 be adjourned at 12:14 p.m."

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
April 2, 2024
Agenda No: 6.1

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

Staff Service Recognitions

We will be having a staff recognition event during the course of the regular meeting, to mark the long years of service by many (most) of the OBWB staff. Employee recognitions are commonly held on each individual's 5, 10, 15, etc. anniversaries. As we are out of sync, we will observe the actual length of service for each staff member, and then get back on the regular cycle as staff reach these milestones. Employees will receive a certificate and a gift card. Listed in order of length of service, we are recognizing the following:

Pat Field – 32 years
Anna Warwick Sears – 17 years
Nelson Jatel – 16 years
Corinne Jackson – 14 years
James Littley – 13 years
Dave Hoogendoorn – 8
Carolina Restrepo - 5

ICJ Semi-Annual Meeting

On April 8 – 11, I will be in Washington D.C., attending the semi-annual meeting of the International Joint Commission (IJC). I will be supporting the presentation on the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control on Monday, April 8th, and attending presentations on the other IJC boards at different times throughout the week. Most of the other boards are larger than the Osoyoos Board, and there is much to learn from their regional approaches. The IJC is interested in having the Osoyoos Board evolve from a Control Board to a Watershed Board, with a more inclusive mandate. They have been undertaking a study for most of the past year to evaluate the local appetite, and potential areas (like water quality, or fisheries) that a broader mandate might include. As well, I will be attending a workshop on Indigenous collaboration, and have been invited to participate on a panel for Women in Water Diplomacy (see attached brochure).

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development – Freshwater study

On April 18th, I have been invited to be part of a panel of witnesses, testifying about freshwater. This is a standing committee in the House of Commons, with members from all parties. I will be appearing remotely. We are permitted to submit supporting documents. I would appreciate hearing from the board about their thoughts on what to provide during my five-minute testimony (and follow-up Q & A).

B.C. Flood Strategy

B.C. has released its long-awaited flood strategy ([link](#)). It contains four 'Pathways', or areas of focus. Here are my brief preliminary comments. In my initial read, it seems like it is going in the right direction. And the challenge will be in how it is implemented.

Pathway 1: Understanding Flood Risk

The Okanagan is far ahead of most regions in B.C., because of our very well-developed flood hazard maps. We also have a fair amount of information about geographic areas of vulnerability.

Pathway 2: Improving Flood Governance

The province lays out a highly collaborative approach to flood governance decision making – including cross-jurisdictional and international coordination. They also plan to increase the number of tools available for flood management planning (and presumably better models).

After the flood of 2021, there was substantial pressure for the province to take back ownership of dikes because of the great cost to maintain them, and the great costs when they fail. The strategy states that *“local governments maintain authority over diking infrastructure, while receiving improved Provincial support through investments and guidance.”* Action 2.9 specifically speaks to the need to address the maintenance of orphan dikes, and tailor an approach for each, based on its level of risk. They also plan to strengthen dike regulations and update legislation related to flood management.

Notably, they also plan to look at forestry's impacts on flooding.

Pathway 3: Enhance Flood Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

Reports analyzing the floods of 2017 and 2018, recommended that the province improve flood modelling and forecasting, and it's important that they are planning further investments in these areas. In general, the Okanagan is a leader for coordinated emergency response, but needs additional supports from the province.

Under Action 3.4, the strategy proposes that they will support communities in both pre- and post-disaster flood recovery planning. Pre-flood planning is essentially what we are trying to do in the Okanagan, by reviewing the management of Okanagan Dam, and the need to change operations of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System. This is probably more complex than what they were considering, but perhaps we will be able to secure funding to continue the work under this umbrella.

Pathway 4: Investing for Flood Resilience

Funding is a problem for communities across B.C. The strategy aims to make flood funding programs more predictable, and better coordinated with federal funding programs. There are a wide range of different proposed investment areas, from flood “accommodation areas” (places deliberately allowed to flood), to managed retreat (removing people, buildings and infrastructure located in the floodway), and flood protection investments that include both gray infrastructure and “nature based” solutions. Each of these solutions would be valuable in different specific situations, and all of them come with high up-front costs that drastically reduce

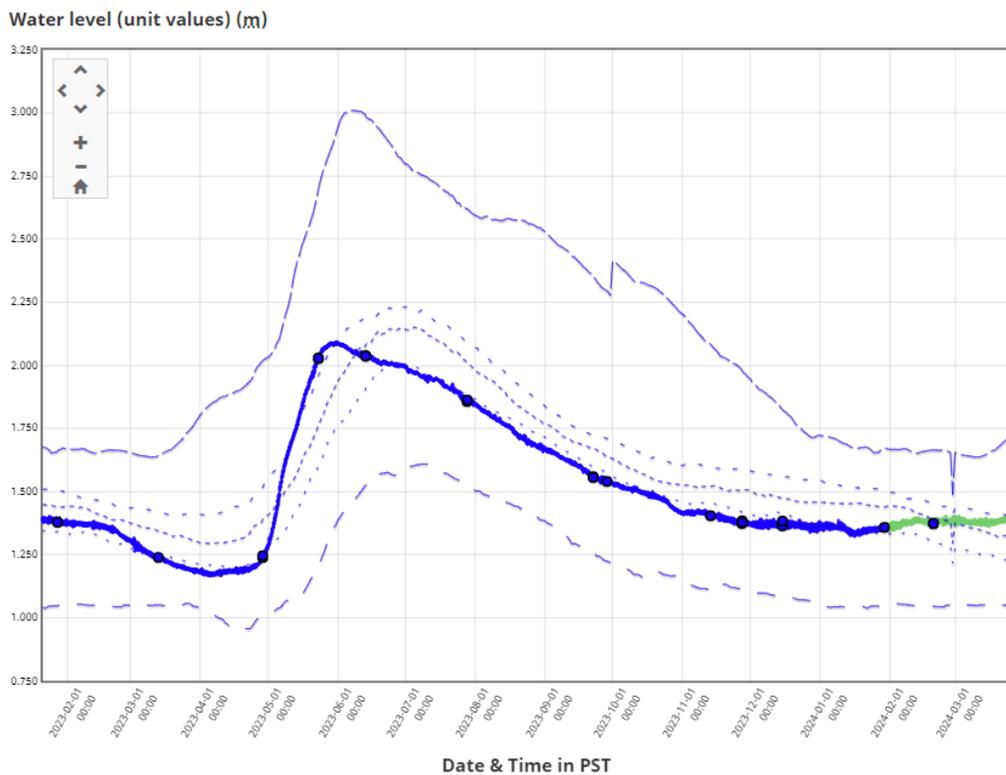
Weather Report

The April 1 Snow and Water Supply Bulletin is scheduled to be released by the BC River Forecast Centre on April 10. This is considered the primary bulletin for historic seasonal snowpack comparison. The official snow basin indices are calculated in the bulletin. The snow basin indices are a modelled value, based on the Okanagan automated snow survey stations, and a number of manually-collected measurements from snow courses. There is a helpful video on the measurement process, given [here](#).

The most recent estimate of our snowpack (March 15) puts the Okanagan at 69%. This is an unofficial estimate, based on averaging information from the snow pillows. As I write this, there is a light rain in Kelowna, but the forecast for most of this week is sun and warm temperatures. In general, these conditions do not bode well for continued accumulation in the near term.

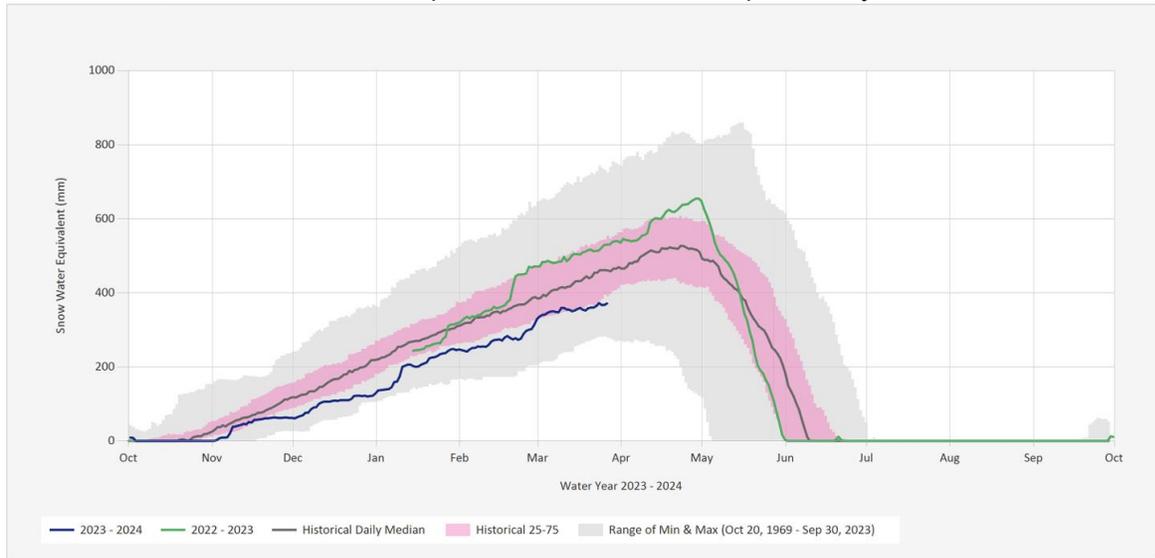
Provincial staff have been releasing as little water as possible from Okanagan Lake (maintaining minimum flows in the Okanagan River channel), using the lake as a storage reservoir—anticipating the low snow pack and an early, less-volume-than-normal freshet. Okanagan stream flow (hydrometric) measurements are also signaling the beginning of an early freshet.

Okanagan Lake level, March 27, 2024



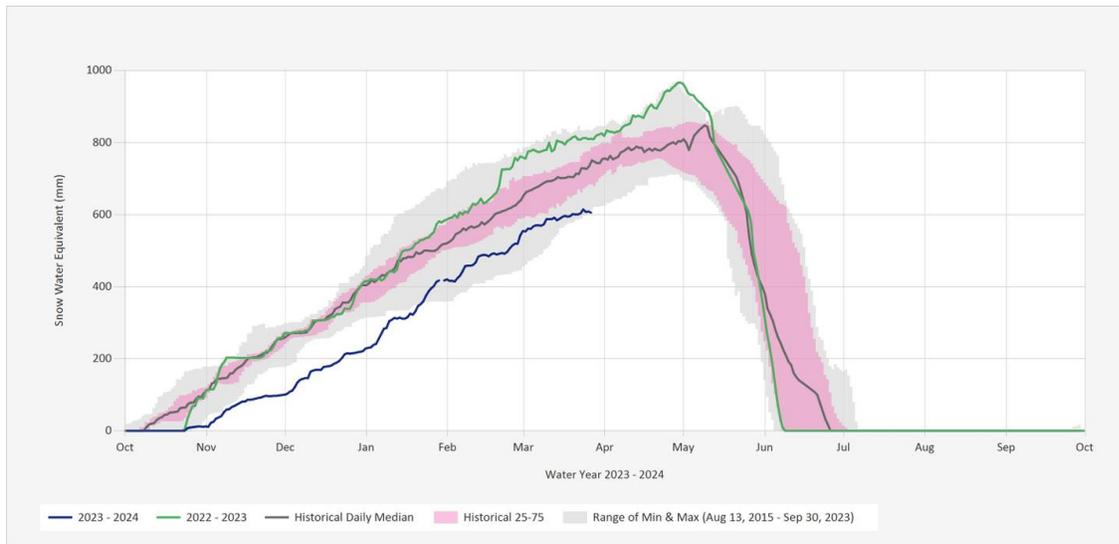
As of February 26, Okanagan automated snow pillows remain at below the 25th percentile for their historical records. The Similkameen snow pillow at Blackwall peak is also extremely low at 3% of the historical percentile.

Mission Creek Snow Pillow: 1780 m elevation (records began in 1969)
 On March 27, at the 21st historical percentile for occurrence probability.



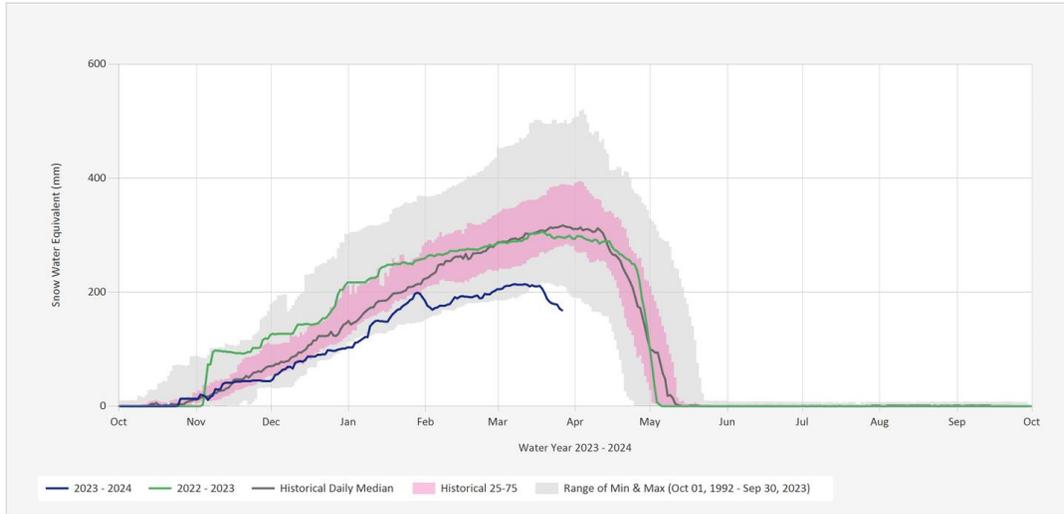
Statistics are based on the period of record prior to the current Water Year
 Statistics are only displayed for locations with at least two years of data
 Automated Snow Weather Station Graph is only available for Active locations
 Data last appended: March 26, 2024 16:00 UTC+00:00
 Status: Active

Silver Star snow pillow: 1840 m elevation (records began in 2015)
 On March 27, at the bottom of the recorded range for this nine-year period.



Statistics are based on the period of record prior to the current Water Year
 Statistics are only displayed for locations with at least two years of data
 Automated Snow Weather Station Graph is only available for Active locations
 Data last appended: March 26, 2024 16:00 UTC+00:00
 Status: Active

Brenda Mines snow pillow: 1460 m elevation (records began in 1992)
On March 27, rapidly melting, and below any recorded measurement since 1992.



Statistics are based on the period of record prior to the current Water Year
Statistics are only displayed for locations with at least two years of data
Automated Snow Weather Station Graph is only available for Active locations

Data last appended: March 26, 2024 16:00 UTC+00:00

Status: Active



Women in Water Diplomacy Network The International Joint Commission Semi-Annual Meeting

April 11, 2024 | 9:00-10:15 AM | Washington D.C., United States

The Madison Hotel – Constitution A

Pre-registration required using this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/FYcyMpqZgb>

Background

The **Women in Water Diplomacy Network** is a community of practice comprised of both formal and informal women decision-makers and experts, representing a wealth of collective experience and expertise in transboundary water management and decision-making engaged in some of the most water insecure regions of the world. Originating in the Nile Basin in 2017, the Network is now a global community of women water leaders (and male champions supporting gender equality) working collectively to strengthen women’s leadership in transboundary water decision-making. **North American representatives have been actively involved in the Women in Water Diplomacy Network since the 2022 launch of the Network’s Global Strategy ‘A Path Forward for Women,**



Commissioner Henry Lickers, Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare, Commissioner Adriana Resendez, Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner and Commissioner Robert Sisson; August '22.

Water, Peace and Security’. During the Network’s Global Strategy launch event at the Stockholm World Water Week 2022, International Joint Commission Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare endorsed the Global Strategy and encouraged its adoption across North America, saying “*there has never been a more important time for a Network like this to exist.*” At Women in Water Diplomacy Network events organized alongside the 2023 UN Water Conference, IJC Commissioners were joined by the International Boundary and Water Commission and other core partners, further building momentum to establish a North American Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

On December 13, 2023, a consortium of partners co-convoked a side event at the annual Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA) conference in Las Vegas, Nevada to **launch the North American section of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.** The milestone launch event was **attended by approximately 150 water policy experts** and decision makers from a broad spectrum of stakeholder communities across the Colorado Basin including strong representation from Indigenous communities as well as Mexican representatives and a pre-recorded video message from IJC Canadian Commissioner Phare.



Participants at the December 2023 North American Women in Water Diplomacy Network Launch.

Since the December 2023 launch event, the North American Women in Water Diplomacy Network has initiated a series of online and in-person consultation meetings to hear from key stakeholder communities across North America and North American representatives have joined the Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s Global Forum

[To register to attend the event please RSVP here.](#)



Program

- 9:00 **Welcome Remarks**
Commissioner Merrell Ann Phare, Canada and **Commissioner Robert Sisson**, United States;
International Joint Commission
- 9:15 **Introduction to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network**
Elizabeth A. Koch, Senior Manager, Environmental Law Institute & Process Support Team Lead,
Women in Water Diplomacy Network
- 9:35 **Panel Discussion: Supporting women water diplomats at local, regional, and national levels**
Facilitated by Elizabeth A. Koch, Environmental Law Institute
- **Dr. Anna Warwick Sears**, Executive Director, Okanagan Basin Water Board, IJC
 - **Zoe Rosenblum**, North American Youth Parliament for Water member and Women in Water Diplomacy Network member
 - **Swathi Veeravalli**, Director of Climate Security and Adaptation, National Security Council, The White House (*to be confirmed*)
- Invited questions and inputs from session participants*
- 10:10 **Closing reflection**
Commissioner Susan Chiblow, International Joint Commission, Canada

For further information:

1. [The Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Global Strategy 'A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security'](#)
2. Women in Water Diplomacy LinkedIn page here: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/women-in-water-diplomacy-network>
3. North American Women in Water Diplomacy Network resources: <https://www.eli.org/women-water-diplomacy-network>.
4. [After Action Report from the 2023 UN Water Conference](#) including highlights of the participation of IJC and IBWC among others.
5. [After Action Report from the North American Women in Water Diplomacy Network launch event](#)

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
April 2, 2024
Agenda No: 6.2

To: OBWB Directors
From: James Littley
Date: March 27, 2024
Subject: Deputy Administrator Report

Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group

On March 8, we hosted the inaugural meeting of the Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group. The meeting had over 100 attendees from across the interior, representing First Nations, local government staff and electeds, provincial staff, marina operators, chambers, lakefront stratas, Rotary Clubs, BC Wildlife Federation, invasive species societies and more. Chair Ireland and Dr. Sears opened the meeting, followed by my presentation on “Invasive Mussels 101,” and Martina Beck’s presentation on the provincial Invasive Mussel Defence Program. Following the presentations there was a Q&A, and an afternoon workshop.

Feedback from the meeting was very positive, with several groups highly engaged on actions for moving forward. I am in the process of reviewing, digitizing and synthesizing information provided as hand-written notes during the workshop, and I will provide a comprehensive written report in the next few months. We will also develop a feedback survey for all participants, allowing them to select their desired level of involvement in the working group going forward. I have also been asked to do a number of presentations over the next few months as a result of the working group meeting.

A few themes emerged at the working group meeting, and through an early review of the notes:

- Participants were in favour of more education and outreach.
- Most groups are supportive of mandatory inspections with some calling for a complete ban on out of province boats.
- Participants were in favour of pull-the-plug regulations or legislation.
- Participants were in favour of more funding, although there was discussion whether it should be user-pay, come from senior government, or come from already-infested areas.
- Many groups are supportive of more mussel-sniffing dogs.
- The working group could be organized into smaller issues-based committees such as an economic/tourism committee, an infrastructure committee etc. I will refine the structure further as I review the notes and write the report.

Milfoil Control Chemical Treatment Discussion and Visit to Southern Nevada

Dr. Sears and I have recently been invited by a provincial staff member to a meeting to learn about an aquatic herbicide targeting invasive milfoil. “ProcellaCOR” has been used extensively in the U.S., including in the southern basin of Osoyoos Lake. It was registered by the EPA in 2018 and was recently registered for use in Canada by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Prior to OBWB taking over the milfoil control program for the Okanagan, B.C. Ministry of Environment tried other aquatic herbicides in Okanagan lakes. The experiments at that time did not achieve the desired effects on the milfoil, and there were public demonstrations against the use of herbicides in drinking water. There are also several other types of

herbicides marketed for use on milfoil and other aquatic plants, but many are not currently registered for use in Canada. **We are not considering using aquatic herbicides** in the OBWB milfoil control program. My understanding based on conversations with provincial staff is that only the province or local governments may apply for a permit to use registered herbicides in public water bodies, but other organizations may apply for a permit in private water bodies. The process to apply for a permit requires consultation with First Nations, and public consultations, and would likely be limited to the specific area being permitted for herbicide use. It is unclear whether the OBWB would be notified if a permit was granted in a private water body in the Okanagan.

In light of the evolving conversation about aquatic herbicides now registered for use in Canada, and because of the use of herbicides up to the border in the U.S. side of Osoyoos Lake, on March 18-22, I visited Southern Nevada to attend the Western Aquatic Plant Management Society's (WAPMS) annual conference. The mission of WAPMS is "to provide a forum to share interdisciplinary information related to aquatic plant and algae identification, management and control." The agenda included several presentations on aquatic herbicides including ProcellaCOR, as well as new research about Eurasian watermilfoil, mostly focused on herbicide effectiveness.

During the conference tradeshow, I met representatives of a milfoil harvester manufacturer and a lake aerator manufacturer. These other non-chemical technologies are also used in certain scenarios to control milfoil and other aquatic plants.

The keynote speaker at the conference was from the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), talking mostly about water conservation efforts in Las Vegas and surrounding areas. Another speaker presented on the quagga mussel discovery and rapid response in Idaho, followed by a presentation from another chemical supplier on an aquatic pesticide for invasive mussels.

Following the conference, I was able to visit Lake Mead, accompanied by Todd Tietjen, Regional Water Quality Manager for the SNWA. At the lake we visited a permanent invasive mussel decontamination station, visited the marina to see the mussels, and spoke also about water quality and conservation.

I will present on my trip during the board meeting.

Milfoil Control Program

We will be completing our winter rototilling operations by the end of April. Due to the cold snap icing-in our machines, and lake level conditions in Osoyoos, we were not able to get to all of our usual areas this winter. We followed board policy to prioritize beaches and public areas, which were all treated. Due to the forecasted drought this year, Osoyoos Lake levels were brought up earlier than usual, so we worked with the Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District to keep the lake at a level that allowed us to cross under the highway bridge as long as possible. We were very grateful that they were able to accommodate us, giving us two weeks more to work in the central and south basin. There is another boat launch at the s̓wíw̓s Provincial Park (formerly Haynes Point), but it is unusable for our machines as a large berm of gravel has built up between the launch and open water. If that launch were restored, we would no longer have access issues during high water. I will contact provincial staff to see if restoring that access is a possibility in the future.

New Amphibious Harvester

The new amphibious milfoil harvester arrived ahead of schedule on March 11. Milfoil Supervisor Pat Field, Milfoil Operator David Hoogendoorn, and I, offloaded the machine, completed the inspection, tested all its components in the yard, determining that it functions as intended. As per our supply contract, following the acceptance we released 90% of the payment to the manufacturer. The remaining 10% will be held back for a further year as assurance against the machine's warranty.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
April 2, 2024
Agenda No: 6.3

To: OBWB Directors
From: Nelson R. Jatel
Date: March 27, 2024
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (technical advisory body to the OBWB)

Last Month's Recap: The March council meeting was cancelled due to the Environmental Flows Conference, which was held March 13 to 15.

Upcoming Council Meeting - April 14: We are preparing for an insightful session covering Okanagan's water resources status and featuring a special virtual presentation by representatives from the newly established Canadian Water Agency (CWA).

Annual Okanagan Water Supply Update: A summary presentation will provide an overview of the current state and trends of the Okanagan water supply, addressing critical concerns and potential strategies for what is trending to be a dry year.

Introduction to the Canadian Water Agency (CWA): We are pleased to welcome:

- **Ute Holweger**, Senior Advisor for Water Strategies at CWA
- **Meghan Sullivan**, Acting Director of External and Indigenous Affairs for the CWA Transition Team

Their presentations will cover the CWA's mission to enhance freshwater management across Canada through strategic federal collaborations and meaningful partnerships with provinces, territories, and Indigenous communities. The agency aims to tackle the country's pressing freshwater challenges and seize opportunities for sustainable management.

CWA's Core Focus:

- The Canada Water Agency, an evolving part of Environment and Climate Change Canada, champions federal initiatives for freshwater management.
- A commitment made in the 2023 Budget outlines plans to legislate the Agency's formation as an independent entity.
- Key goals include improving freshwater outcomes, restoring and safeguarding nationally significant water bodies, and enhancing water quality.
- Regional Freshwater Ecosystem Initiatives target areas of national importance, including the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg, and the Fraser River. This does **NOT** include the Okanagan or the greater Columbia basin.
- With headquarters in Winnipeg and regional offices nationwide, the CWA is positioned to address diverse freshwater issues.

This session promises valuable insights into national efforts and local impacts concerning water management.

Environmental Flow Conference - highlights

Hosting and chairing the 2024 Environmental Flows Conference was an enriching experience. The event was a resounding success, drawing in over 180 attendees and generating a waiting list of over 15. It stood out for its unprecedented engagement with Indigenous communities, featuring more than 41 Indigenous participants and receiving valuable contributions from Grand Chief Stuart Phillip, Coun. Jordan Coble, and Dawn Russel. With a budget of around \$240,000, supported by corporate sponsors and registration fees, we achieved several remarkable milestones. Notably, our team secured a significant grant from the B.C. Real Estate Foundation, ensuring robust First Nations participation, created space for meaningful water management conversations and enhanced the community of water professionals trying to resolve complex water issues in the face of climate change, land-use change, and increasing population.

The conference showcased the expertise of 28 leading Canadian experts, chosen from 38 proposals, enriching our discussions with a broad array of perspectives. Poster presentations added depth and diversity to the discourse, while professional facilitators employed Strategic Foresight techniques to foster participant engagement, trend analysis, and the development of four future scenarios. A standout moment was Karilyn Alex's keynote speech at the gala dinner, where she delivered an inspiring narrative on Okanagan environmental flows and their crucial role in the salmon's return to the Okanagan. This event highlighted current ecological challenges and opportunities and paved the way for meaningful future actions.

Conference Proceedings Summary

Our team, along with various conference organizing committees, is crafting a comprehensive document to encapsulate the essence of the conference, its key findings, and forward-looking recommendations. Drawing from the rich insights and feedback garnered during the conference, several actionable strategies for the future emerging:

1. **Embrace Collaborative Governance:** Future initiatives should investigate collaborative governance models in water management observed globally. Such exploration will spark local innovation and enhance decision-making processes.
2. **Leverage Digital Media:** Integrating digital media like videos and documentaries into our outreach efforts can broaden our impact, serving as educational tools to raise awareness among a diverse audience.
3. **Convene a Strategy Session:** Organizing a post-conference strategy session to consolidate various perspectives will be pivotal in crafting a comprehensive action plan to tackle water-related challenges and seize opportunities.
4. **Enhance Communication and Dialogue:** Strengthening the lines of communication among all actors, including environmental groups, governmental bodies, and economic interests, is imperative. This includes enhancing education, training, and data sharing to ensure informed participation in water management.
5. **Promote Real-time Data Sharing:** Making informed decisions requires access to the latest data. Establishing mechanisms for real-time data sharing and reaching consensus on assessment methodologies will underpin effective policy and practice.
6. **Employ Storytelling for Engagement:** Utilizing storytelling and public awareness campaigns can significantly contribute to educating and mobilizing public support for water conservation efforts, capturing the imagination and commitment of a wider audience.
7. **Build Trust and Relationships:** It is fundamental to nurture trust and foster enduring relationships across communities and stakeholders. Harmonizing traditional knowledge with scientific approaches promises a sustainable future for water resources, fostering reconciliation and collaborative endeavours.

These recommendations are designed to foster greater collaboration, enhance knowledge dissemination, elevate public consciousness, and refine water management practices, all of which aim to address the pressing challenges faced by our water systems.

Okanagan Hydrometric (Stream Flow) Monitoring

Throughout March, we've maintained ongoing stream flow and water level monitoring, focusing on producing reliable data. Hydrometric data, which includes measurements of water flow and water levels in streams and rivers throughout the Okanagan, is crucial for several reasons. This importance is amplified by the valley's unique climatic conditions, agricultural prominence, and the growing pressures from urban development and climate change.

1. **Water Resource Management:** In the Okanagan Valley, where water is limited and demand often exceeds supply during the dry summer, hydrometric data is essential for managing these scarce resources. It helps allocate water for agriculture, drinking, and industrial uses, ensuring that the needs of the population and the environment are met.
2. **Agricultural Planning:** Agriculture is a significant part of the Okanagan Valley's economy, with the region known for its vineyards, orchards, and other crops. Precise hydrometric data allows for better irrigation planning, ensuring that water use is optimized for crop health and yield. This is particularly important in a semi-arid region where water can be scarce.
3. **Flood Risk Management:** The Okanagan Valley is prone to flooding, especially in the spring when snowmelt increases river and stream flow. Hydrometric data is vital for flood forecasting and risk assessment, allowing for timely warnings and implementing mitigation strategies to protect communities and infrastructure.
4. **Drought Monitoring and Response:** The valley also faces drought conditions. Hydrometric data is critical in monitoring drought severity, effectively helping water managers implement conservation measures and drought response plans.
5. **Environmental Protection:** The health of aquatic ecosystems in the Okanagan Valley depends on maintaining adequate water flow and levels. Hydrometric data ensures that water withdrawals do not harm fish populations, aquatic plants, and overall ecosystem health. This is particularly important for the survival of species at risk and maintaining biodiversity.
6. **Climate Change Adaptation:** Hydrometric data becomes even more crucial as climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of droughts and floods. It supports the development of adaptive management strategies to cope with these changing conditions, ensuring water security and ecosystem resilience.
7. **Recreational and Cultural Values:** Water levels and flows affect recreational activities such as fishing, boating, and swimming, which support the local economy and community well-being. Further, water bodies have cultural significance for Indigenous communities, including the Syilx people. Managing water responsibly requires accurate and timely hydrometric data.

In summary, hydrometric data is indispensable in the Okanagan Valley for its role in supporting sustainable water management, protecting against natural hazards, preserving ecosystems, and adapting to the impacts of climate change, all while supporting the economic and cultural needs of the community.

Environmental Flows Conference: In Photos



MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
April 2, 2024
Agenda No: 6.4

To: OBWB Directors
From: Carolina Restrepo Tamayo
Date: March 26, 2024
Subject: **Office and Grants Manager Report**

Environmental Flows Conference

The conference that took place March 13-15 at the Capri Hotel, was a great success.

Here are some conference numbers for reference:

- Participants: 184
- Presenters: 28
- Organizers, facilitators, and volunteers: 16
- Important participation from Local, Provincial, and First Nation leaders

Special thanks to board directors who participated at different stages of the event – your presence and support was greatly appreciated. A grant from the Real Estate Foundation of BC and conference revenue allowed us to subsidize registration for First Nations participants who represent a critically important voice that we wanted to ensure we included and heard from. We had 40 participants from various First Nations communities across B.C. Additional participants came from different regions in B.C., Central and Eastern Canada, and the United States.

Content was presented in seven different sessions that included the following topics:

- Policy
- Ecosystems
- Hydrology and Licencing
- Environmental Flow Needs Setting Methods
- Data Collection and Compliance
- Land Use & Storage
- Case Studies

Karilyn Alex from the Okanagan Nation Alliance provided an amazing keynote presentation, that described in an engaging storytelling style the process of how salmon have been reintroduced into Okanagan waterways.

Pacific DataStream, an open access hub for sharing water data, whose mission is to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration, and that is an initiative led by the Gordon Foundation with support from RBC Tech for Nature, was launched with a reception during Day One of the conference.

A report and videos of the event will be available for future reference on the OBWB website.

Some photos from the event:



MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
April 2, 2024
Agenda No: 6.5

To: OBWB Directors
From: Corinne Jackson
Date: March 27, 2024
Subject: **Communications Director Report**

Make Water Work 2024

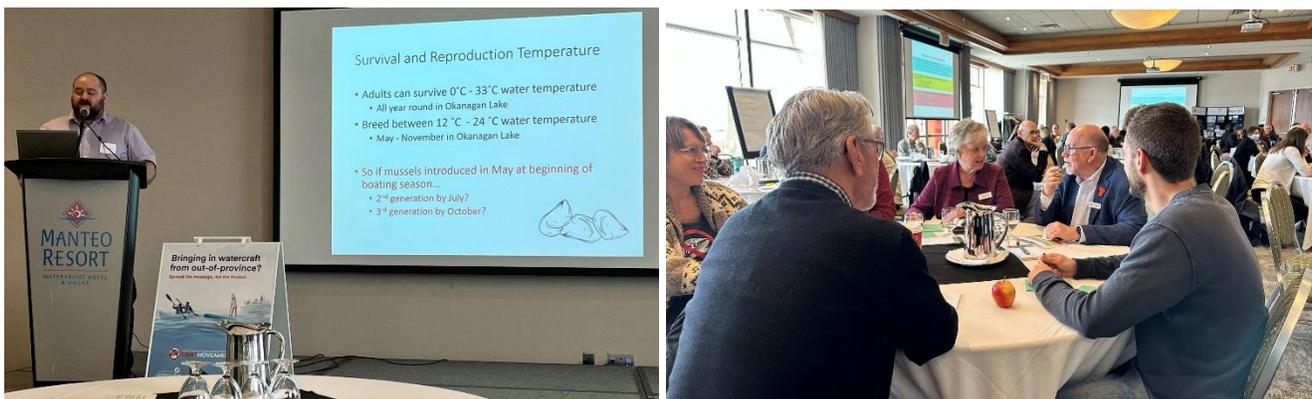
Following on the delivery of our Make Water Work 2023 Wrap-Up Report in March to Okanagan local government and utility partners, we issued our offer of matching funds for 2024. We are still waiting to hear back from a few partners, but those who have already committed include: Regional District of North Okanagan, City of Armstrong, NEW this year – Township of Spallumcheen, District of Lake Country, Black Mountain Irrigation District, City of Kelowna, Glenmore Ellison Irrigation District, Westbank First Nation, City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland, District of Summerland, City of Penticton, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen and Town of Osoyoos.

We have also extended our contract with Habit Communications for another two years. Habit will be helping with the development of the Make Water Work and Don't Move A Mussel campaigns. I have my first meeting with them about this year's campaigns tomorrow, March 28.

I will also be working with our partner, the Okanagan Xeriscape Association, to update the Make Water Work Plant Collection List to identify and add Firesmart plants that also meet the criteria as WaterWise. The new list will be distributed to our garden centre partners where Okanagan residents will be encouraged to plant appropriately for the valley's climate.

Other communications

March was a very busy month, starting with communications support to the March 8 **Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group**, with a media advisory and local media support at the workshop, social media posts, and photo and videography of the event. A few photos of the event are provided below.



2023-04-02_CD Report_Memo



Communications support was also provided to the ***siw!kw (Water) For All – Co-Creating Futures, Environmental Flows Conference***, held March 13-15. We issued a news release, available at <https://tinyurl.com/2024-EFconference>, and supported media requests. We also posted photos and videos from the event on social media over the three days, drawing engagement from attendees and those who were unable to attend but were interested in the event.

Some of these photos have been included in both the Water Stewardship Director and Office and Grants Manager reports. Additional photos, as well as videos, can be found in an album on our Facebook page at <https://tinyurl.com/4yk4tdsv>.

As noted last month, we are selling **rain barrels** (at-cost), partnering with the Regional District of Central Okanagan's Waste Reduction Office, which is selling composters. The items are available by pre-sale, March 1-31 while supplies last. We began with 250 rain barrels, but when they almost sold out within the first week, we added another 50. As of yesterday, there were only 12 left. The rain barrels are limited to two per household to ensure broader availability. Details can be found at rdco.com/compostersale.

Finally, Ms. Burnett developed an **infographic** based on the results of our water survey to help relay results to the public. We shared it on March 22, UN World Water Day. You can find an image at the end of my memo, and a link here: <https://tinyurl.com/ye27yb8p>.

OBWB-Related News Coverage Highlights

- March 8 “[Okanagan Basin Water Board calls gathering to address invasive mussel threat](#),” *CBC-RadioWest*
- March 8 “[Okanagan stakeholders strategize on regional response to invasive species of mussels](#),” *Global Okanagan*
- March 13 “[Fish at risk due to low stream flows in the Okanagan](#),” *Global Okanagan*
- March 14 “[Love of the land can unite divergent Okanagan water use interests](#),” *Kelowna Capital News, Vernon Morning Star, Summerland Review*
- March 22 “[Marking World Water Day](#),” *Global Okanagan* (clip runs 6:37-8:13)
- March 23 “[Vernon home to another lost Okanagan wetland](#),” *InfoNews.ca*
- March 27 “[Officials urged to increase efforts around invasive species](#),” *The Brooks Bulletin*

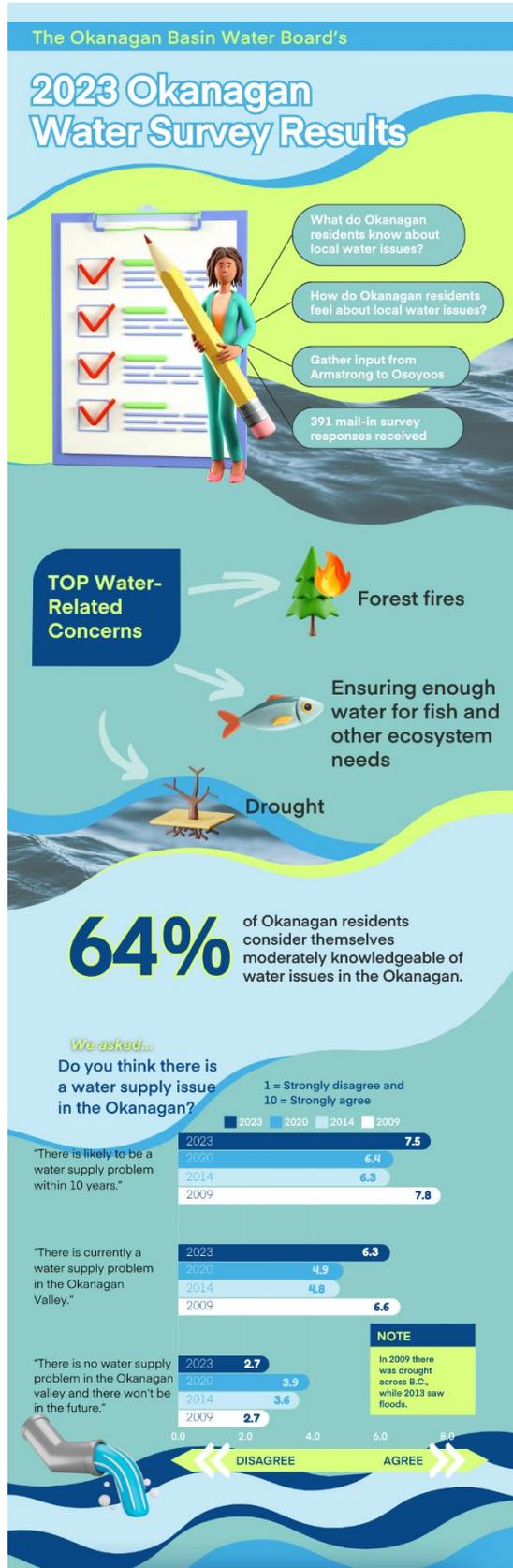
Recent Presentations

- March 12 “OBWB Governance,” to Kwantlen Food Systems Study Okanagan working group- Anna Warwick Sears

Upcoming Presentations

- April 3 “Water Sustainability and Invasive Species,” to North Okanagan Naturalists Club – Anna Warwick Sears
- April 8 “*Invasive Mussels*,” to Kal Lake Fly Fishers – James Littlely
- April 18 “*Testimony on Freshwater*” to Parliamentary Committee on Freshwater – Anna Warwick Sears
- April 22 “*Water Conservation in the Okanagan*” to Kelowna Yacht Club – Corinne Jackson
- May 16 “*River Film screening and water conservation*” to First Things First Okanagan – Anna Warwick Sears and Corinne Jackson

The infographic below is intended to be seen as one vertical piece. We have split it in two here to improve readability. As noted above, it can also be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ye27yb8p>.





DISTRICT OF COLDSTREA

9901 KALAMALKA ROAD, COLDSTREAM, BC V1B 1L6

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Email: info@coldstream.ca Website: www.coldstream.ca

"Rural Living At Its Best"

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
April 2, 2024
Agenda No: 8.1

March 18, 2024

File: 400-30

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
pm@pm.gc.ca

The Honourable Diane LeBouthillier, M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, M.P.
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Minister-ministre@ec.gc.ca

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, M.P.
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs
ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@ps-sp.gc.ca

Re: Funding for B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defense Program

Dear Ministers,

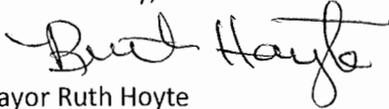
The District of Coldstream Council was troubled to hear that the federal funding for British Columbia's Invasive Mussel Defense Program may be reduced or cancelled this year.

Coldstream, BC is a community on the shores of Kalamalka Lake, where an infestation of invasive mussels would have a devastating effect on our infrastructure and shoreline/beaches. Many communities in the Okanagan Valley, spearheaded by the Okanagan Basin Water Board have been fighting against an accidental introduction of invasive mussels into the numerous lakes and waterways that are integral to our valley for several years and we must emphasize the importance, now more than ever, of continuing to fight against the invasion of zebra and quagga mussels, especially now that these mussels have been detected closer to our community, in the state of Idaho.

Should invasive mussels reach BC waters, it may cost the Province more than \$129 million annually to manage the negative impacts. This infestation will be nearly impossible to eradicate once established in our waterways and will have detrimental impacts to our ecosystems, infrastructure and economies. Damage to sensitive freshwater ecosystems, obstructed water intake channels and spoiled beaches would be devastating. Economically, spending more on mussel defense annually to delay infestation makes sense.

The District of Coldstream Council echoes the call for immediate, long-term federal funding assistance for B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defense Program and implores the federal government to reconsider reducing or cancelling funding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Hoyte". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Ruth Hoyte
District of Coldstream

Cc: The Honourable David Eby, M.L.A, Premier of British Columbia
Clifford Small, M.P., Shadow Minister for Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
Gèrard Deltell, M.P., Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change
Raquel Dancho, M.P., Shadow Minister for Public Safety
Mel Arnold, M.P. (North-Okanagan Shuswap)
Harwinder Sandhu, M.L.A. (Vernon-Monashee)
Regional District of North Okanagan Board
Coldstream Council
Okanagan Basin Water Board



Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
April 2, 2024
Agenda No: 8.2

Reference: 33975

March 26, 2024

VIA EMAIL: anna.warwick.sears@obwb.ca

Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director
Okanagan Basin Water Board
1450 KLO Road
Kelowna, British Columbia
V1W 3Z4

Dear Anna Warwick Sears:

We appreciate the continued support and advocacy provided by the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) regarding invasive mussel prevention in British Columbia (B.C.). The foundation for the success of the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP) has been through the commitment and collaboration with longstanding partners such as the OBWB.

The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship fully supports the work of the OBWB on the development of the vulnerability assessment toolkit for zebra and quagga mussels. IMDP leads have been working closely to provide technical input on the report. We see this as a valuable tool that extends beyond B.C., and we have shared it with our counterparts across western Canada.

We look forward to seeing the final published report and having the opportunity to share the report across our collective network of partners. It will serve as an important new tool to help strengthen our prevention efforts for invasive mussels in B.C. and across western Canada and the United States.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your team on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Lori Halls
Deputy Minister