

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

DATE: Tuesday, October 1, 2024

TIME: 10:00 p.m. – 2 p.m.

PLACE: Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
101 Martin St., Penticton, 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 traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

2. **INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of September 6, 2024 held at the Rotary Centre for the Arts, Kelowna. [Page 2.](#)

5. **STAFF REPORTS**

5.1 Interim Executive Director Report. [Page 5.](#)

5.1.1 Proposed 2025 OBWB Meeting Calendar. [Page 7.](#)

5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report. [Page 8.](#)

5.3 Water Science Specialist Report. [Page 11.](#)

5.4 Office and Grants Manager Report. [Page 13.](#)

6. **DIRECTOR ROUNDTABLE**

6.1 Updates from board directors on water-related topics from UBCM.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

8. **IN-CAMERA**

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

9. **NEXT MEETING**

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, November 5 at 10:00 a.m., online.

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 communications@obwb.ca for further details.*



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD SEPTEMBER 6, 2024, AT ROTARY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
421 Cawston Ave, Kelowna, B.C.**

PRESENT

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

STAFF

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

- 2.1 Late Item: Deputy Administrator report memo addendum 5.2.1 – see memo addendum in September agenda package.
- 2.2 Late Item: Tracking measures report.

“THAT the late items be received.”

CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 6, 2024, held at the Regional District of North Okanagan.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on August 6, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan, be approved."

CARRIED

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears reported on the progress made in the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan. She noted that the evaluation of annual progress over the past five years was completed. She identified that some tracking measures were redundant and that some goals were challenging due to the requirement for partnerships. She promised to provide the board with the compiled report on the Strategic Plan as soon as it became available.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated September 6, 2024, be received."

CARRIED

5.2 Deputy Administrator's Report

Mr. Littley presented to the board that milfoil harvesting for the summer is now complete, and preparations are being made for winter milfoil management. Mr. Littley also updated the board on the possible liability of damage to a water intake pipe during milfoil treatment this summer, however insurance will cover the damages, preserving the OBWB's equipment reserve funds. Mr. Littley also provided an update on the ongoing request for proposals for a new milfoil harvester to replace the current machine, which has been operating for over 46 years.

Mr. Littley provided an update to the board on the Sewerages Facilities Assistance (SFA) program, noting that the recent SFA presentation prompted feedback regarding the loss of eligibility for local governments allowing small lot development on private sewerage treatment facilities. Following consultation with the province and local governments, Mr. Littley recommended an additional exemption to the 1.0 Hectare policy to address this concern.

"THAT the OBWB approve the recommended and approved changes to the Sewerage Facilities Assistance program."

CARRIED

"THAT the Deputy Administrator's Report, dated September 6, 2024, be received."

CARRIED.

5.3 Communications Director Report

Corinne Jackson reported that she had resigned on August 19th, with the resignation becoming effective on October 18th. Ms. Jackson and Board Directors and staff reflected on her 15 years at the OBWB.

In her update, she mentioned that the staff had been participating in weekly calls with the B.C. Regional Technical Drought Working Group. It was decided on August 21st to maintain the Okanagan at a Level 3 Drought, previously established on July 25, due to the ongoing analysis of precipitation and stream flow data.

Ms. Jackson provided an update to Board Directors on Make Water Work and Don't Move A Mussel outreach campaigns – noting:

- Although the Make Water Work Community Champion has been awarded, the contest for Okanagan residents will continue until September 29th.
- The final promotional videos from Habit will be delivered before her departure.
- The FireSmart campaign expressed interest in continued collaboration on WaterWise messaging into 2025.
- Signs and ads are tapering off for the Don't Move A Mussel campaign, while boat launch signs have been dispatched for delivery.

“THAT the Communications Director Report, dated September 6, 2024, be received.”
CARRIED.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Directors reviewed a response letter from Minister Diane Leboutheillier from the Federal Ministry of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard regarding invasive mussels dated Aug 9, 2024.

Board Directors discussed OBWB's work on communications between provinces, encouraging a western-Canadian mussel free zone – it was noted that these efforts should be sustained.

“THAT the letter from Minister Diane Leboutheillier from the Federal Ministry of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard regarding invasive mussels dated Aug 9, 2024, be received.”

CARRIED.

7. IN-CAMERA

7.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(c) of the Community Charter) at 1:02 p.m.

The board exited the in-camera session at 1:23 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held on Tuesday, October 1st at 10 a.m. at the Regional District of the Okanagan-Similkameen, at 101 Martin St., Penticton, B.C.

9. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of September 6, 2024 be adjourned at 1:23 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Interim Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
October 1, 2024
Agenda No: 5.1

To: OBWB Directors
From: James Littlely
Date: September 25, 2024
Subject: Interim Executive Director's Report

Board Schedule 2025

I have attached the proposed board meeting schedule for 2025. Note:

- January meeting cancelled following winter holidays.
- Meetings in Winter months will be held online.
- July meeting cancelled as it falls on Canada Day.
- September meeting is on a Friday, following the Annual Meeting.
- Other significant meeting business like grant awards, budget and audited financial statement approvals are noted.

Recommended Motion: *That the OBWB adopts the 2025 meeting schedule as presented.*

2026 Budget Preparation

I am working with RDCO accounting staff to prepare the OBWB budget for 2026 (year ending March 31, 2026). This will be presented to the Board for review and approval at the November 5 regular meeting. Per our Supplementary Letters Patent, the OBWB's final budget must be approved by the Board no later than our December 3 board meeting.

Job Posting for Communications Manager

We have posted for the Communications Manager position with an application closing date of October 17. We have already received several applications from well-qualified people. The full job description and posting can be accessed on several sites including LinkedIn, Indeed, CivicInfo, and the OBWB website here: <https://obwb.ca/employment-opportunities/>

International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control Annual Meeting

The International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control will be holding its annual board meeting on Thursday, October 3rd, which I will attend as an observer. The Board will also be hosting a public meeting the same evening (October 3) in Oroville, Washington at the Oroville High School Library from 6:30 – 8:00 pm. The Board will provide an overview of the role of the International Joint Commission (IJC), present information on Okanagan and Similkameen Basin water management, including an overview of Osoyoos Lake levels for 2023-2024 (to date), and hear questions and comments from the public regarding lake level management and the Board's activities. These meetings alternate each year between Osoyoos, British Columbia, and Oroville, Washington. This year's meeting will be held in-person (in Oroville) and virtually. Pre-registration for virtual participation at the public meeting will be required, with registration information being posted on the board website in early September. <https://ijc.org/en/olbc/international-osoyoos-lake-board-control-hosting-public-meeting-october-3-oroville-washington>

Milfoil Program Update

Working with the Interior Purchasing Office, we have released an RFP for the supply of a new standard milfoil harvester, with a closing date of September 25th. I anticipate reviewing proposals with milfoil staff to have a

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recommendation for the board at the meeting. Timing is limited to ensure the machine is delivered by next harvesting season.

I am pleased to report that our rototilling permit for the milfoil program will be issued in the coming days, after excellent engagement with provincial staff since January. The new 5-year permit establishes a ruleset for our environmental contractor to follow for the addition of new treatment areas as needed, accounting for all known habitat and species protection, water intake protection zones, and engagement with First Nations. This new, more flexible, science-based approach will allow us to target milfoil where it is growing each year, rather than being limited to pre-defined polygons as we have been since 2013.

Invasive Mussels Update

OBWB received a response to our letter calling for interprovincial cooperation on invasive mussels from the office of MLA Grant Hunter, the head of the Alberta Invasive Mussel Task Force. MLA Hunter expressed an interest in arranging a meeting to continue the conversations started at PNWER. However, due to the timing of the B.C. election, I have suggested that we work to arrange a meeting in November or December once the election is over.

Working with Rob Birtles, Team Leader for the Drinking Water Program, and Dr. Silvina Mema, Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer, both at Interior Health, I have been invited to present at a session of the Health Officer's Council in White Rock in October. My presentation will focus on the water quality and related public health concerns caused by invasive mussels.

Quagga mussels found again in Snake River, Idaho

On September 24th I was sent a [news release from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture](#) that invasive quagga mussels had been detected again around the same stretch of the Snake River that was treated with 116,000 litres of Copper Chelate pesticide last fall. This finding reinforces what we have seen in several areas, that once invasive mussels are in a system, they are almost impossible to eradicate. The Snake River is a tributary to the Columbia, entering downstream of the confluence of the Okanogan River, but still in the same system as the Okanagan. While watercraft from Idaho are currently treated as "High Risk" by the province of B.C., if these mussels spread downstream, they will travel into the Columbia River entering both Oregon and Washington States.

This finding also reinforces the OBWB's and our partners' calls to action for mandatory inspections, to introduce a temporary boat ban from out of province, and to establish an invasive mussel-free zone in partnership with Alberta and Saskatchewan.

I will have more to report and recommendations at the November board meeting, following the provincial election.

Board Meeting Schedule for 2025

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

TBD = To be determined.

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
October 1, 2024
Agenda No: 5.2

To: OBWB Directors
From: Nelson R. Jatel
Date: September 25, 2024
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

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

September 12th Council Meeting

The Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting on September 12, 2024, included a panel discussion by subject matter experts on the threats of blue-green algae on drinking water and swimming beaches. The panel featured multiple presentations addressing water management and the challenges posed by cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) in the Okanagan. **Heather Larratt's** presentation highlighted Kelowna's ongoing water quality monitoring, noting significant cyanobacteria level increases in 2024 at crucial intake points, such as Poplar Point and Cedar Creek. **Ed Hoppe** emphasized the historical monitoring efforts since 2014 and the critical role of stormwater detention ponds in affecting cyanobacteria levels. **Donovan Klassen and Stephen Horsman** discussed predictive modelling of harmful algal blooms (HABs) using machine learning and satellite data. **Bob Hrasko** focused on water intake design, stressing the need to manage risks like forest fires and contamination. **Nicolas Peleato** wrapped up the panel, identifying several research opportunities at UBC Okanagan. Cyanobacteria blooms were linked to nutrient loading, particularly in Wood Lake, illustrating global and local challenges.

There are four Council Committees. The **Policy Committee** updated on revising the Okanagan Water Infrastructure Discussion Paper, incorporating feedback for the next meeting. Moreover, the committee finalized and submitted a drought report to staff for action. The **Supply and Demand Committee** reported progress on developing a proposal to model water demand, supported by recent hydrological updates. The **Building Ethical Space for Water Stewardship Committee** is working on a literature review and resource guide to be completed by the end of the term. The **Water Quality & Health Committee** continues to explore key water health issues, including an in-depth discussion on blue-green algae at the meeting.

Council members also discussed several key issues, including:

- A postdoc researcher will assess the economic impacts of water management decisions.
- Concerns about the connection between groundwater and surface water, with challenges in proving this relationship and implications for Section 88 restrictions.
- Potential impacts of a new herbicide for milfoil control on human health, agriculture, and the environment.
- Continued efforts to prevent the spread of invasive mussels, emphasizing stronger watercraft controls in the Columbia River Basin.
- The launch of a new Climate Indicators dashboard to monitor environmental changes.

- Updates from Environment and Climate Change Canada and reflections on the relatively calm summer season.

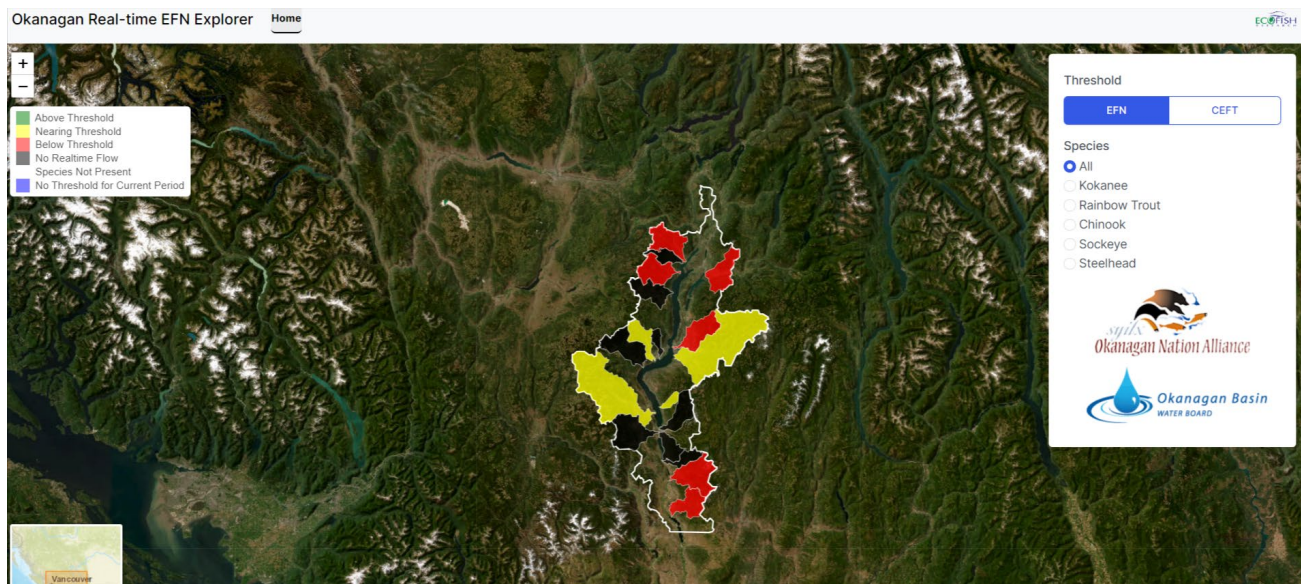
Our next Water Stewardship Council meeting is set for October 10th, from 12 to 4 p.m., at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna. Board members are always welcome and encouraged to attend.

Environmental Flows & Critical Flow Thresholds in Okanagan Streams

With updated hydrometric data and previous work to determine stream-specific flows for fish and ecosystems, the OBWB, in partnership with the ONA Fishery Department, is enhancing its communication tool. This tool now provides real-time hydrometric data in context with the required 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.

Several Okanagan streams showed signs of stress in September, when water demand peaks and streamflows are critical for spawning fish (see Figure 1 below). This data underscores the urgency of addressing low summer flows and the need for reliable, real-time hydrometric data to support informed water management decisions that benefit Okanagan communities and ecosystems. The top image from the EFN Explorer highlights several streams falling below the Environmental Flow Needs, with others nearing critical thresholds. Mission Creek is shown in more detail for context.

Figure 1. Snapshot from the Okanagan Real-time EFN Explorer data tool (Sept 23, 2024).





Current Discharge

1.44 m³/s

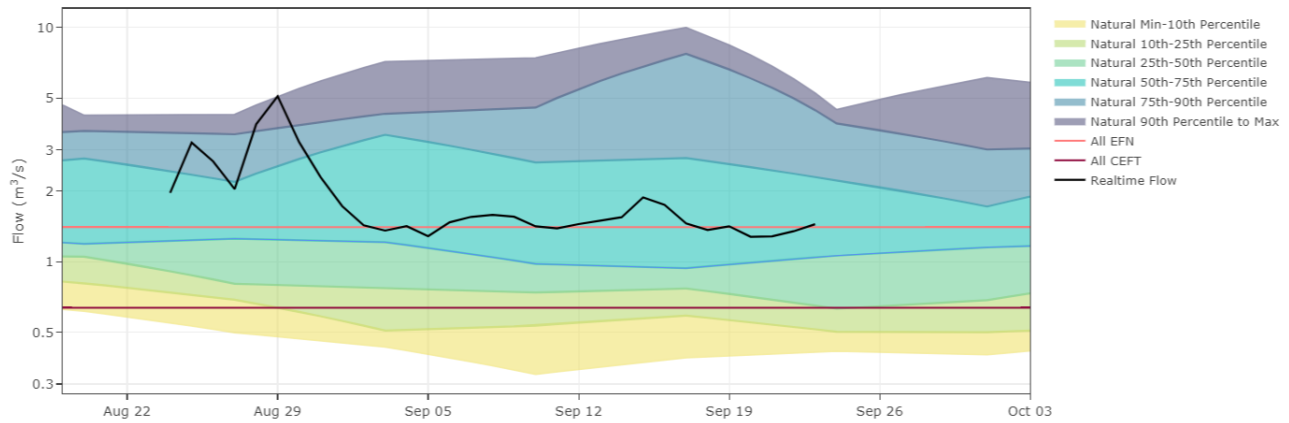
23% LTMAD (6.35 m³/s)



Supported Species

Kokanee - EFN 1.4 m³/s, CEFT 0.64 m³/s

Rainbow Trout - EFN 1.4 m³/s, CEFT 0.64 m³/s



MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
October 1, 2024
Agenda No: 5.3

To: OBWB Directors
From: Sandra Schira
Date: September 25, 2024
Subject: **Water Science Specialist's Report**

Summary of 2024 Drought

Following a severe drought in summer 2023, the Okanagan remained at level 2 coming into the summer of 2024. The first 2024 provincial drought call for the Okanagan region was held the first week of May—several months earlier than in 2023—due to significant concerns that the below-average snowpack levels would lead to drought. Since that call on May 2nd the Okanagan has remained in drought until today.

Fortunately, despite concerns of another major drought, the Okanagan Region did not exceed level 3 due to several rain events throughout the summer. These rain events helped prevent a severe drought; however, their effect on streamflow was often brief and insufficient to take the region out of drought. This is partly due to the prolonged heatwave in July, where temperatures were consistently above 30 C and even reached the 40s. Importantly, the rain events helped refill reservoirs that had minimal recharge to their supply due to the small snowpack in the spring.

While the region experienced a less severe drought in 2024 (Figure 1), individual streams and water supplies varied across the watershed. While Vaseux Creek has been dry at the mouth for several weeks, and flows in Shuttleworth Creek have remained very low, Equis Creek had excellent flows all summer. Drought responses also varied, with water restrictions over the summer in only some areas. Fortunately, so far the province has not needed to implement any temporary protection orders this summer.

Although the valley is in a better position than this time last year, we are still in drought and in the late summer or early fall low-flow period. This period overlaps with a vital time for fish spawning and rearing through the watershed. Streamflows are low in many streams which is concerning for ecosystem health. Fortunately, water temperatures in the streams have been cooler the last few weeks due to cooler air temperatures allowing fish to move into streams to spawn. The irrigation period will also end soon, which will reduce water consumption in many streams.

As the drought continues, water stewardship and ongoing communication remain vital, and OBWB staff continue to participate in drought communication. Over the winter, staff will review what can be done to improve drought communication and response in the valley.

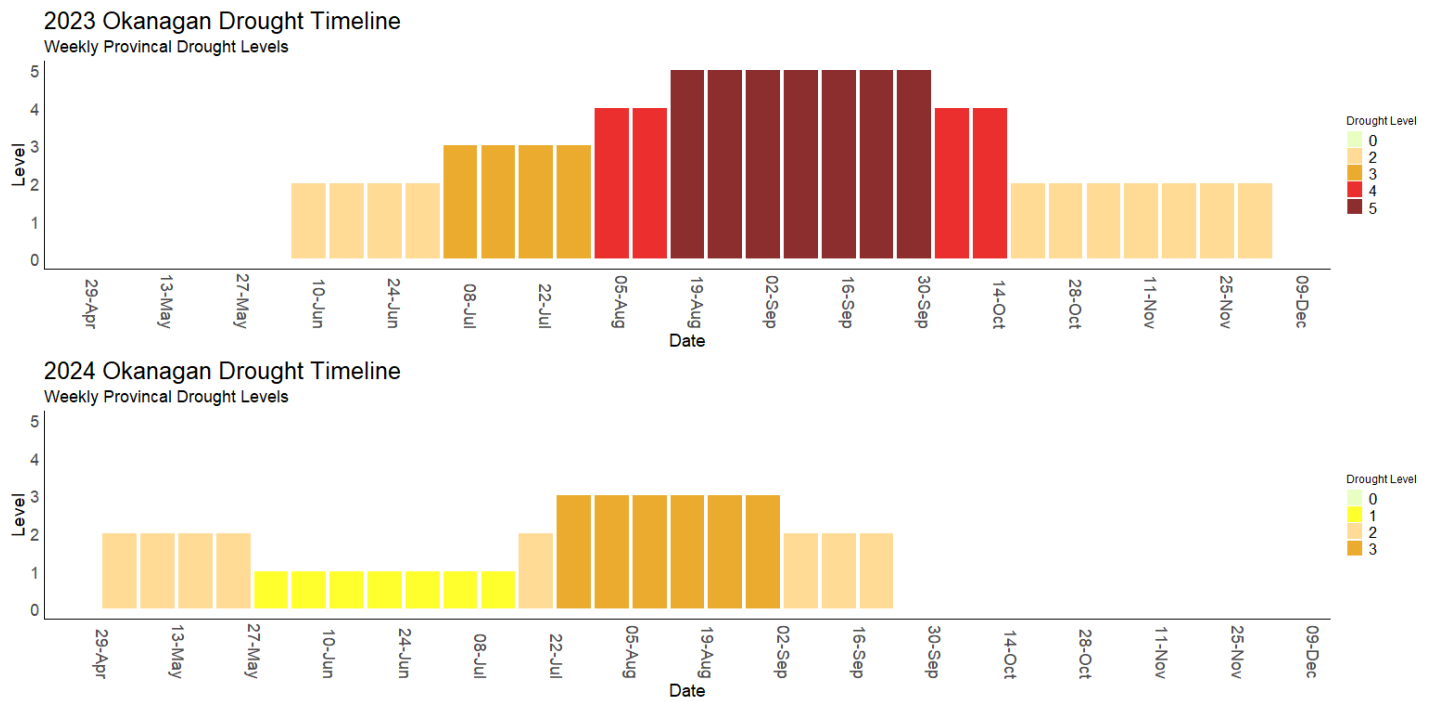


Figure 1 Weekly timeline of Provincial Drought Levels in the Okanagan for 2023 and 2024

MEMORANDUM

Okanagan Basin Water Board
Regular meeting
October 1, 2024
Agenda No: 5.4

To: OBWB Directors
From: Carolina Restrepo
Date: September 25, 2024
Subject: Office and Grants Manager's Report

Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants Update

WCQI recipients for the 2024-2025 cycle are required to submit mid-term reports by October 31st. These reports will provide updates on project status and identify any areas where additional support may be necessary to ensure the projects' success. This may include reviewing progress, considering project timeline extensions, and addressing other needs.

In November the board will be asked to approve the grant process and annual theme for 2025, followed by the call for applications for the 2025-2026 WCQI grant cycle.

Sewer Grant Program – First Liquid Waste Management Plan Application Received

In June 2024, the board approved updates to the existing sewer grants program, expanding funding for community sewer systems and introducing new funds to support rural areas in protecting groundwater and community health through proper wastewater planning. As part of these updates, new funding is now available for the development of Liquid Waste Management Plans (LWMPs), which aim to protect water and community health. Communities are eligible to apply for these updated grants with payments starting as soon as 2025.

On August 22nd, we received the first LWMP grant notification from the District of Lake Country for the completion of their Liquid Waste Management Plan. This project includes drafting the Stage I/II report, the Stage III report, community engagement, and an associated Environmental Impact Study for the Okanagan Lake outfall. The notification comes a year in advance of project completion and allows OBWB to budget for new grants payable in the following fiscal year. Notifications are based on estimated project budgets and are approved in principle by the board, with the final approval being subject to an application with final numbers in the year payments commence. For the LWMP-SFA grants, the maximum eligible amount per year is \$30,000.00 for a total of 3 years (\$90,000.00).

The projected annual grant for the Lake Country LWMP project is \$17,333.33 for three years, based on 16% of the project's total cost of \$325,000.00.

Recommended motion: *That the board approve in principle the Lake Country LWMP project as described above, and that staff include the projected amount in the 2026 SFA Program budget.*