

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

DATE: Tuesday, August 6, 2024

TIME: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

PLACE: Regional District of North Okanagan
9848 Aberdeen Rd., 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 June 4, 2024 held at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (page 1)

5. DELEGATIONS

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

6. STAFF REPORTS

6.1 Executive Director Report (page 6)

6.1.1 Endowment Fund Report for the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability

6.2 Water Stewardship Director Report (page 10)

6.2.1 Map of active hydrometric stations in the Okanagan

6.3 Deputy Administrator Report (page 14)

6.4 Water Science Specialist Report (page 18)

6.5 Communications Director Report (page 21)

7. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Financial Reserves Memo (page 28)

8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Letter from B.C. Minister of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship Nathan Cullen to OBWB re: Watershed Security Fund (page 29)

8.2 Email from B.C. Ministry of Housing Director Eric Nicholls to Anna Warwick Sears re: Home for People Action Plan (page 31)

9. NEXT MEETING

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be an abbreviated meeting on Friday, Sept. 6 at 12 noon, following our annual meeting at Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna.

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.



MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD JUNE 4, 2024, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF THE OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN
101 MARTIN ST., PENTICTON, B.C.

PRESENT

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt-Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt-Director Matt Taylor	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Alt-Director Dr. Sheena Spencer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

REGRETS

Director Christine Fraser	Regional District of the North Okanagan
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)

DELEGATIONS

Shaun Reimer	B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Section Head – Public Safety & Protection
Maddison Atwood	BDO Auditor

STAFF

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

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

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 4, 2024 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of May 7, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on May 7, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan, be approved.”

CARRIED

5. DELEGATION

- 5.1 Presentation by Shaun Reimer, B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Section Head of Public Safety and Protection

Mr. Reimer presented on drought management for the Okanagan Lake Regulation System (OLRS) and lake levels in the Okanagan. Mr. Reimer noted that water management decisions consider physical infrastructure and operational targets, and are guided primarily by rainfall and snowmelt that contributes to lake levels.

He underscored the variability and unpredictability of water supplies, drawing on historical data dating back to 1921, to illustrate the fluctuations and recovery periods following drought years.

In 2015, during an exceedingly dry period, provincial staff faced significant challenges to manage the OLRS, prompting closer collaboration with the OBWB to develop comprehensive drought management guidelines. This cooperative approach led to the creation of drought trigger thresholds and a systematic approach to managing water during varying drought conditions, supporting both human and ecological needs.

Furthermore, Mr. Reimer discussed the intricacies of managing water levels when the timing of water inflows doesn't align with peak demands. He showed how the fish water management tool is used for forecasting lake levels, which allows for more strategic water releases, based on seasonal forecasts and inflow predictions, to support diverse uses such as irrigation and fisheries later in the summer season.

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Reimer offered insight into the current water year's status, indicating that we are experiencing below-average cumulative inflow. He highlighted the importance of continued diligence in water conservation and OLRS adaptive management strategies used to navigate these fluctuations effectively.

Shaun was thanked for his presentation and excused himself from the meeting.

- 5.2 Annual Audit Presentation by Maddison Atwood, BDO.

Maddison Atwood presented BDO's annual OBWB audit findings for the year that ended March 31, 2024. Following some brief discussion, the board voted to receive the report.

“THAT the Annual Audit from BDO, dated June 4, 2024, be received.”

CARRIED

6. STAFF REPORTS

- 6.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears discussed the first intake of B.C.'s Watershed Security Fund, noting that while the applications are being processed, there's concern about the lack of professionals experienced in

technology and water management within the review team. This could potentially impact the assessment of applications that include technological solutions for water issues. Dr. Sears added that the letter sent by Dir. McKortoff had been received by B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship Nathan Cullen. The dialogue with the minister was constructive, with discussions on the necessity of further funding.

The board was provided with a copy of the "Mission Creek Report" based on the meeting OBWB convened in December. The report has been well received, offering in-depth information on the current state of Mission Creek, Dr. Sears added.

Lastly, Dr. Sears reported on her attendance at a recent farmer's rally organized by the B.C. Fruit Grower's Association. Discussions at the rally centred around the harsh economic circumstances faced by the Okanagan's agriculture sector due to extreme weather conditions which have led to significant crop losses. These events have intensified concerns over water availability and the potential for widespread farm bankruptcies. The potential conversion of farmlands to non-agricultural uses by external purchasers was also noted as a concern, emphasizing the importance of strategic water management and support for the agricultural community.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated June 4, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

6.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel expressed how well-received the May 7 joint OBWB/Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting had been. At the June council meeting, several members noted its value, adding it was productive and insightful.

Directors were told that three new hydrometric stations have been installed in the north Okanagan to help enhance data collection. Director Cumming asked that a map of the stations be included in future reports to better understand the distribution of the stations.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated June 4, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

6.3 Deputy Administrator's Report

Mr. Littley presented a summary of the invasive mussel working group meeting in March and the subsequent action plan, including 55 action items. A number of committees are being considered as a next step. These include a Communications and Outreach Committee, a Funding and Resource Development Committee, a Gap Analysis and Research Committee, and a Regional Emergency Planning Committee.

In reference to previous board discussions around supporting an additional mussel sniffing dog, Mr. Littley proposed the board request that federal government funding equal provincial contributions.

"THAT the board call on federal government to match provincial funding."
CARRIED.

The report moved on to address the Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grants program review, which has been completed with input from local governments. Proposed amendments to the program were put forth, particularly some narrow exemptions to the 1 ha. policy that would not compromise water quality. These would facilitate certain types of road adjustments or park dedications, as well

as utility and wildlife uses.

"THAT the OBWB adopt the SFA terms of reference."

CARRIED

Lastly, Mr. Littley provided an update on milfoil control efforts, including the introduction of a new amphibious milfoil harvester, which is planned to be launched on June 20 at Paddlewheel Park in Vernon. This initiative, along with a new five-year permit program for milfoil control, demonstrates a proactive approach to managing invasive species in local waterways.

"THAT the Deputy Administrator's Report, dated June 4, 2024, be received."

CARRIED.

6.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson reported on the May 29 provincial drought response team meeting. It was noted that the Okanagan region experienced cooler temperatures and precipitation in May, but some streams and aquifers were still running below average. However, with a forecast for more rain and cool temperatures, it was decided to move the region to Level 1 drought. The situation is being watched closely, she added, noting interest from media and the public in the current drought situation.

Next, Ms. Jackson shared about the Make Water Work campaign launch and emphasis on promoting the Make Water Work Plant Collection as WaterWise and, working with FireSmartBC, now also approved with FireSmart designations. The launch was held in a Lake Country neighbourhood that was developed with WaterWise and FireSmart design principles and survived last year's wildfire. The event included speeches from valley mayors and councillors, the Lake Country fire chief, and Ellison FireSmart coordinator whose team helped protect the neighbourhood from fire. Residents also attended, as well as several news outlets.

The board was also updated on the launch of this year's "Don't Move a Mussel" (DMM) campaign, using strategically placed billboards and more. A contract is in place with Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society to help promote the DMM message and a variety of materials have been provided to them for distribution. Ms. Jackson added that a call has gone out to local governments in the region with an offer to subsidize additional boat launch signs, like past years.

"THAT the Communications Director's Report, dated June 4, 2024, be received."

CARRIED.

6 CORRESPONDENCE

"The only correspondence to note is the letter from the OBWB to Minister Cullen, attached in the agenda package"

7 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be on Tuesday August 6, 2024 at 10 a.m. at the Regional District of North Okanagan.

8 ADJOURNMENT

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 4, 2024 be adjourned at 1:18 p.m."

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 6.1

To: OBWB Directors
From: Anna Warwick Sears
Date: July 31, 2024
Subject: Executive Director Report

Changes to OBWB Appointments

There have been two changes to the slate of OBWB directors appointed by the Okanagan's regional districts. Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) Dirs. Fleming and Fraser have exchanged places with each other for OBWB director and alternate, and Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) has reduced their number of alternates to one. The current OBWB directors and alternates are:

Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO): Dir. Victor Cumming, Dir. Rick Fairbairn, Dir. Bob Fleming (alternates: Dir. Christine Fraser and Dir. Shirley Fowler).

Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO): Dir. Charlie Hodge, Dir. Blair Ireland, Dir. Wayne Carson (alternate: Dir. Kevin Kraft).

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS): Dir. Sue McKortoff, Dir. Doug Holmes, Dir. Rick Knodel (alternates: Dir. Adrienne Fedrigo, Dir. Subrina Monteith, Dir. Matt Taylor).

Water Management Appointments: Dir. Bob Hrasko - Water Supply Association of BC (alternate: TBD), Dir. Jeremy Fyke - Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (alternate: Sheena Spencer), Dir. Tim Lezard - Okanagan Nation Alliance (alternate: TBD).

Annual Report/Tracking Measures/Strategic Plan

We are close to completing the 2024 Annual Report. It will be presented at the OBWB's AGM on September 6th, in Kelowna. I am also working on the tracking measures report for the 2024 fiscal year, including a five-year evaluation to see what has changed during our strategic planning period. I will be working on the Strategic Plan this month, and will have it available for the board's review in September.

UBCO Endowment Fund Update

In 2010, at the request of the Okanagan Regional Districts, the OBWB provided five years of funding (\$100,000/year) to unlock a provincial grant to UBC Okanagan, to endow a BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Management. Since that time, we have received annual reports, and the latest is attached. The fund has grown substantially since that time, due to investments and earned interest, and it currently provides more than \$150,000/year in research funding.

Final Summary of Remediation on Truck Fire

On July 31, I received the following update from the Environmental Emergency Branch of B.C.'s Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, regarding the chemical fire in West Kelowna, near Trepanier Creek, on November 17, 2023.

“Remediation Plan (previous update): Based on the initial field assessment, a high-level remediation plan has been prepared to address the known areas of impact and to further delineate any unidentified impacted areas. This will include the removal of impacted soils along the highway based on visual indications of impact. Following removal of soils, confirmatory samples will be collected to ensure there is no residual contamination. The drainage basin and culvert outflow will be flushed, collecting all material to remove residual sources of impacts. If water flow allows, a sample will be collected from the culvert to assess residual water quality following the cleaning of the culvert. Additional samples will be collected from Trepanier Creek to ensure that these waters, and the downstream drinking water intakes, remain unimpacted by the incident. Should any additional contamination or impacts be found during the remedial works, this will trigger additional remediation and follow up sampling as needed. Initial remedial works were expected to start by February 22, 2024 and we are currently awaiting an update on the findings. EEP staff will review the results of remedial work and ensure that the environment is recovered to within acceptable standards.

Remediation Summary: There were observations of discoloured soils along the roadway and through the culvert, where the fire extinguishing water had flowed. Any soils with visual impacts were removed and samples were collected after the removal to confirm that contaminants of concern were effectively managed. The confirmatory samples do have some residual exceedances of chloride, sodium, and zinc, however all three of these are attributable to roadway runoff. While above guidelines, concentrations of chloride and sodium were considerably reduced following remediation works. Zinc concentrations were higher in the second round of sampling, but didn't exceed guidelines in the initial assessment, reinforcing the potential roadway source.

Water sampling in Trepanier Creek did not have any exceedances in standards or guidelines except for copper (elevated background), and results are consistent with an upstream background sample, including chloride, sodium, and zinc. There was no detection of cyanide or methanol, and ammonia was consistent with upstream concentrations.”

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 6.1.1



2023–2024 Report

PREPARED FOR

Okanagan Basin Water Board



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Development & Alumni Engagement
500 - 5950 University Blvd, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3
(604) 822-8900 | info@give.ubc.ca

FUND DESCRIPTION

Established by a lead gift from the Okanagan Basin Water Board, the endowment supports the Chair who focuses on assessing the impact of climate change and population growth on biodiversity and key industries in the Okanagan basin. Centred in the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, the Chair develops innovative policy solutions to enhance water management in BC and beyond.

Year established:
2011

FUND FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Total new donations and UBC contributions to principal in 2023/24 fiscal year:	\$600
Total donations and UBC contributions to principal since establishment:	\$2,501,716
Market value as of March 31, 2024:	\$4,057,076
3-year average market value as of December 31, 2023:	\$3,784,665
Spending allocation for 2024/25 (4% of 3-year average market value):	\$151,393

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 6.2

To: OBWB Directors
From: Nelson R. Jatel
Date: July 30, 2024
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

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

The Council does not meet over the summer months of July and August.

September 12th Council meeting

Our next Water Stewardship Council meeting is set for Sept. 12, 12 to 4 p.m., at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna. Board members are always welcome and encouraged to attend. September's meeting agenda includes a comprehensive discussion on the current state of the basin's water supply and its impacts, including fire risks, fish flows, and water restrictions. We will examine how this year's low snowpack has affected the summer and could impact the fall. The meeting will feature a panel of experts providing insights into the summer hydrology.

Additionally, we will review the recent discussion paper drafted by the council's Policy Committee, titled "Robust Okanagan Water Infrastructure: Now and Future." This discussion paper addresses the current and future challenges in maintaining and enhancing the region's water infrastructure. The four council committees, Building Ethical Space for Water Stewardship, Water Quality & Health, Policy, and Water Demand & Supply Committee, will reconvene in September.

Okanagan Hydrometric (Stream Flow) Monitoring Program [Map attached]

The OBWB's Hydrometric Monitoring Program is crucial for sustainable water management in the valley. It safeguards against natural hazards, preserves ecosystems, and helps adapt to climate change impacts, all while supporting the economic and cultural needs of the Okanagan.

Throughout the summer, we monitored stream flows and water levels across the Okanagan, producing reliable hydrometric data for sustainable water management. Our map of hydrometric stations (see attached) is continually being updated, and this visualization allows our team to identify data gaps strategically, ensuring comprehensive capture of real-time and long-term stream flow information to support current and future water management needs. The summer installations at Irish Creek, Nashwito Creek, and Ewer Creek have been completed, and we are now monitoring these systems.

Environmental Flows & Critical Flow Thresholds in Okanagan Streams

With new hydrometric data and previous efforts to determine stream-specific flows needed for fish and the ecosystem, the OBWB, in partnership with the ONA Fishery Department, continues to improve our

communication tool, providing context for real-time hydrometric data alongside stream-specific fish and environmental flows. The B.C. government defines environmental flows as the quantity, timing, and quality of water flows required to sustain freshwater ecosystems and the human livelihoods and well-being that depend on these ecosystems.

In July, several Okanagan streams exhibited stress (see Figure 1 below). Presenting this data as part of the broader conversation about low summer flows highlights the importance of collecting real-time, credible hydrometric data. This effort supports Okanagan communities and our ecosystem in making informed water management decisions.

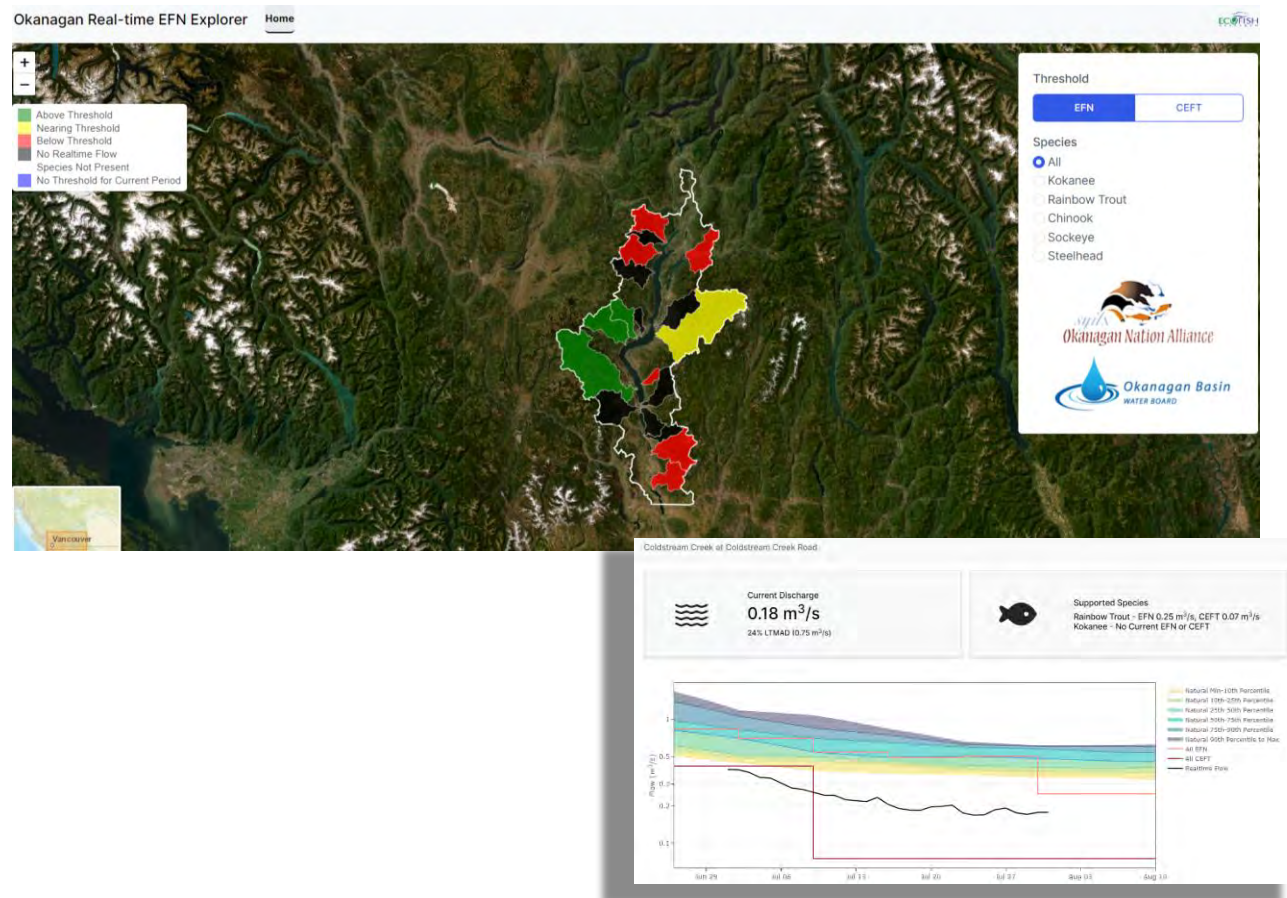
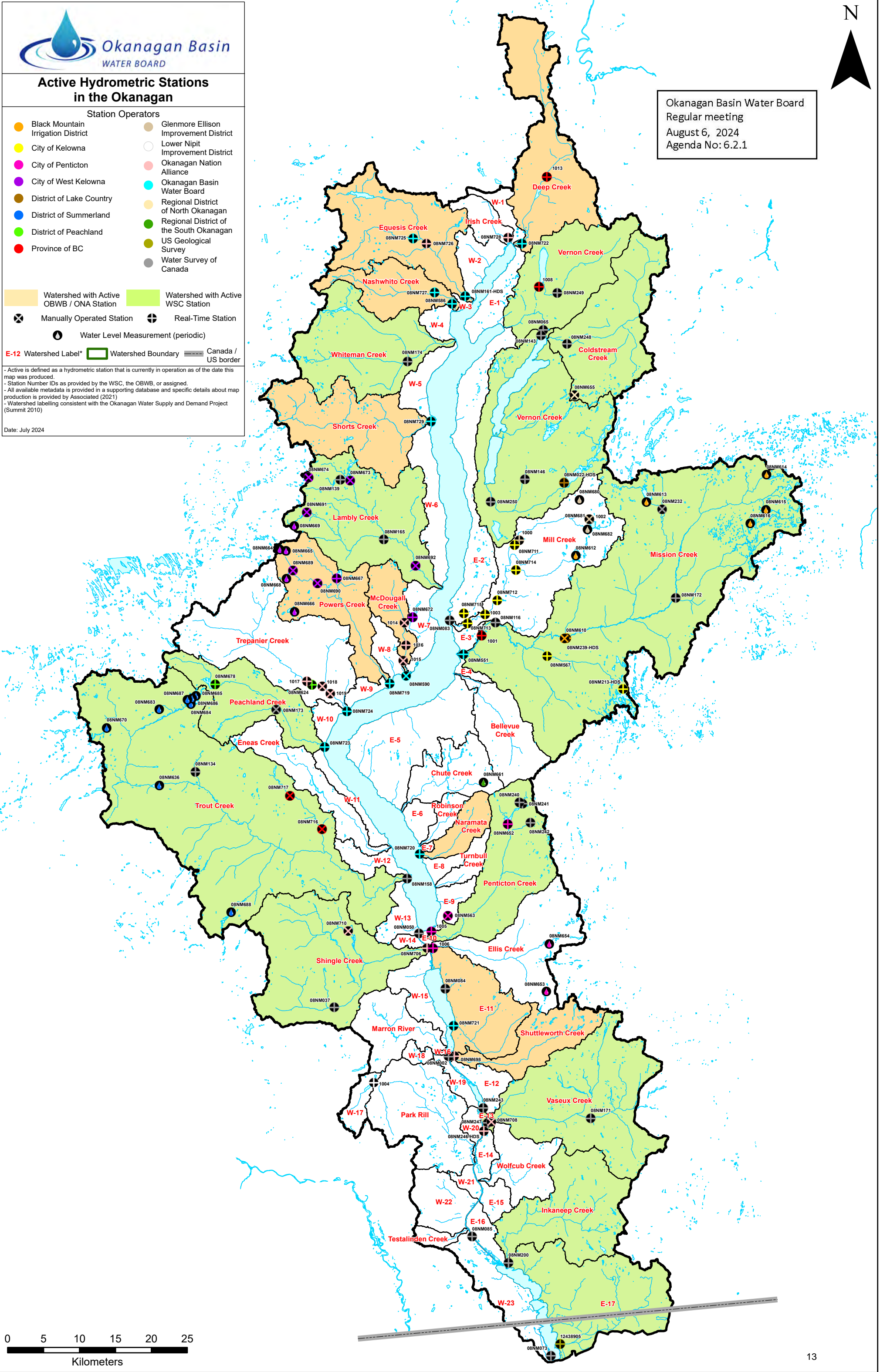


Figure 1. Snapshot of Okanagan stream health from the perspective of water flows meeting Environmental Flow Needs, with a call-out of Coldstream Creek data in the bottom right (July 30, 2024).

Kick-Starting a Two-Year Project: The Value of Agricultural Water Use in the Okanagan Valley

We are thrilled to announce the addition of Alberto Ceccacci as the successful MITACS grant recipient for a two-year contract position at UBCO, starting in early September. Alberto, who holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and Rural Appraisal from the University of Bologna, brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the economic valuation of ecosystem services and climate change adaptation in agriculture. This project is a partnership with UBCO, RDCO, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, the BC Fruit Growers Association, and several local governments. It aims to evaluate the economic value of irrigated agriculture in the Okanagan. Key outcomes of this project include a comprehensive Cost-Benefit Analysis for selecting development scenarios, an Economic Impact Analysis, and multiple reports that will inform water policy and infrastructure investments in the region. To support this research, we will form an advisory committee comprised of partners and subject matter experts. This project will deliver critical insights into agricultural water needs today and in the future, ensuring sustainable water use in the face of climate change and population growth.



MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 6.3

To: OBWB Directors
From: James Littlely
Date: July 29, 2024
Subject: Deputy Administrator Report

Invasive Mussel Update

In July I participated in the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) summit in Whistler, contributing as a panelist to their Invasive Species Working Group. At the summit I showcased the OBWB's "Preparing for Invasive Mussels: Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure," handing out 80 copies for distribution throughout the Pacific Northwest. I have since been contacted for more copies for distribution to utility and irrigation managers from across the western U.S.

Based on information provided during the conference and several conversations with elected representatives and staff from jurisdictions throughout the Pacific Northwest, I recommend that the board send letters to Hon. Nathan Cullen, B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, and Hon. Grant Hunter, MLA and head of Alberta's new Invasive Mussel Task Force, to encourage cross-provincial cooperation on establishing a "Western Canada Mussel-Free Zone," including Alberta, B.C., and potentially Saskatchewan, banning watercraft from outside these provinces. This strategy would support tourism within the zone while curtailing the risk of mussels being introduced on watercraft from Ontario, Manitoba and other infested areas.

I further recommend that the board renew our call for mandatory inspections using existing provincial inspection stations, supplemented by certified inspectors/decontaminators from the private sector who could offer this paid service to watercraft owners who are not stopped at a roadside inspection station. This model is similar to one used in Arizona and would ensure that watercraft brought into the province along routes that are not monitored, out of inspection season, or outside of inspection hours, are still required to have an inspection prior to launching in B.C. waters. Proof of previous inspections could be provided through an app, receipt, stamp or sticker provided to the watercraft owner.

Alberta also recently increased their fines related to invasive mussels, including \$4,200 for failure to stop at an inspection station. B.C. is currently reviewing their fines, and I recommend that the OBWB's letter propose that B.C. at least match Alberta's fine levels.

Finally, the letters should ask both B.C. and Alberta to explore all options to secure more federal support for the prevention of invasive mussels. With the exception of action by Parks Canada within national parks, the government of Canada, and specifically Fisheries and Oceans Canada has been largely absent on the file for several years. The majority of federal Aquatic Invasive Species funding for freshwater has been allocated to the Great Lakes, with little or no funding to Western Canada and the Pacific, except against already introduced saltwater European Green Crab. DFO cannot protect Pacific salmon populations without protecting their freshwater habitat.

Recommendation:

THAT OBWB send letters to Minister Cullen and MLA Hunter as outlined above.

Milfoil program update

Milfoil harvesting is complete for the summer in Wood and Osoyoos Lakes, with work continuing around Vernon in Okanagan Lake. We are also awaiting approval from Osoyoos Indian Band to harvest in Vaseux Lake before Aug. 31. We continue to conduct surveys as notified about milfoil growth throughout the valley, but this July has seen relatively little growth in most areas likely due to the cooler spring weather.

Amphibious Harvester Naming Contest

Following the public event launching the new amphibious harvester in June, we have received several submissions for the naming contest. We have attached the proposed names to this memo for the board to consider during the meeting.

1978 Harvester Maintenance or Replacement

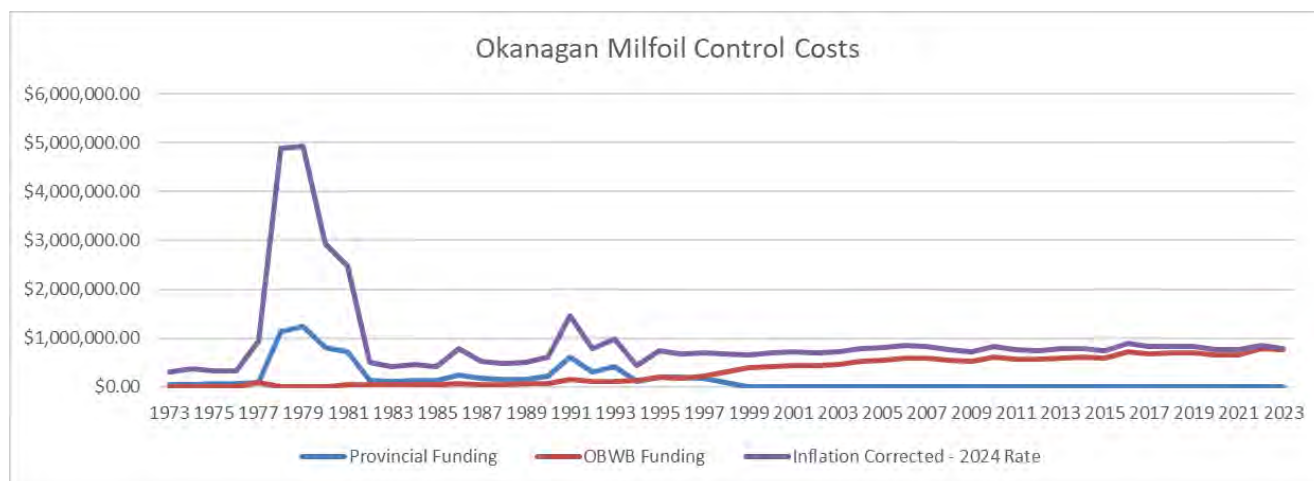
During our spring maintenance cycle, we found two holes in the hull of the remaining 1978 harvester. These holes are caused by metal corrosion affecting the entire hull, meaning that this is the last summer we can safely operate the old harvester without a major repair. Together with the milfoil staff, we explored multiple options to extend the lifespan of the 1978 machine with the only viable option being to tear down and rebuild the hull at a cost of approximately \$25,000 - \$35,000 depending on the condition of the inner hull structure. We expect this would extend the hull lifespan by at least 10 years, but all the other major components of the machine would still be at risk of needing repair or replacement sooner.

While we were exploring options, we spoke to a harvester manufacturer who informed us that our 1978 machine is likely the oldest operating harvester in the world at 46 years. The BC Government's [Core Policy and Procedures Manual for Tangible Capital Assets](#) lists a 10-year useful life for heavy equipment, and a 25-year useful life for ferries, where our OBWB Asset Management Plan calls for a 35-year lifespan for our harvesting and rototilling machines.

An alternative would be to procure a new standard harvester to be delivered for summer 2025, if manufacturers can meet that schedule. The original Asset Replacement Plan (2023) called for both harvesters to be replaced in the last fiscal year (2023-24), while the amended plan allowed us to purchase the new amphibious harvester instead of two traditional harvesters with the intent to keep one 1978 machine operating until at least summer 2027. This would give us enough time to rebuild our equipment reserve without an increase in our annual budget.

The anticipated cost of a new harvester is \$350,000 - \$385,000 Canadian at today's exchange rate (available harvester prices are in USD or Euros). The current equipment reserve balance is \$285,000 and I recommend keeping it at \$100,000 minimum after planned capital purchases each year to account for any unforeseen costs during that year. Should the board decide to move up the purchase of the new harvester, the upcoming milfoil equipment budget should be a minimum of \$200,000, rather than the \$150,000 called for by the Asset Replacement Plan.

I recommend that the board authorize the procurement of a new standard harvester for summer 2025 as this will save the cost of repairing the hull of the 1978 harvester and will be a lower final cost for a new harvester given inflation over the next two years. Since introducing an Asset Management Plan in 2016, the board has significantly upgraded our capital assets without raising the overall costs of the program when accounting for inflation. The purple line on the graph below shows a relatively stable annual budget since OBWB took over all costs from the province in 1998, despite significant inflationary and supply chain pressures.



Recommendation:

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

Alternative Recommendation:

THAT staff repair the existing 1978 harvester and defer the purchase of a new harvester until summer 2027 following the 2023 Asset Replacement Plan.

Chemical use in Okanagan Waters

On July 30 I attended a technical exchange and field tour in Oroville Wash., hosted by the Okanagan Country Noxious Weed Control Board discussing the use of herbicides in the U.S. side of Osoyoos Lake. I will provide a verbal report to the board at the meeting.

Sewer Grant Information Session for Local Governments

On August 8, 1 – 2:30 p.m., OBWB will host an online information session for Okanagan local government staff and electeds to provide updates and clarity on the recent changes to the OBWB's Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grant Program. The session will include the following presentations:

Presentation 1: New funding opportunities for lots created prior to 2007, new funding for the development of Liquid Waste Management Plans, updates to the 1.0 Hectare Policy, and how to apply to the program. James Littlely, Deputy Administrator, OBWB.

Presentation 2: Provincial infrastructure grants and the 1 ha policy. Madelaine Martin, Director, Local Government Infrastructure and Engineering, Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Presentation 3: Understanding Liquid Waste Management Plans and provincial guidelines for approval. Cassandra Caunce, Director, Communities, IPM and AgriFood Authorizations, Ministry of Environment.

All eligible local governments have been contacted, and I can be contacted directly for a link to the registration page.

MILFOIL HARVESTER NAMING CONTEST

The following names were submitted by members of the public and are considered appropriate for a publicly owned craft. Submissions are listed in alphabetical order.

Bob
Captain Out of My Lake
Dr. Millford (gender neutral)
Dredg O Nator
Dredg O Tron
Free Milly
Harvey Harvester
Mildred (Millie for short)
Millhouse Vanogan
Millie
Milly (female)
Moe (male)
OkeyPokey
Super-Duper Milfoil-Scooper
The Hippo
The Millfoil Muncher
Water Maid 2.0

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 6.4

To: OBWB Directors
From: Sandra Schira
Date: July 29, 2024
Subject: Water Science Specialist Report

2024 Drought Timeline

The Okanagan spent more than half of 2023 in drought, and that drought persists today. The below-normal snowpack over the winter meant that despite some rain in April, the Okanagan did not see a significant recovery of the precipitation deficit and entered the spring in drought. In addition to the low snowpack, above-normal temperatures caused an early melt where, for example, Brenda Mines reported the earliest-ever snow-free conditions in its 28-year record. This early melt led to an early freshet, bringing concerns for late-season water supply. These concerns prompted B.C.'s Thompson Okanagan Regional Drought Team to meet a month early and set the Okanagan to Drought Level 2 on May 16.

Thanks to some precipitation in May and an improvement in stream flows, the Okanagan was downgraded to Drought Level 1 on May 30. June — typically the wettest month in Okanagan — saw about average precipitation (Figure 1).

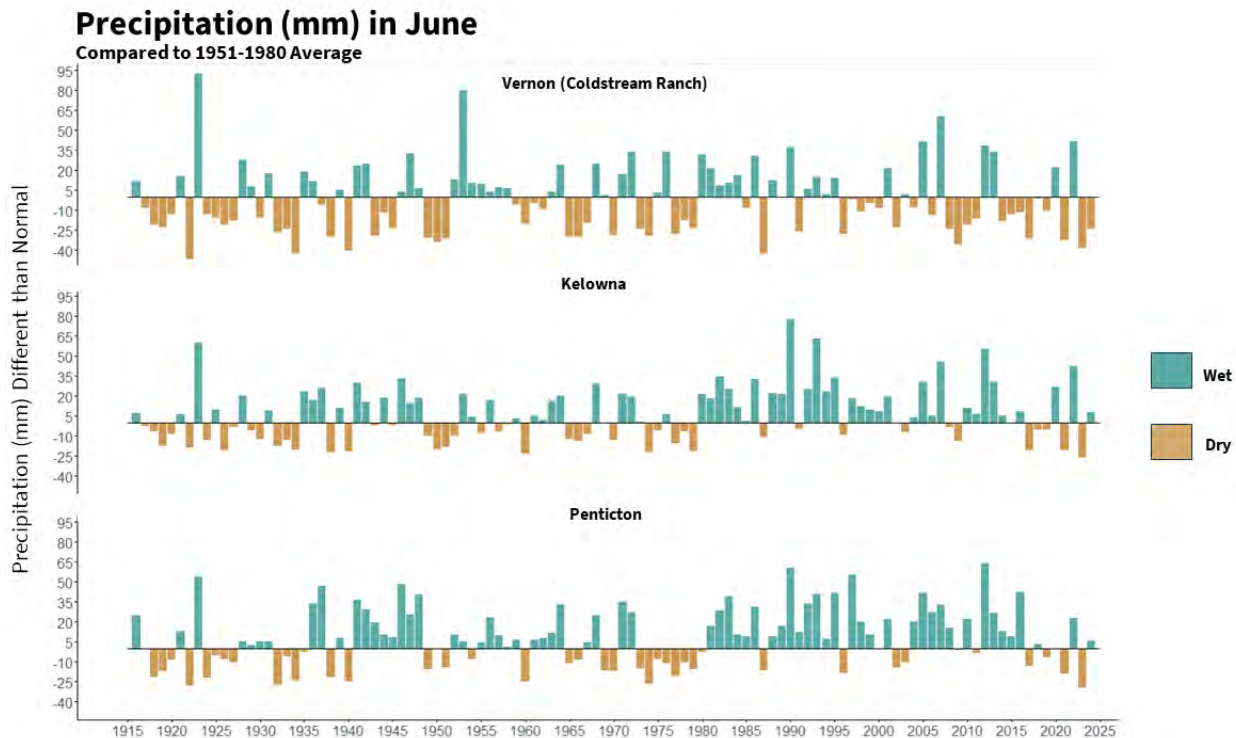


Figure 1 Total precipitation (mm) for June across the Okanagan from 1915 to 2024 compared to the 1951-1980 average for each city. Negative values (brown) are drier and positive values (green) are wetter. The 1951-1980 June averages are 49.9 mm in Vernon, 30.3 mm in Kelowna, and 31.9 mm in Penticton.

As June shifted to July, a heatwave set in. For the first half of July, air temperatures consistently stayed between 35C and 40C, unprecedented for the Okanagan (Figure 2). With the shift to hot, dry conditions, water temperatures in some creeks reached 27C (concerning for fish mortality). Many creeks across the watershed also saw a rapid drop in flows. This prompted the provincial drought level to be raised back to Level 2 as of July 17.

One week later, on July 25th, the drought level was raised again to Level 3. Stream flows across the Okanagan had continued to drop—in some cases quite rapidly—and water temperatures continued to increase. Although flows remained better in some streams with control structures or with storage, certain unregulated streams were extremely low. These low flows and hot water temperatures increased concerns about fish passage and mortality.

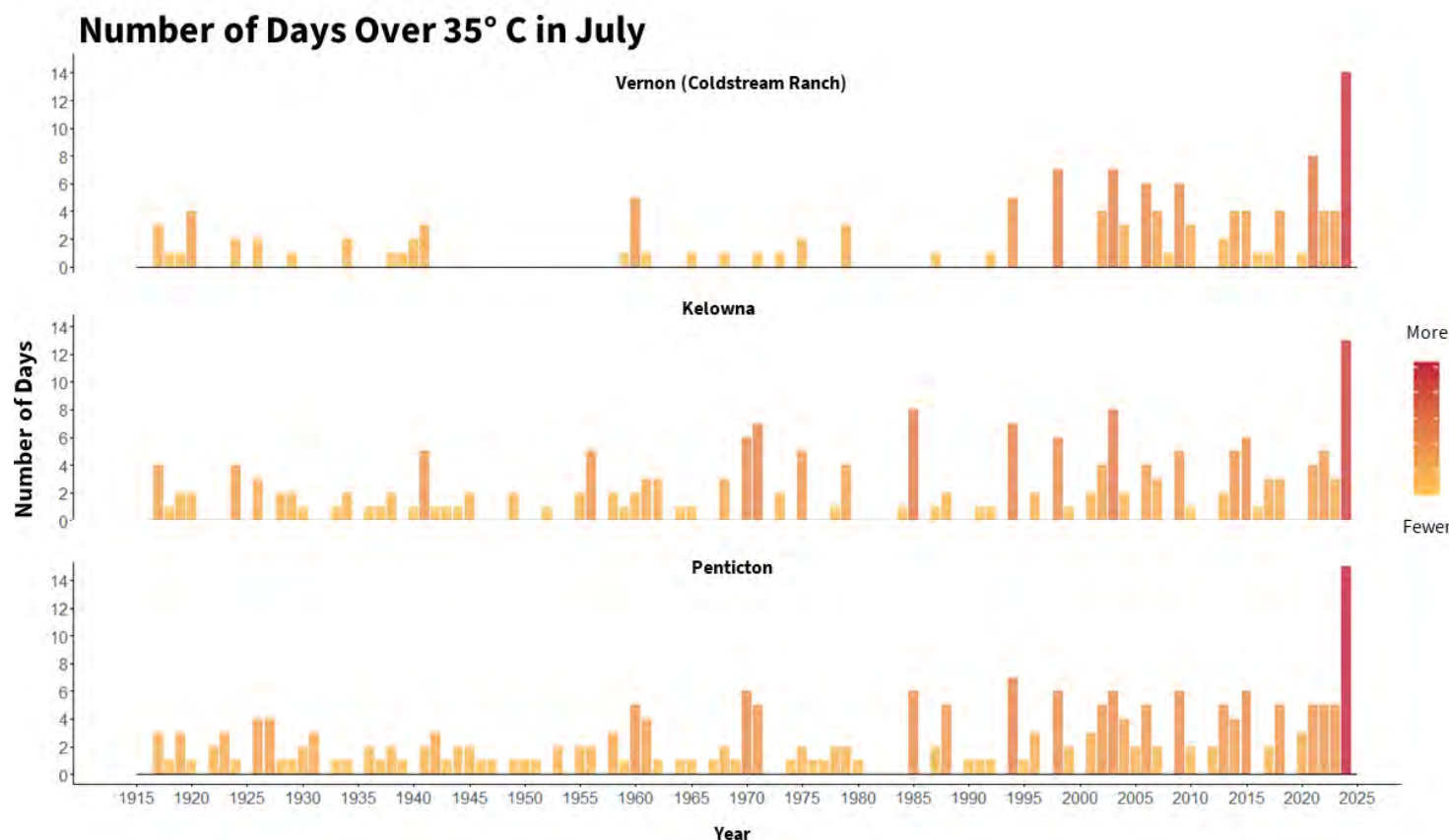


Figure 2 Number of days over 35 degrees C in July across the Okanagan from 1915-2024.

Current Conditions

The Okanagan region remains at Drought Level 3 (“Severely Dry”). Provincial drought levels range from 0 – “non-drought conditions” to 5 – “exceptionally dry.” These levels are set by a regional drought team that includes staff from the OBWB, province, Okanagan Nation Alliance, water suppliers, local governments, and more. To assign the levels, the team meets weekly to consider key indicators, on-the-ground conditions, and local observations.

According to the province: “At Level 3, conditions are becoming severely dry. Potentially serious ecosystem or socio-economic impacts are possible in some circumstances. All unauthorized use should be curtailed. Water suppliers are much more likely to impose watering restrictions, and data collection for regulatory action by the provincial government may start to occur.” - *British Columbia Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan, 2023*

While the region is at level 3, conditions vary for individual streams across Okanagan, and local water restrictions (stages) are set using different indicators from those of provincial drought *levels*. Therefore, customers of water utilities should check with their utility and comply with all watering restrictions and advice from their supplier. Water licence holders on streams and wells who are not customers of local water utilities should adhere to conservation measures communicated by the Government of B.C.

Current long-term forecasting indicates warmer-than-normal weather for the rest of the summer (Figure 3). Therefore, voluntary water conservation is encouraged to help mitigate the effects of drought. By working together, we can help reduce conflict and support agriculture, firefighting, and fish through 2024 and into the future.

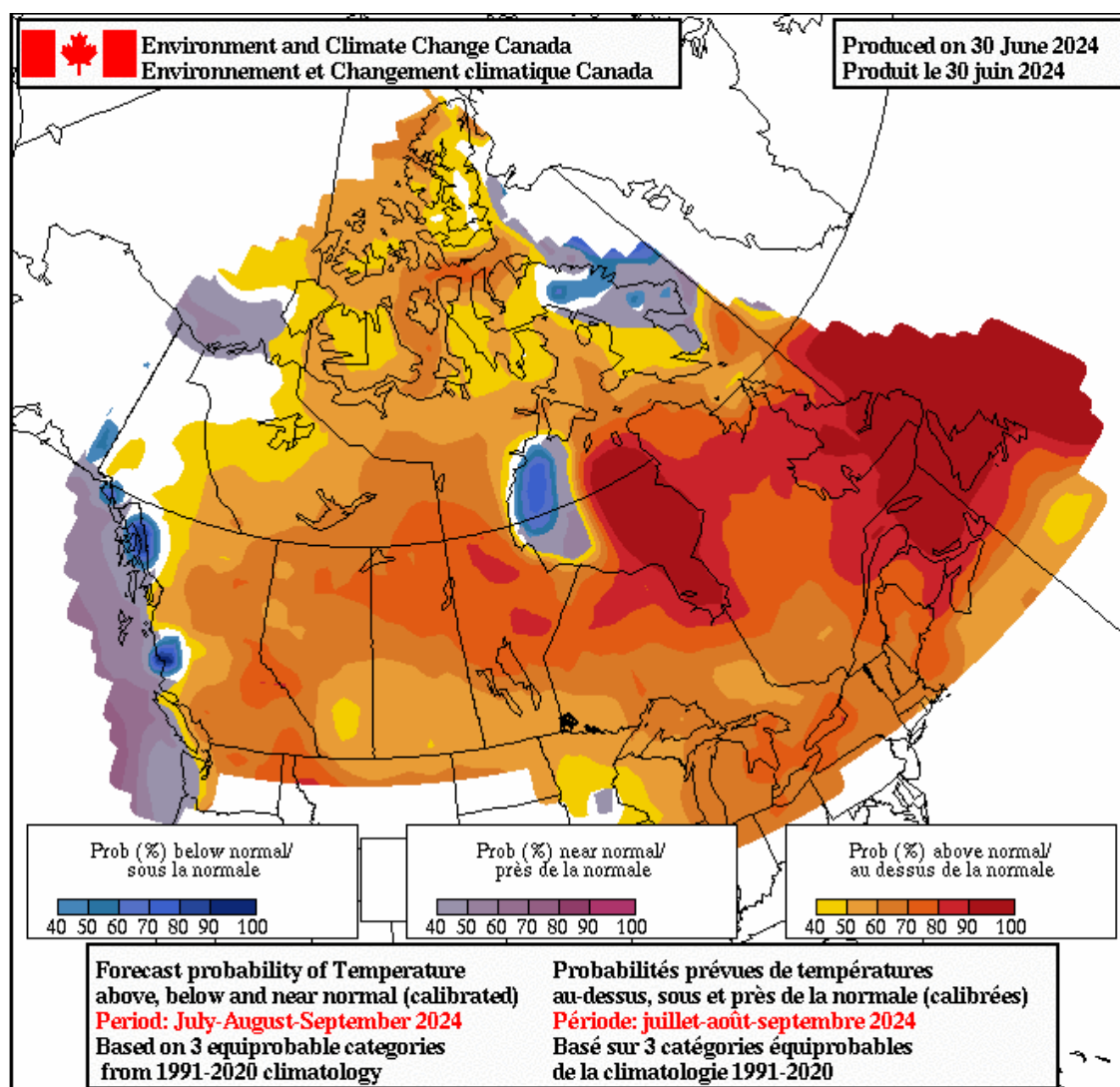


Figure 3 Environment and Climate Change Canada long-term temperature forecast for July-August-September 2024. Red areas have a high chance of being warmer than usual, and the blue regions have a high chance of being colder than usual.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 6.5

To: OBWB Directors
From: Corinne Jackson
Date: July 31, 2024
Subject: Communications Director Report

Drought Communications

As indicated in Ms. Schira's board report, the Okanagan is continuing to experience drought. Water board staff are participating in weekly calls with the Thompson Okanagan Regional Technical Drought Working Group (RTDWG) to monitor and respond to the situation. The working group includes staff from water utilities, First Nation fishery departments, as well as B.C. and federal staff in agriculture, environment and fisheries. To clarify, the Government of B.C. is the agency that makes the drought declarations, and these are made based on feedback from Working Group members who report on what they are seeing on the ground, in streams, in reservoirs and aquifers.

As part of the Water Board's *Okanagan Drought Response Strategy*, a "Drought Bulletin" is used to communicate changes in drought levels. The bulletin provides an Okanagan watershed perspective on current drought impacts to water supply, agriculture, fish, firefighting, domestic use, and ways various sectors can respond. It is emailed to utility staff and elected officials, as well as media. It is then posted on our social media channels.

Staff have sent out two bulletins since my last report to the board in June. The province dropped the Okanagan from Level 2 drought (very dry) to Level 1 (dry), following a stretch of cooler temperatures and some precipitation. However, the province moved the region back to Level 2 on July 19 and so we sent a bulletin, and then Level 3 on July 25 and another bulletin was sent. (Both bulletins are attached at the end of this memo).

Make Water Work 2024 Update

In addition to the above, I have been busy with our May-October "Make Water Work" (MWW) campaign, aimed at promoting outdoor water conservation by Okanagan residents. I have been working with our contractor to update the website (www.MakeWaterWork.ca) to be more attractive and interactive. We have added an Okanagan drought meter that shows the current state of the valley's water supply. We have also updated information about the MWW Plant Collection and its newest feature, indicating plants that are also deemed FireSmart.

We have also been updating messaging and the creative designs, as well as purchasing advertising for the campaign. The message is being promoted on billboards, buses, radio, Castanet, and TV. We are also reaching out to local residents with ads on Facebook and Instagram, YouTube and relevant websites.

We have a contract with the Okanagan Xeriscape Association to help us with face-to-face outreach. They have had an information table at a number of our garden centre partners, including Sandhu Greenhouses in Osoyoos, Wild Bloom Nursery in Kelowna and Nicholas Alexander in Vernon.

And, last week I worked with Habit to collect interviews with some well-known Okanagan residents for a series of Make Water Work videos. (A couple photos provided below.)



If directors or members of their councils or boards haven't pledged to Make Water Work yet, we invite you to [check out our updated website](#), pledge, and encourage family and friends in the valley to do the same.

Don't Move A Mussel 2024

May to October is also when we do most of our "Don't Move A Mussel" outreach since this is also when people are more likely to be launching watercraft in local waterways – the main source of invasive zebra and quagga mussel spread. Work has been done to update the website www.DontMoveAMussel to include B.C.'s inspection stations for 2024, information about the new pull-the-plug order, maps showing the most current spread of the mussels, and information about last fall's discovery of invasive mussels in Idaho's Snake River and Clear Lake, Man.

Similarly, to Make Water Work, we are sharing the mussel message on billboards, radio, and Castanet. We are also reaching out to local residents with ads on Facebook and Instagram. We are also using digital ads on YouTube and relevant websites, geo-targeting ads to those who look up terms such as "Okanagan boat launches."



As with MWW, we also did some filming last week around the Okanagan, showing the various items at risk if mussels were to be introduced, including the fishery, beaches, infrastructure and more. (Photos provided below of someone launching their boat at Kekuli Bay, and of a tour of Kelowna's Poplar Point water treatment plant.)



Other communications

The communications team provided assistance with a news conference for the launch of the **new milfoil harvesting machine** on June 12 at Paddlewheel Park and naming contest.

I also assisted with a review of the OBWB's new **Climate Indicators Dashboard** and an online media launch, held today, Aug. 1.

And, the entire OBWB team has been busy working on our **annual report** to be presented at the Water Board's annual meeting on Sept. 6.

OKANAGAN DROUGHT BULLETIN #2024-2

July 19, 2024



OKANAGAN BACK TO DROUGHT LEVEL 2

The Okanagan began 2024 at Drought Level 2 due, in part, to low snowpack. With rain events in May and June, the Okanagan was downgraded to Level 1. After this reprieve, the recent heatwave, low stream flows and increasing water temperatures have prompted the Government of B.C. to move the Okanagan back to Drought Level 2.

Okanagan water purveyors should continue to monitor supplies and customer demand closely and communicate the importance of conservation with customers as we enter a low flow period.

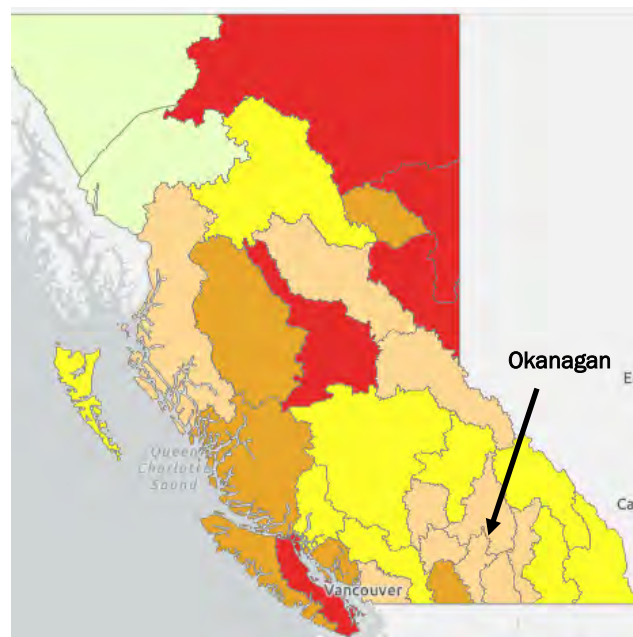
Low snowpack last winter and an early melt meant the Okanagan did not fully recover from the 2023 drought. Considering water supply conditions, the province to set the Drought Level at 2 on May 2. Thanks to some precipitation in May and an improvement to stream flows, the Okanagan was downgraded to Drought Level 1 on May 30. June – typically the wettest month in the Okanagan – saw about normal precipitation; An improvement over the past few years where June was very dry.

However, the current heatwave has come with air temperatures over 35C and water temperatures in some creeks reaching 27C (concerning for fish mortality). Many creeks across the watershed are also seeing a rapid drop in flows. In consultation with Okanagan utilities and Okanagan Nation Alliance's fisheries department staff, the province has increased the drought level back to 2 (Very Dry). At this level, there is emphasis on curtailing unauthorized water use and water suppliers may consider implementing water restrictions.

Local water restrictions (*stages*) are set using different indicators than provincial drought *levels*, and water supply conditions vary across the region. Whether a utility moves to a higher restriction stage depends on several factors, including customer demand, infrastructure capacity, and local water supply conditions.

Several Okanagan utilities have increased their water restrictions. These can be found at www.MakeWaterWork.ca. Water licence holders on streams and wells who are not customers of local water utilities should adhere to conservation measures communicated by the Government of B.C.

Provincial drought level map on July 18, 2024
Source: [BC Drought Information Portal](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov2/serv/bc/drought/)



Level	Conditions	Impacts
0	Non-Drought	There is sufficient water to meet socio-economic and ecosystem needs
1	Dry	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are rare
2	Very Dry	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are unlikely
3	Severely Dry	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are possible
4	Extremely Dry	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are likely
5	Exceptionally Dry	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are almost certain

Implementing effective water conservation strategies will help mitigate the effects of drought. Working together, we can help reduce conflict and support both firefighting and fish, through 2024 and into the future.

WATER FOR FIREFIGHTING



As temperatures rise and water supplies begin to drop in some areas, there is concern about ensuring enough water for the valley's most important needs, including firefighting.

Exterior wildfire sprinklers are increasingly being used by residents to help protect their property when wildfires break out nearby. However, widespread use of exterior sprinklers connected to shared water systems can impede available water supply used by firefighters during a wildland urban interface fire. And, this has been an issue for some fire departments trying to respond to recent wildfires.

If you have sprinklers and there is time, set up the sprinklers or leave them at the end of the driveway, and leave them for the fire crews to turn on as needed.

In the case of the Regional District of North Okanagan, residents who connect any external wildfire sprinklers (including ground level sprinklers) to a municipal source will have them turned off at the curb-stop valve and will be subject to fines.

WATER FOR FISH

The Okanagan basin is an extremely important region for fish. Sockeye, Chinook, Steelhead and Coho (in small numbers) use Okanagan tributaries for spawning and rearing. The Okanagan is also home to resident Kokanee, Rainbow Trout and Whitefish. These fish species are culturally important to the syilx nation, support a vibrant fishery, and are critical for healthy freshwater systems.

Current temperatures in many streams are warm enough to cause a significant risk of fish fatalities as fish require cool water temperatures. Likewise low stream flows can impede fish migration and lead to fish getting stranded. Ensuring stream flows are meeting environmental flow thresholds helps prevent significant or irreversible harm to the stream's aquatic ecosystem.

RESIDENTIAL WATER CONSERVATION

"Make Water Work" is an annual valley-wide residential outdoor water conservation campaign, delivered between spring and fall by the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise outreach and education program and with water utilities throughout the valley.



Recognizing that the valley did not fully recover from last year's drought, and with hot temperatures and little precipitation expected in the weeks ahead, Okanagan utilities have been increasing watering restrictions. The purpose of Make Water Work is to provide residents with effective and even easy ways to maintain their yard while being WaterWise.

One way is by using our "Make Water Work Plant Collection" which is promoted and available at garden centres throughout the valley. New this year, we partnered with FireSmart BC to note the many plants on the list that are also FireSmart.

The Make Water Work (MWW) website has also been updated. In addition to providing information on the plant collection, Okanagan water restrictions, WaterWise yard tips, and a pledge contest, a drought meter has been added on the homepage. This provides information on the latest local drought level announced by the province and how it relates to local water restrictions.



MWW messaging can be seen on billboards and buses, digital and social media, and heard on radio and TV. On-site customer outreach is being conducted at garden centre and irrigation partner businesses. And outreach materials, have been delivered to partners.

Interested in becoming a Make Water Work utility or business partner? Email corinne.jackson@obwb.ca or call 250-469-6271.

OKANAGAN DROUGHT BULLETIN #2024-3

July 25, 2024



OKANAGAN DECLARED AT DROUGHT LEVEL 3

Conditions in the Okanagan are changing quickly. Cooler temperatures and rain in May and June have given way to hot, dry conditions in July. Stream flows are dropping and water temperatures are increasing. In reviewing these conditions and the expected forecast for continued hot, dry weather, the Government of B.C. has moved the Okanagan up to Drought Level 3.

Some important fish-bearing streams in the Okanagan have low flows. Okanagan water purveyors should continue to monitor supplies and customer demand closely, and take action to conserve.

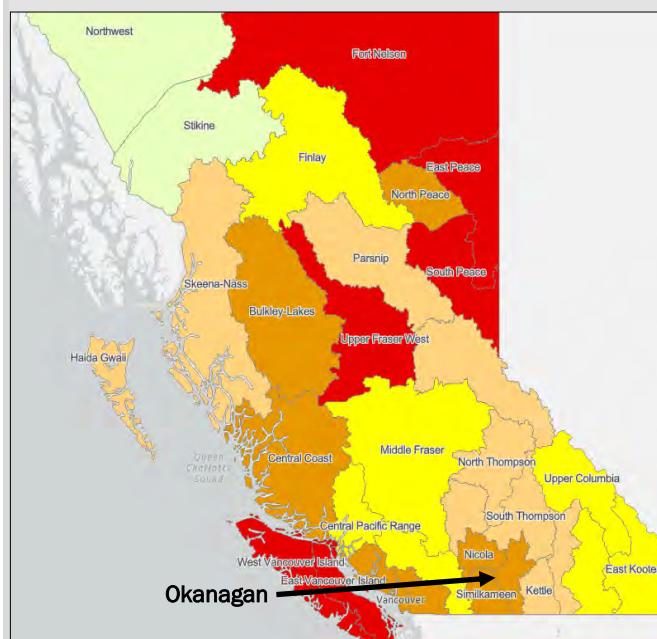
The heatwave has continued through July with air temperatures consistently between 35C and 40C and no significant precipitation. As a result, stream flows across the Okanagan have continued to drop — in some cases quite rapidly — and water temperatures have continued to increase. Although flows remain better in some streams with control structures (e.g. a dam), some unregulated streams are extremely low.

After being moved to Level 2 last week, continuing hot and dry conditions have prompted a move to **Level 3 (Severely Dry)**. At this level, serious ecosystem and socio-economic impacts are possible. All unauthorized use should be curtailed and water suppliers are likely to impose water restrictions. Utilities should be communicating these restrictions to customers.

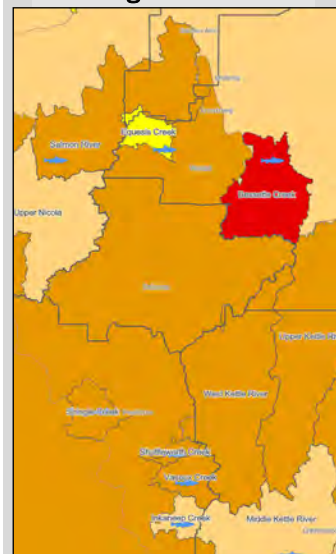
Whether a utility moves to a higher restriction stage depends on several factors, including customer demand, infrastructure capacity, and local water supply conditions. Local water restrictions (stages) are set using different indicators than provincial drought levels, and water supply conditions vary across the region. That said, everyone should be using water wisely.

Customers of water utilities should comply with all watering restrictions and advice from their supplier. Water licence holders on streams and wells who are not customers of local water utilities should adhere to conservation measures communicated by the Government of B.C.

Provincial drought level map on July 25, 2024
Source: [BC Drought Information Portal](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/droughts)



Okanagan Zoomed In



Level	Conditions
0	Non-Drought
1	Dry
2	Very Dry
3	Severely Dry
4	Extremely Dry
5	Exceptionally Dry

Implementing effective water conservation strategies helps mitigate the effects of drought. By working together we can help reduce conflict and support agriculture, firefighting, and fish, through 2024 and into the future.

FARMERS AND RANCHERS

Water is critical to ensuring a healthy agricultural sector – feeding our community and our economy. Hot and dry conditions mean crops and livestock need more water to survive. As these conditions persist, good water management is essential right now, especially where water sources do not have storage to fall back on.

Visit www.OBWB.ca/ag for tools and information about increasing water-use efficiency and responding to drought on the farm.



REGULATORY TOOLS TO PROTECT FISH

With the increase in drought level, B.C. provincial staff are working with water licencees to encourage voluntary water conservation. If these measures do not achieve sufficient results and drought conditions worsen, temporary protection orders under the *Water Sustainability Act* may be issued to support drinking water for communities and avoid significant or irreversible harm to aquatic ecosystems. The protection orders give the province the ability to restrict water withdrawals if streamflows drop below environmental flow needs (EFNs), or completely stop withdrawals if flows drop below critical environmental flow thresholds (CEFTs).

The Okanagan basin is an extremely important region for fish. Low water levels can impede fish passage to spawning and feeding areas, increase susceptibility to disease and predation, cause stranding, or result in fish kills due to low oxygen and high water temperatures. An EFN, or in-stream flow need, is the volume and timing of streamflow required for proper functioning of an aquatic ecosystem. A CEFT is a short-term flow threshold, below which significant or irreversible harm to the stream's aquatic ecosystem is likely to occur.



The goal with voluntary reductions and conservation is to avoid the need to issue temporary protection orders.

The goal with voluntary reductions and conservation is to avoid the need to issue temporary protection orders.

HELP FOR RESIDENTS



Okanagan Basin Water Board staff have been delivering “Make Water Work” outreach materials to local government and utility partners, as well as garden centre and irrigation business partners, throughout the valley. Materials include the “2024 Make Water Work Plant Collection” list that denotes the many plants also deemed FireSmart, Make Water Work tips sheet, branded gardening gloves, garden centre banners, plant and yard stakes.

The plant list and tips sheet are available for printing and distribution at www.MakeWaterWork.ca/resources.



This week, we also filmed interviews with Okanagan residents to produce a series of videos aimed at educating the public on the Okanagan's water challenges and to promote conservation.

“Make Water Work” is an annual valley-wide residential outdoor

water conservation campaign, delivered between spring and fall by the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise outreach and education program and with water utilities throughout the valley. Learn more at www.MakeWaterWork.ca.

Interested in becoming a Make Water Work utility or business partner? Email corinne.jackson@obwb.ca or call 250-469-6271.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 7.1

To: OBWB Directors
From: Anna Warwick Sears
Date: July 31, 2024
Subject: OBWB Financial Reserves Memo

The OBWB has two formal reserve funds. All funds are held in cash accounts, earning interest at prime minus 1.95%, but are liquid and available for use.

Sewerage Facilities Reserve

The Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) Grants program, established in 1976, provides grants for communities to upgrade wastewater treatment plants and install community sewer, to reduce water pollution. The majority of the grants are established as 20-year payments on interest and principal, based on equivalent Municipal Finance Authority (MFA) interest rates. Interest rates for each 20-year grant are generally updated every 5 or 10 years by the MFA, so the amount the OBWB pays out is subject to year-to-year fluctuations. This reserve is intended to buffer the effects of interest rate changes, and any other unbudgeted changes to grant obligations.

While we budget using best projections for grant retirements and earned interest, the reserve sometimes accumulates and rises in value. Since at least 2007, we have kept the reserve level at approximately \$1 million. Excess amounts in this reserve are used to offset annual tax requisitions. Our most recent year-end reserve balance was \$1,121,736. The grant program terms of reference were reviewed and updated in 2024, increasing the scope of projects eligible for grants. As a result, we expect that there will be greater demand on the program over time, and the board may need to adjust the standard reserve balance to accommodate within-year fluctuations. We will do a more detailed analysis before the next budget cycle (beginning in October), to determine whether this target reserve amount is sufficient.

Milfoil Equipment Reserve

The OBWB's milfoil control program involves the use of heavy equipment to de-root and harvest invasive milfoil from several large Okanagan lakes. The equipment is stored off season and is repaired in a machine shop leased from the Regional District of North Okanagan. Some of our equipment dates to the 1970s and needs periodic overhauls and updates. The equipment reserve is used to purchase parts and new equipment, following our asset replacement plan, as well as occasional unbudgeted expenses to the program (e.g. extra mapping or environmental studies). Our current equipment reserve balance is \$285,436. James Littlely's memo has some discussion of the milfoil reserve, along with recommendations.



Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 8.1

Reference: 42104

July 18, 2024

VIA EMAIL: corinne.jackson@obwb.ca

Blair Ireland, Chair
Okanagan Basin Water Board

Dear Blair Ireland:

Thank you for your letter of May 27, 2024, regarding the Watershed Security Fund. I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond.

Protecting water and watersheds in British Columbia (B.C.) is a priority for this government. We welcome feedback from organizations like the Okanagan Basin Water Board and commend the important work you are leading on the ground. I certainly appreciate your perspective as a local government body.

Government recognizes the scale of investment needed to support watershed security in B.C. This year, the Watershed Security Fund will flow \$7 to \$10 million to communities, spread across two grant intakes in 2024/25, to address urgent and long-term watershed security needs. While the first intake closed June 26, 2024, a second intake is expected later this year or in early 2025.

As outlined in the [Budget and Fiscal Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27](#) (“Budget 2024”), government also committed \$234 million in new funding over two years for priority infrastructure projects and programming, which improve the Province’s ability to manage water resources. This has increased funding for the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program and for local government water metering, in particular.

While there is no additional Budget 2024 allocation available for the Watershed Security Fund at this time, we will continue to work with our partners to leverage these funds to attract further investments from the public (including the federal government), philanthropic and private sectors.

As you are aware, the Watershed Security Fund is currently being co-developed and co-managed by the Real Estate Foundation of B.C. (REFBC) and the First Nations Water Caucus with the First Nations Fisheries Council. As the Fund is external to the Province, provincial staff hold an advisory role in respect of its development and management. We have noted your concerns and will convey to and discuss with REFBC, the First Nations Fisheries Council and the First Nations Water Caucus. I would encourage you to reach out to these

Page 1 of 2

Blair Ireland, Okanagan Basin Water Board

organizations directly for further discussion of your interests. To do so or for more information, please see <https://watershedsecurityfund.ca/> or reach out at info@watershedsecurityfund.ca.

Sincerely,

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

Nathan Cullen
Minister

From: [Planning & Land Use Management HOUS:EX](#)
To: [Anna Warwick Sears](#)
Cc: [Corinne Jackson](#)
Subject: RE: Okanagan Water Board letter re. Homes for People Action Plan
Date: July 11, 2024 11:03:52 AM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
August 6, 2024
Agenda No: 8.2

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Dear Anna Warwick Sears,

Thank you for your letter of June 29th, 2023, to the Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing, and Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs, regarding the Okanagan Basin Water Board's concerns as the [Homes for People Plan](#) moves forward. Your email was forwarded to the Planning and Land Use Management Branch of the Ministry of Housing. As a Director with the Branch, I am pleased to respond on behalf of Minister Kahlon and Minister Kang. I sincerely apologize for my delay in replying.

Increasing housing supply is a priority for the Province and the B.C. Government is working with local governments to simplify and speed up development approvals processes, helping to get the homes people need built faster. The Province has prioritized increasing the supply of secondary suites and attainable small-scale multi-unit housing, such as townhomes, duplexes and triplexes through zoning changes and proactive partnerships. This was actioned through legislation passed in Fall 2023 requiring local governments to amend their zoning bylaws to accommodate additional residential density.

The small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) legislative amendments require local governments within an urban containment boundary established through a regional growth strategy, as well as communities with a population over 5000, to allow a minimum of 3-4 units of housing, depending on lot size, in zones which are restricted to single family and/or duplex housing. Requirements also apply in single-family and duplex zones that already allow a secondary suite or a detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU). For areas within 400 metres of a bus stop with frequent service, a minimum of 6 units must be allowed.

For those communities smaller than 5000 people and are outside of an urban containment boundary established through a regional growth strategy, they are required to allow an additional dwelling unit in zones exclusively restricted to single family housing, such as either a secondary suite and/or detached accessory dwelling unit.

It should be noted that the legislation establishes the ability for local governments to exempt areas from the 3, 4, and 6 unit requirements of the small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) legislation, for the following reasons:

- Land protected by the *Heritage Conservation Act*.
- Land which is designated as heritage, under Part 15 of the *Local Government Act*, prior to the legislation coming into force.
- Land that is not connected to water and sewer system provided by a local government.
- Land that is larger than 4050 m².

As well, regulations which came into force on December 7, 2023, ([Local Government Zoning Bylaw Regulation](#)) establish further exemptions for areas from SSMUH:

- Areas captured within a Transit Oriented Area, as noted by Housing Statutes (Transit-Oriented Areas) Amendment Act, 2023, S.B.C. 2023, c. 48, are exempted from the 3, 4, 6 unit requirements as the TOA regulation will allow higher densities of housing.
- Land which is subject to:
 - a) hazardous conditions,
 - b) the threat or risk from the hazardous conditions would increase if the density permitted under this legislation is achieved, and
 - c) the hazardous condition cannot be practically mitigated,is exempt from the SSMUH legislative requirements. Local governments must have a report prepared by a qualified professional which certifies a) and b) above.

Local governments are required to provide a written notice to the Province of an exemption. Further information for implementation of small-scale multi-unit housing legislative requirements, including hazardous areas, can be found in the SSMUH [Provincial Policy Manual and Site Standards](#).

Regarding septic and water systems, Ministry of Housing staff are aware of the infrastructure challenges faced by communities across B.C. and the need to have homes built in the right places. Ministry staff recognize there may be potential impacts from



increasing the supply of housing that need to be considered as part of any policy approach. These impacts include increased infrastructure and servicing pressures resulting from growth, particularly in rural areas that rely on septic systems for on-site wastewater treatment. Infrastructure challenges were considered in the development of the SSMUH legislation, as noted by the exemption from the 3, 4, and 6 unit requirements if a parcel is not connected to water and sewer service provided by a local government.

To provide some background, the SSMUH [Provincial Policy Manual and Site Standards](#) was published as a resource to support local governments with the implementation of zoning bylaw amendments required to comply with the changes to the *Local Government Act* and *Vancouver Charter* under the SSMUH legislation. It establishes provincial policy expectations for local government implementation of the SSMUH requirements. .

The Policy Manual recommends only secondary suites be permitted on properties less than one hectare in size which are not serviced by a local government sewer system. As well, it is recognized that local governments have the authority to continue to allow accessory dwelling units on unserviced properties less than a hectare, and rely upon industry professionals to determine case by case scenarios if onsite wastewater management is appropriate.

Provincial regulation of sewer and water aside, local governments are the primary decision makers for new development and they are most likely to make the decisions that result in how densifying areas are served. I would encourage you to continue working with your local government partners to ensure that their planning takes into account the need to limit water pollution and flood risk.

Thank you again for your email and I hope this response provides some clarity to your concerns. I appreciate you sharing some of the planning issues which arise for the Okanagan in considering the implementation of government's commitment to increasing housing supply.

Sincerely,

Eric Nicholls

Director

Ministry of Housing

From: Corinne Jackson <corinne.jackson@obwb.ca>

Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2023 9:59 AM