

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Agenda



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

DATE: Tuesday, February 4, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: ONLINE

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

- 1.1 Acknowledgement of First Nations Traditional Territory

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

- 1.2 Acknowledgement of the passing of OBWB Director Rick Knodel, January 7th, 2025.

2. ELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 3, 2024 held online P.2

6. DELEGATION

- 6.1 Lisa Scott – Executive Director, Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society

7. STAFF REPORTS

- 7.1 Executive Director Report P.7
7.1.1 Audit Planning Report – *sent separately*
7.2 Deputy Administrator Report P.8
7.2.1 Draft letter to Honorable Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship re: Invasive Mussel Prevention – *sent separately*
7.3 Water Stewardship Director Report P.11
7.4 Water Science Specialist Report P.14
7.5 B.C. Mandate Letters Memo P.22

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9. NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, March 4, 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 DECEMBER 3, 2024, ONLINE**

PRESENT

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice Chair Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	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
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C

REGRETS

Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
James Littlely	Deputy Administrator
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
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 10:00 a.m.

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

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

No late items.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“ THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 3, 2024 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of November 5, 2024, held online.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on November 5, 2024, held online, be approved."

CARRIED

5. **DELEGATION**

Dr. Peter Mortifee, Co-Founder and Chair of the Chute Creek Stewardship Society (CCSS) presented on the CCSS's Lower Chute Creek Restoration and Reconstruction Project.

Dr. Mortifee introduced the CCSS's members and their roles; Heather Fleck, Kelly Terbasket, Sheila Reynolds, Lauren MacPherson, and himself; Peter Mortifee.

The Board heard about the history of Lower Chute Creek, CCSS's founding purpose, and the organization's previous and current work on the creek through the Lower Chute Creek Restoration and Reconstruction Project, which is funded by the OBWB's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program.

In 1962 channelization was done in Lower Chute Creek to prevent flooding in the spring and subdivide the lots for residential sale. This construction led to the destruction of fish and other animal habitat. In 2017 the concrete banks of the Lower Chute Creek failed and led to destruction of both private property and public infrastructure.

The Lower Chute Creek Restoration and Reconstruction project has three main goals:

1. Flood protection for the community of Indian Rock in Naramata.
2. Ecosystem regeneration for both in-stream and riparian areas.
3. Community engagement and learning opportunities - this project is a micro-example of a macro-issue.

Directors heard about the CCSS's collaborative approach to this project, which includes partnering closely with and/or receiving advice from the Pacific Salmon Ecology and Conservation Laboratory, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, syilx Advisors, the Penticton Indian Band and the Okanagan Nation Alliance.

Since the restoration began, kokanee spawned at the creek mouth for the first time in 60 years.

Peter Mortifee answered questions from Board Directors about the project. He was thanked for his presentation and exited the meeting.

6. **STAFF REPORTS**

6.1 Executive Director Report – Dr. Anna Warwick Sears

Dr. Sears presented about her work on the beginning phase of grant applications to the Watershed Security Fund for an updated Mission Creek Water Use Plan, in collaboration with the Okanagan Nation. The last time a Water Use Plan was created for Mission Creek was 2010 by the Ministry of Environment, Black Mountain Irrigation District, and the South East Kelowna Irrigation District. This updated Plan is of some urgency, since significant changes have happened in the area since 2010. These changes include the City of Kelowna taking over the Southeast Kelowna Irrigation District, infrastructure changes by Black Mountain Irrigation District, residential development, and more frequent extreme flows (high and low). Large numbers of sockeye and chinook salmon are also expected to return to Mission Creek soon thanks to ongoing rehabilitation efforts and will require increased water flows to support spawning. The update process will involve collaboration with various local and regional organizations, as well as smaller

water utilities and local First Nations.

Dr. Sears also reported on the progress of a survey OBWB is conducting with local water utilities about their water rates. Staff are waiting to hear back from some municipalities to complete the survey.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated November 27, 2024, be received.”
CARRIED

6.2 Deputy Administrator Report - James Littlely

Mr. Littlely provided the Board with an update regarding invasive mussels, reporting that he would attend an upcoming Pacific Northwest-wide meeting with updates of the mussel infestation in Idaho and all other jurisdictions.

He also reported that in October, California discovered the invasive golden mussel in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – the first introduction in North America. Originally from China, golden mussels represent a significant threat to infrastructure and habitats, similar to zebra and quagga mussels but with a broader temperature tolerance and lower calcium requirements. This could put previously safe water bodies at risk. Despite this new threat, the existing prevention strategy, including mandatory watercraft inspections remains unchanged.

Mr. Littlely also reported to the board about a partnership opportunity with the Interior Health Authority to support calls to action on invasive mussels to protect drinking water quality and determinants of public health.

“THAT the Deputy Administrator’s Report, dated November 25, 2024, be received.”
CARRIED

6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel

Dr. Jatel provided the board with a summary of the November 14 Water Stewardship Council (WSC) meeting, where Council members heard from guest speaker Stephen Morrison, a geologist with over 35 years experience in government and environmental consulting. His presentation about the need for co-management in resource management advocates for inclusive decision-making with Indigenous groups, public engagement, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. With successful Northern Canadian water boards as an example, he indicated that co-management leads to better governance, particularly in handling challenges like climate change.

Director Fyke provided a report as the Chair of the WSC. The WSC discussed ongoing efforts in modernizing water regulation systems, water demand models, and quality research. Effective adaptive water management strategies and the importance of comprehensive water usage data were topics of interest for optimizing regional water resources.

The next Water Stewardship Council meeting is December 12, 2024 and will include updates on the ONA-led watershed initiative by Scott Boswell and Tessa Terbasket, following the recent agreement that advances collaborative water stewardship.

Dr. Jatel also presented to the Board with updates on his ongoing projects:

The Cyanobacteria Threat to Drinking Water Working Group held a meeting to improve water source management through enhanced monitoring and collaborative strategies, with plans for a

follow-up and an advisory committee being laid out.

The Hydrometric Program Advisory Committee will discuss program enhancements to support drought and flood responses on December 12.

Dr. Jatel is working on multiple studies on Mission Creek's water dynamics to support Dr. Sears grant application for the Mission Creek Water Management Plan, to improve management effectiveness for ecological and hydrological sustainability.

Dr. Alberto Ceccacci, the post-doc fellow sponsored in-part by the OBWB is conducting an economic analysis of irrigation water use in the Okanagan, involving stakeholder surveys approved by UBCO Ethics Review Council, aimed at informing policy and decision-making of agricultural waters in the Okanagan.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated November 25, 2024, be received.”
CARRIED.***

6.4 Water Science Specialist Report – Sandra Schira

The Board heard from Ms. Schira about a weather report and expected conditions for the upcoming winter. Based on the US Nation Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) prediction of La Nina persisting into spring, the Okanagan might expect cooler temperatures and rainy and snowy conditions. La Nina conditions have been seen already in other parts of B.C., especially in regions that experienced the “bomb cyclone” and atmospheric river. However, according to current rainfall and temperatures in the Okanagan, most areas have been at or below normal expected rainfall and temperatures compared to historic data.

***“THAT the Water Science Specialist Report, dated November 26, 2024, be received.”
CARRIED.***

7. IN CAMERA

The Board entered an in-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(a) and 90(2)(b) of the Community Charter) at 11:51 p.m.

***“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board enter into an in-camera session.”
CARRIED.***

The board exited the in-camera session at 12:20 p.m.

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Budget Features Memo – Proposed Budget 2025-26 (updated) – Presented by Dr. Anna Warwick Sears.

Dr Sears presented a revised budget as directed by the board in November.

***“THAT the OBWB adopts the updated 2025-2026 budget as presented.”
CARRIED***

9. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, February 4, at 10:00 a.m., online.

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10. **ADJOURNMENT**

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 3, 2024 be adjourned at 12:26 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Anna Warwick Sears
Date: January 29, 2025
Subject: **Executive Director Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting February 4, 2025 Agenda No: 7.1

Board Election

The first item on the agenda is the election of Chair and Vice-Chair for the OBWB. Please reach out to your fellow directors to discuss nominations before the meeting. We are working on a digital “ballot” process if there is more than one nomination for either position. We are anticipating a few changes in 2025, but at this time the Directors and Alternates are:

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

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

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

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

New Communications Manager

I’m very pleased to share that the OBWB has hired Carmen Weld as our new Communications Manager. Like Ms. Jackson, Ms. Weld has a journalism background, and she also has experience working for local government. She will be starting on February 18th. Our Communications Coordinator, Amanda Burnett, has been holding down the fort for more than three months, and we will be very glad to have Ms. Weld on board.

Audit Planning

The OBWB’s fiscal year end, and annual audit are coming up in the next few months. We are scheduled to have our auditors present their findings to the board at our June meeting held in Penticton. The auditors have asked me to provide the Audit Planning Report to the board, and because of its length, we will send it out in a separate attachment.

Mission Creek Water Use Planning

We have been working for several months on a project scope and grant applications to update the 2010 Mission Creek Water Use Plan. I’m please to say that the Okanagan Nation Alliance has now taken the leadership of this effort, and submitted a grant application, framing the work under the Sylix Water Responsibility Plan, and piloting a governance approach with the Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table. The OBWB will closely collaborate with the ONA, especially providing support for the water science aspects of the project. The project will also engage with the City of Kelowna, Black Mountain Irrigation District, staff from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, and other parties active in and around Mission Creek. It is very good to see this project move forward in a collaborative way.

MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: James Littley
Date: January 27, 2025
Subject: Deputy Administrator Report

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting February 4, 2025 Agenda No: 7.2

Invasive Mussel Calls to Action

Now that the provincial election is over and I have received updates from the quagga mussel infestation in Idaho and the discovery of golden mussels in California, I have reviewed the latest OBWB calls to action and drafted a letter to the Honourable Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship (attached for board review). During mid-February, provincial ministries will be setting their spending priorities, so it is urgent to get invasive mussel prevention on the Minister's agenda as soon as possible.

Provincial IMPD Funding:

OBWB previously called for a minimum \$4 million dedicated funding from all sources to run the provincial Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP). This number was equivalent (accounting for inflation) to the program budget from 2019, used as a benchmark when the province intercepted more than 52,000 watercraft. In 2023, the last published budget of the IMDP showed funding of just \$3.3 million, and an actual expenditure of only \$3 million. This budget covered only 48 inspection staff, compared to 64 in 2019, and only 6 permanent and 2 roving stations, compared to 12 in 2019.

- In 2023 the IMDP inspected only 40% of watercraft compared to 2019;
- The 2023 budget was 25% lower than the budget for 2019;
- IMDP vehicles and inspection/decontamination equipment are in a cycle of replacement;
- Idaho is now an infested high-risk area meaning more high-risk watercraft from the south;
- The golden mussel will need more science and policy consideration; and
- 2024 was the last working year for K-9 Major, and the province did not have adequate funding for his replacement.

To provide adequate funding for the IMDP total program costs including salary, travel, vehicles, lake monitoring, outreach, equipment and maintenance, and given the closer proximity and increased threat from quagga mussels in Idaho and golden mussels in California, I recommend the board call for increased funding of \$5.5 million to the IMDP in 2025 from all sources. This would allow the IMDP to fully staff more inspection stations, filling gaps in routes coming into the province, enhancing inspection capacity along southern border crossings, and doing more work on lake monitoring, science and policy. This budget could also support further work on the Wildlife Act review, or on other policy development to implement mandatory watercraft inspections. Provincial staff simply do not have the resources or capacity to accomplish the work and analysis that is needed to prevent a mussel introduction.

Alberta Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force

While B.C. has been a leader since 2015 on invasive species prevention in Canada, recently Alberta has made a significant advancement by commissioning an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Task Force. The difference is the Alberta AIS Task Force is Chaired by MLA Grant Hunter, (Taber-Warner) and includes an MP, and members from outside of government, including the Alberta Lake Management society, University of Alberta, Alberta Water Council, Alberta Wildlife Federation, Alberta Invasive Species Council, Alberta Irrigation Districts Association, and Stamp Seeds.

2025-02-04_Deputy Administrator Report_memo

The task force, with political leadership, in just six months has produced a detailed report and recommendations including some that align with OBWB's calls to action. [Alberta AIS Task Force Report Dec 2024](#):

The [Alberta] Provincial AIS Task Force recommends several key measures to combat the spread of aquatic invasive species, with particular emphasis on invasive mussels:

- 1. Implement a mandatory annual watercraft sticker initiative in Alberta with all revenue dedicated to support the AIS program, in addition, a second inspection sticker that also provides visual proof of inspection when reporting to an inspection station. Target March 2026.*
- 2. Environment and Protected Areas pilot a dip tank in Alberta. Target March 2026.*
- 3. Mandatory Watercraft Inspection - Issue a Ministerial Order requiring mandatory watercraft inspections for all watercraft entering Alberta from eastern or southern provincial borders. Watercraft must report to designated provincial inspection stations during operational hours to prevent high-risk watercraft from introducing invasive species into Alberta's waters. Target March 2026.*
- 4. Environment and Protected Areas Minister advocates to the federal government on behalf of the AIS program for more chemical options be registered to treat aquatic invasive species. Target March 2025.*
- 5. Environment and Protected Areas establishes an eDNA monitoring program for Aquatic Invasive Species. Target March 2026.*
- 6. Environment and Protected Areas creates an invasive mussel specific, early detection and rapid response (EDRR) Plan as well as a detailed Invasive Mussel Tactical Plan. Target March 2025.*
- 7. Conduct Tabletop and Field-Based Exercises for Invasive Mussel Response Training in Alberta. Target May 2025 and May 2026.*

In August 2024, OBWB wrote to MLA Hunter and Minister Cullen calling on B.C. and AB to work together on AIS prevention, and to consider the creation of a Western Canada Invasive Mussel Free Zone by aligning policies and penalties and coordinating inspections. MLA Hunter expressed support for the idea, but in B.C., the election stalled momentum. With a new Minister for Water, Land, and Resource Operations, I recommend that OBWB reiterate those calls to action and ask members of the Okanagan-Interior Invasive Mussel Working Group to also contact the minister supporting the calls to action.

Recommendation:

THAT OBWB send a letter to Minister Neill, calling for the following actions:

1. \$5.5 Million funding to B.C. IMDP in 2025;
2. Mandatory inspections for all watercraft entering B.C.;
3. B.C. call on the federal government for resources and support;
4. B.C. work with Alberta to create a Western Canada Mussel Free Zone, including a politically led AIS Task Force;
5. B.C. work with Alberta to align penalties across provinces; and
6. Create clear policy to limit chemical use as a rapid response.

Milfoil Control Program Update

Our crew is continuing with regular rototilling operations in Wood and Okanagan Lakes. The Vernon Arm is now complete, with extra work being done in areas that were not previously permitted. Work is continuing in Kelowna and West Kelowna areas, with Osoyoos Lake on the list for the Spring.

Request for OBWB Directors

Milfoil control operations rely on boat launch and shoreline infrastructure to accommodate our very large equipment. With turnover in local government staff over many years, waterfront changes often happen without notice to OBWB or the milfoil operators. Many of these changes are planned without considering our operational needs and can raise costs and operational complexity for OBWB for decades. In the past,

OBWB has sent letters and staff have reached out to local governments to request collaboration on these changes, and we will send another letter in the next few weeks. I also request that OBWB Directors remind your local governments about the milfoil control program and ask their staff to connect with us early in the planning of any lakefront park or boat launch changes to make sure we can continue to provide a good level of milfoil control for our communities.

MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Nelson Jatel
Date: January 27, 2025
Subject: **Water Stewardship Director's Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting February 4, 2025 Agenda No: 7.3

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

Meeting Summary – December 12th, 2025

Tessa Terbasket (Okanagan Nation Alliance) and **Scott Boswell** (Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program) updated the *Watershed Responsibility Planning Initiative*. Launched in 2018, this initiative aims to create a comprehensive Okanagan Lake Management Plan, prioritizing community engagement and Indigenous collaboration and addressing gaps in water governance policies.

Key Achievements

A significant milestone was signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by 30 elected leaders representing Indigenous nations, municipalities, and regional districts. This MOA formalizes a collaborative government-to-government approach to watershed governance, focusing on shared priorities such as:

- Salmon restoration
- Water quality improvement
- Invasive mussel management

While most parties have signed, a few municipalities await further clarity on governance terms before committing.

Principles and Approach

The initiative is rooted in rights, responsibilities, and reconciliation, aligning with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)*. It seeks to:

- Integrate Indigenous law into water governance.
- Build grassroots participation.
- Foster collaboration across all levels of government.

Next Steps

Moving forward, the initiative will focus on:

1. Developing terms of reference for the MOA.
2. Establishing a governance framework and communication protocol.
3. Convening a leadership meeting in February.
4. Advancing specific projects like the Aberdeen Plateau water supply collaboration.

The process remains voluntary, flexible, and centred on building trust and developing long-term solutions for effective watershed management.

Meeting Summary – January 9th, 2025

Jason Schleppe, Principal of Ecoscape Environmental, presented to the Water Stewardship Council on *Habitat Conservation Banking* as a tool to balance habitat losses and restoration under the Fisheries Act. He highlighted the historical decline in habitat productivity in streams like Mill and Mission Creek, largely

due to development and infrastructure gaps. Habitat banking, he explained, offers a structured and predictable system to address these losses.

Key Insights

1. What is Habitat Conservation Banking?

- A system to manage habitat gains and losses by creating "banks" of restoration credits.
- Credits are earned through measurable restoration efforts (e.g., square meters of habitat restored) and "withdrawn" for projects causing habitat loss.

2. Benefits of Habitat Banking

- Streamlined Permitting: Simplifies the approval process for projects requiring Fisheries Act authorizations.
- Cost Predictability: Reduces delays and unexpected expenses in infrastructure development.
- Proactive Restoration: Encourages restoration tied to long-term regional planning.

3. Challenges and Considerations

- Habitat impacts must be quantified, and offsets must be in place before projects can proceed.
- Success depends on collaborative planning, strong governance, and coordination with municipalities and Indigenous groups.
- Managing a shared bank becomes complex when multiple entities contribute to or withdraw from it.

4. Historical Context

- Before 2019, informal habitat banks like the Mission Creek Habitat Compensation Bank operated without formal legislation. These served as local models for restoration efforts.

5. Legislative Framework

- The 2019 Fisheries Act update formalized habitat banking, requiring pre-established offsets for projects.
- Mr. Schleppe emphasized the need for regional governments to understand and adapt to this framework.

6. Opportunities for Local Action

- Expand and enhance the Mission Creek Habitat Compensation Bank.
- Explore similar initiatives for Mill Creek.
- Adopt a regional approach involving multiple governments to optimize resource allocation and planning.

7. Implementation Challenges

- Limited awareness of habitat banking among local stakeholders.
- Difficulty securing upfront funding for restoration projects to build bank credits.
- Inflation and long-term maintenance costs for restored habitats.

8. Next Steps

- Work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to clarify requirements.
- Align infrastructure development with habitat banking initiatives.
- Develop collaborative governance models and engage stakeholders.

Mr. Schleppe underscored the importance of proactive regional planning to integrate habitat banking into infrastructure development. This approach could improve cumulative environmental benefits while supporting long-term conservation goals. The presentation concluded with a Q&A session, where participants explored logistical, governance, and policy implications in greater detail.

February Council Meeting Preview

The next Water Stewardship Council meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna. Lunch will be served at 12:00 PM, followed by the meeting from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. This session will feature **Dr. Alberto Ceccacci**, a postdoctoral researcher from Bologna, Italy, with expertise in Agricultural Economics and Rural Appraisal. Dr. Ceccacci will present preliminary findings from his project titled *"The Value of Agricultural Water Uses in the Okanagan Valley."*

Dr. Ceccacci's research examines the economic, cultural, and environmental impacts of agricultural water use in the Okanagan. His presentation will address critical questions such as the economic value of irrigated

agriculture in the region, including its direct, indirect, and external benefits. He will also explore the opportunity costs of using water for irrigation and discuss how future water allocations and irrigation investments can adapt to increasing weather extremes and community needs while maximizing agriculture's contributions to the local economy.

Dr. Ceccacci will also share insights from surveys conducted with Okanagan farmers and stakeholders. These findings aim to inform policy decisions, prioritize investments, and address water access challenges in this water-stressed region. The meeting promises to provide valuable information and perspectives for tackling the challenges of balancing agricultural needs with the realities of climate change and regional water management.

Project Updates

Hydrometric Program

On December 10, 2024, we held the annual Technical Advisory Committee meeting for the OBWB Hydrometric Program. This program, a collaboration between the OBWB, Okanagan Nation Alliance, and Water Survey of Canada, focuses on hydrometric data collection, management, and use in the Okanagan. The meeting covered updates on new station installations, flood monitoring efforts, and the integration of water chemistry data into regional analysis. Participants discussed the need to improve data sharing, ensure quality control, and meet diverse stakeholder needs. Key plans include the OBWB's installation of seven new stations on Mission Creek, the relocation of existing stations, and upgrades to data processing systems. Looking ahead, we aim to create interactive online maps, incorporate graded data into provincial systems, and evaluate the economic value of hydrometric data to support water management and planning.

Cyanobacteria Threat to Drinking Water – Working Group

We held the second Cyanobacteria Threat to Drinking Water Working Committee meeting on December 11, 2024. The discussion focused on the project's scope, water quality challenges in the Okanagan, and developing tools to improve water management decisions, particularly for drinking water intakes. Co-chaired by Ed Hoppe (Water Quality and Customer Care Manager, City of Kelowna) and Krista Derrickson (Manager of Utilities & Public Works, Westbank First Nation), the committee discussed analyzing current water quality in subbasins, expanding monitoring to include nutrients, and creating a meteorological model for the region. Members emphasized the need for data harmonization, better monitoring systems, and predictive modelling to manage cyanobacteria risks effectively. Next steps include a follow-up meeting in February 2025, conducting a survey to identify data gaps, repackaging data for water utilities, and improving the EMS platform for easier data input and sharing. These initiatives aim to enhance water quality management and foster collaborative decision-making.

MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Sandra Schira, Water Science Specialist
Date: January 27, 2025
Subject: **Water Science Specialist Report**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting February 4, 2025 Agenda No: 7.4

2024 Climate Indicators Summary

Winter Cold Snap

Last year began with a cold snap between January 11th and 15th, with temperatures consistently below -20°C. Cold winter temperatures are not unprecedented in the Okanagan, but the sudden temperature drop caused significant damage to fruit trees and vines across the valley. Typically, cool weather sets on more gradually, allowing plants to become hardened and dormant; however, that did not happen in this case because the fall of 2023 was quite warm. Exact crop losses are still being calculated but are significant for many industries, especially soft bodied fruits.

For example, in Kelowna, the weekly average minimum temperature went from:

- -1°C the week of January 1st to 7th to
- -17°C the week of January 8th to 14th, a change of 16°C.
- Individual days got as cold as -30°C (January 13th).

Despite the cold snap, the Okanagan experienced significantly fewer extremely cold days than normal in 2024 (i.e., days where the maximum temperature was below 0°C). In the 110-year record from 1915 to 2024, last year had the 2nd fewest extremely cold days in Vernon, 3rd fewest in Kelowna, and 9th fewest in Penticton (Table 3). This is partly because temperatures quickly warmed up again after the cold snap. For example, by the week of January 22nd to 28th, the average minimum temperature was back up to 0.5°C in Kelowna. After the cold snap, temperatures fluctuated between warm and near seasonal averages through February and March but never returned to the extremely cold conditions of early January (Figure 4). The lack of extremely cold days is also due to very warm fall conditions in 2024, where the weekly average temperature stayed above 0°C for most of the fall.

Drought

In Spring, low snowpack accumulation and a rapid early melt triggered concerns over a continuation of the 2023 drought. Brenda Mines was snow-free in early May which was the earliest on record (Figure 1). The Okanagan region's first 2024 provincial drought call was held the first week of May. The Okanagan has remained in drought since that call on May 2nd until today (Figure 2).

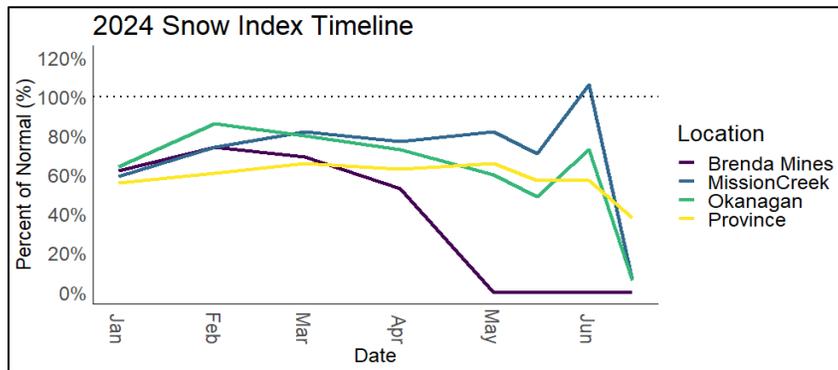


Figure 1 2024 Provincial Snow Water Index. Data shows the percent of normal compared to 1991-2020¹

The Okanagan remained in drought throughout 2024 but unlike 2023 did not exceed drought level 3 (of 5) as several rain events occurred in the summer. However, the effect of these summer rains on streamflow were 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 into the 40s. Importantly, the rain events helped refill reservoirs that had had minimal recharge due to the low snowpack in the spring. Some individual streams saw more severe impacts and were dry for a significant portion of the summer. Others, often those supported by storage, had more stable flows throughout the summer.

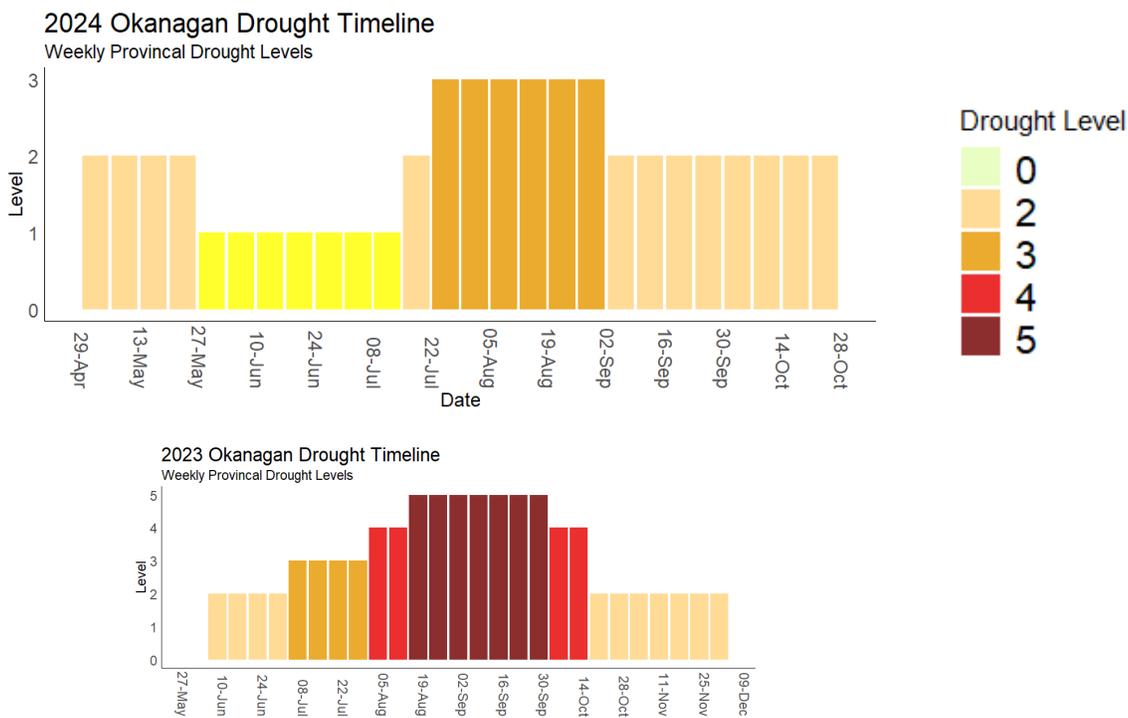


Figure 2 Provincial Drought Level Timeline 2024 and 2023²

Average Temperature

¹ Data from the 2024 Provincial Snow Bulletin. gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/water/river-forecast/2024.pdf

² Data from the B.C. Drought Portal: droughtportal.gov.bc.ca

Globally, 2024 was the hottest year on record (since 1850). However, across the Okanagan, while annual temperatures were well above normal, they were not as hot as in 2023. In the 110-year record since 1915, last year was the 4th warmest in Vernon and Kelowna and the 18th warmest in Penticton (Table 1). Mean annual temperatures were 9.3 °C in Kelowna, 10. 2 °C in Penticton and 9.9 °C in Vernon. Seasonal temperatures in both summer and winter were warm, between the 5th and 18th hottest on record. Fall was unseasonably warm across the Okanagan and ranked 1st in Kelowna, 3rd in Vernon, and 6th in Penticton. Spring was at a more typical temperature, ranking 24th and 23rd for Kelowna and Vernon and 60th in Penticton.

Summer Heatwave

What really stood out in 2024 was the number of days over 35 °C (Figure 4 and Table 2). While it is typical to get days over 30 °C in the Okanagan, that number has increased in recent decades, and 2024 saw a significant jump. Historically, the Okanagan experienced around 3 days of this extreme weather per year, whereas last year, there were over two weeks. This is more total days over 35 °C than 2021 – the year with the heat dome event. However, the heat dome was a more intense consecutive period in the end of June and not spread over a whole month.

Global Temperature Rankings

Rank	year
1	2024
2	2023
3	2016
4	2020
5	2019
6	2017
7	2015
8	2022
9 (tied)	2018
9 (tied)	2021

Number of Days Over 35° C in July

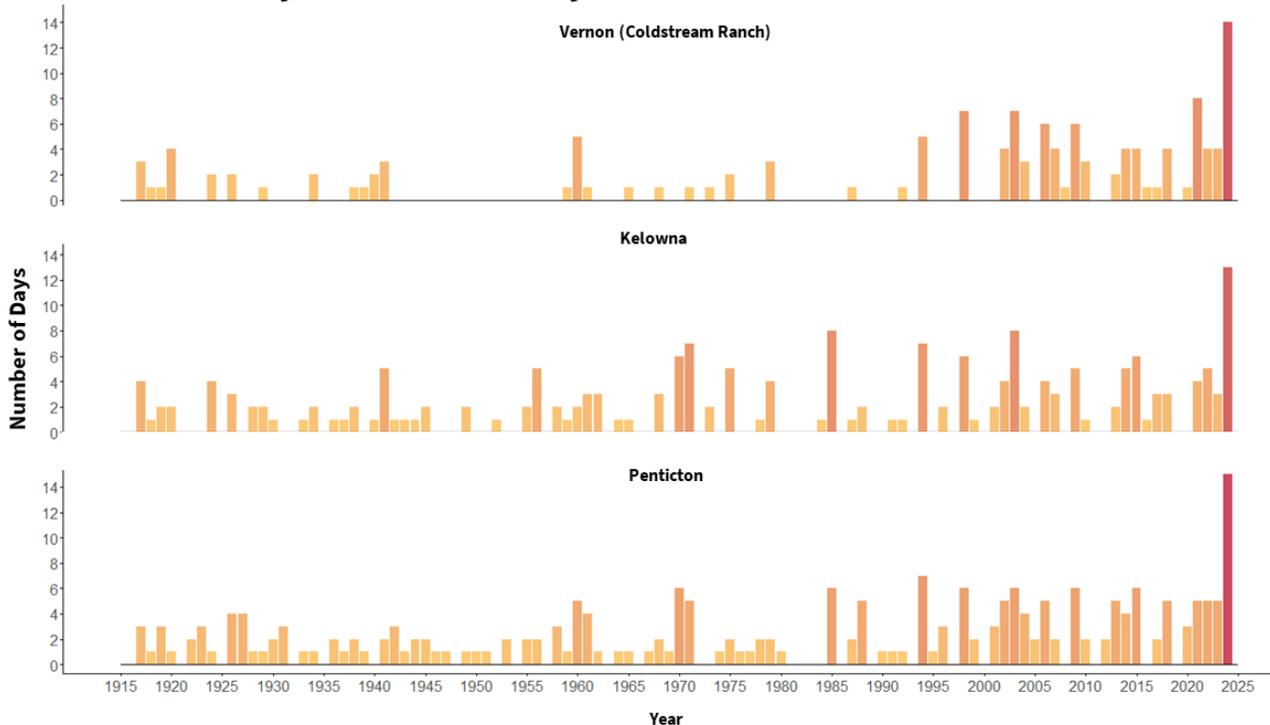
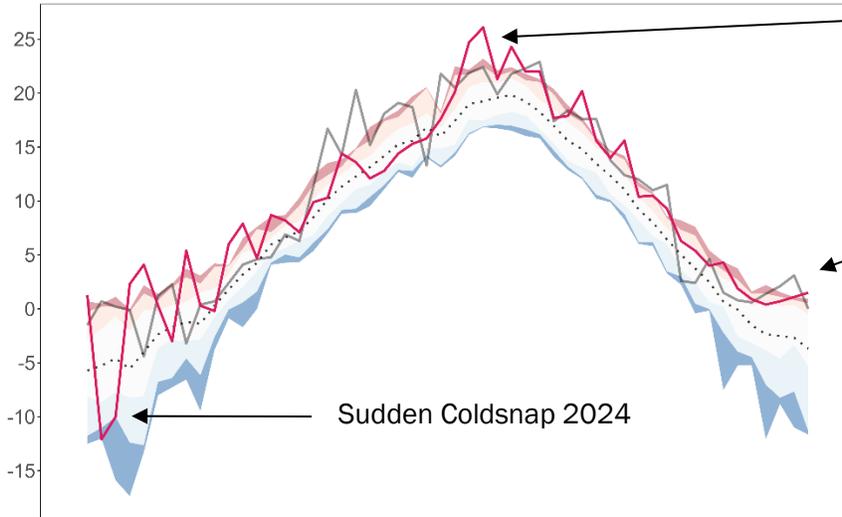


Figure 3 The number of days in July with a maximum temperature over 35 °C between 1915 and 2024 in the Okanagan

Weekly Mean Temperature vs. 1951–1980 Normal

Kelowna

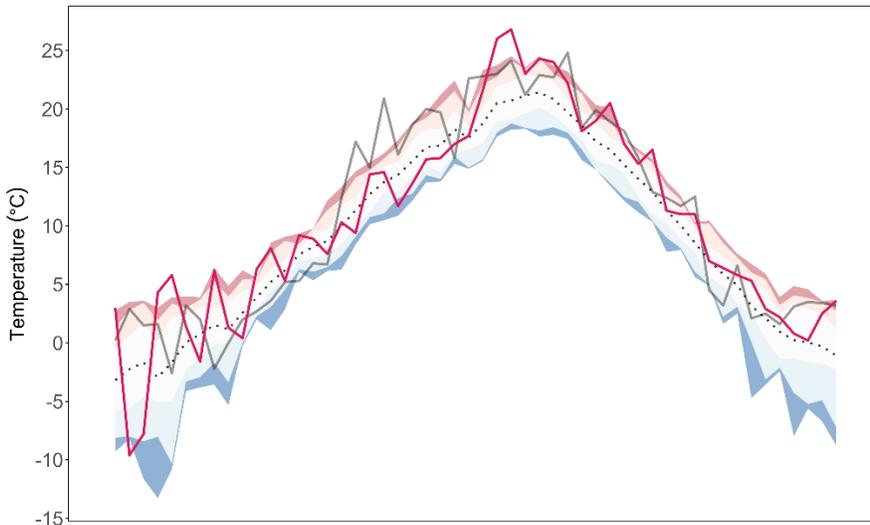


July 2024 Heatwave

Warm Conditions in Late 2023 and 2024

Sudden Coldsnap 2024

Penticton



Highlighted Years

- 2024
- 2023

Percentile Ranges

- Very Cold
- Cold
- Normal
- Warm
- Very Warm

Vernon

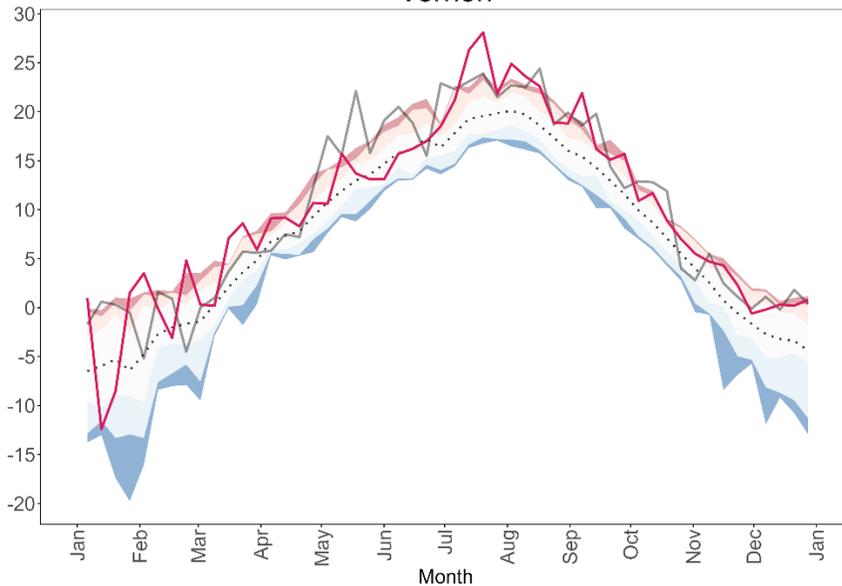


Figure 4 Weekly Mean Temperatures Across the Okanagan in 2024 and 2023 Compared to the 1991-2020 Average. Data from ECCC³

Precipitation

The Okanagan received more precipitation in 2024 than in 2023 but remained in drought throughout the summer. Total precipitation was 354.5 mm in Vernon, 265 mm in Kelowna and 290.7 mm in Penticton (Table 4). Out of the 110-year record from 1915 to 2024, last year’s precipitation ranked 78th in Vernon, 91st in Kelowna, and 83rd in Penticton. Several well-timed rain events throughout the summer were vital in preventing a severe drought and refilling low reservoirs after a below-normal snowpack. With the exceptions of January, February, and August, most months last year had less precipitation than normal for the last 30 years, although most were within the normal range of variability (Figure 5).

Monthly Precipitation vs. 1991–2020 Normal

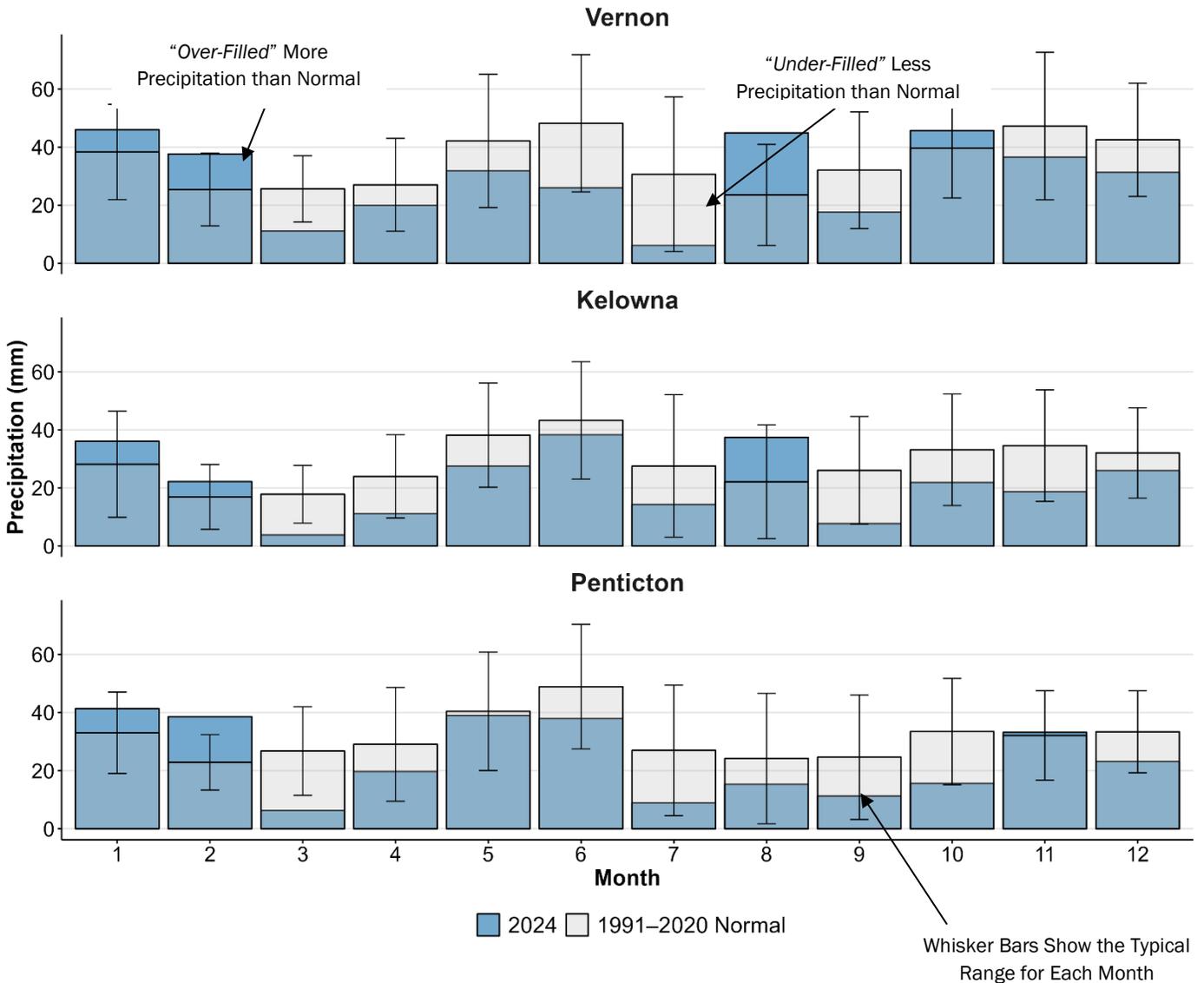


Figure 5 Monthly total precipitation (mm) in 2024 (blue) compared to the 1991-2020 average (grey)

2024 Summary Tables

These tables show some key highlights for 2024. Data Available from the OBWB Climate Indicators webpage³.

Table 1 Annual Mean Temperature - 2024 was hot across the Okanagan

City	2024	Rank Hottest to Coldest	1951-1980 Mean	Coldest on Record	Hottest on Record
Vernon (Coldstream Ranch)	9.9 °C	4 th	7.3 °C	5.4 °C (1996)	10.2 °C (2023)
Kelowna	9.3 °C	4 th	7.1 °C	5.0 °C (1929)	9.6 °C (2015)
Penticton	10.2 °C	18 th	9.0 °C	7.3 °C (1955)	11.1 °C (2015)

Table 2 Days Over 35 °C - The Okanagan experienced a record of extremely hot days

City	2024	Rank Most to Least Days	1951-1980 Mean	Least on Record	Most on Record
Vernon (Coldstream Ranch)	19 days	1 st	1 day	0 days (Many years)	19 days (2024)
Kelowna	17 days	1 st (Tied with 1971)	3 days	0 days (Many years)	17 days (1971 and 2024)
Penticton	17 days	1 st	3 days	0 days (Many years)	17 days (2024)

Table 3 Ice Days (Days with a maximum temperature below 0 °C) – Some of the least on record

City	2024	Rank Most to Least Days	1951-1980 Mean	Most Days on Record	Least Days on Record
Vernon (Coldstream Ranch)	13 days	109 (2 nd lowest)	49 days	81 days (1985)	7 days (1953)
Kelowna	12 days	108 (3 rd Lowest)	37 days	73 days (1985)	3 days (1953)
Penticton	12 days	101	30 days	73 days (1985)	2 days (1953)

Table 4 Total Precipitation – 2024 was a dry year but not in the top 15 for any city

City	2024	Rank Wettest to Driest	1951-1980 Mean	Least on Record	Most on Record
Vernon (Coldstream Ranch)	354.5 mm	78 th	411.6 mm	176.3 mm (2023)	599.8 mm (1995)
Kelowna	265 mm	91 st	348.2 mm	136.8 mm (2015)	529.5 mm (1982)
Penticton	290.7 mm	83 rd	330.4 mm	157.9 mm (2023)	520.7 mm (1983)

³ <https://obwb.ca/indicators/>

Current Conditions 2025

Weather

After the warm fall of 2024, January shifted to colder weather but has not reached the conditions of last year's cold snap. The shift to colder weather was more gradual and less severe than last January. For precipitation, 2025 started off dry, and as of January 27th, the total precipitation for the month was well below average.

Snowpack

As of January 1st, snowpack conditions in the Okanagan were estimated to be 102% of normal (Figure 5). Although snow continued to accumulate throughout January, snow measurement stations are now below normal conditions (Figure 6). Snowpack levels are, in many cases, approaching where they were this time last year.

Seasonal forecasts for the Okanagan from both ECCC and NOAA are projecting wet conditions into the spring so snowpack *may* significantly accumulate into the spring,

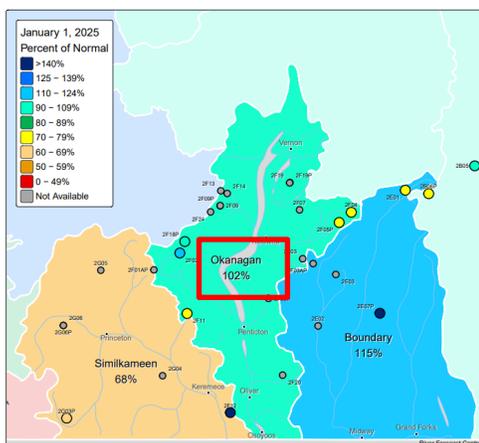


Figure 5 Provincial South Interior Snow Station Map Showing Percent of Normal⁵

⁴ January 1, 2025, Snow Bulletin https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/water/river-forecast/2025_jan1.pdf

⁵ B.C. Water Data <https://bcmoe-prod.aquaticinformatics.net/>
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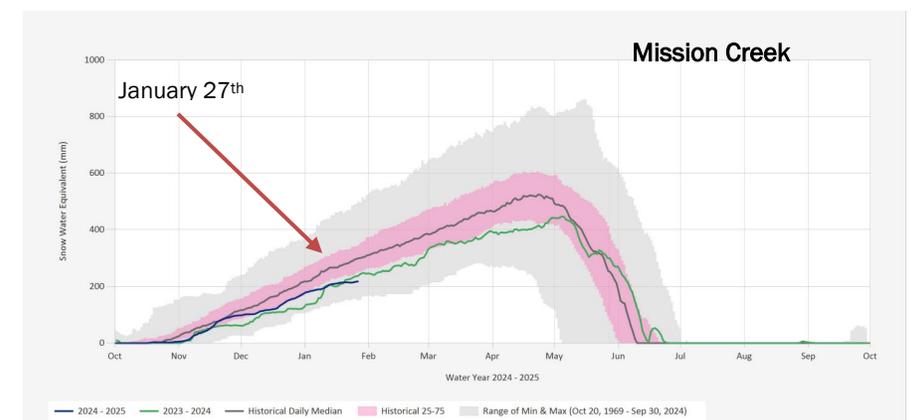
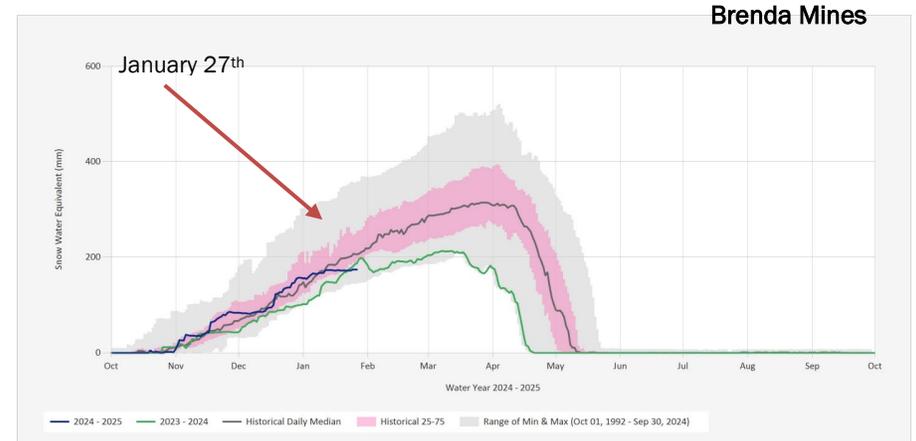
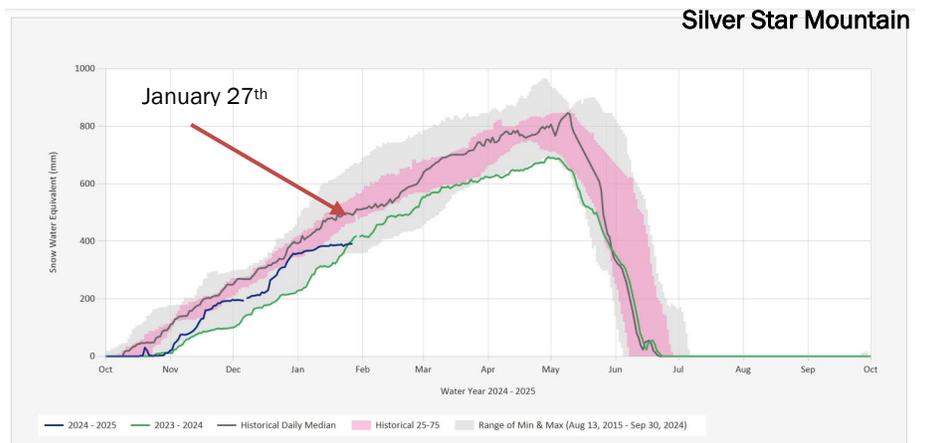


Figure 6 Weekly Snowpack Accumulation Across the Okanagan as of January 27th ⁶

Seasonal Forecast

Seasonal forecasts from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC⁶) and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA⁷) both predict wetter than normal conditions for the winter into the spring (Figure 7). The two organizations have different temperature forecasts with ECCC predicting above normal temperatures in the west, but NOAA is projecting below normal temperatures (Figure 8). Seasonal forecasting is highly challenging, so disagreement between models is not uncommon. Please note that figures 7 and 8 show different time periods, January to March for ECCC and February to April for NOAA which may explain some differences.

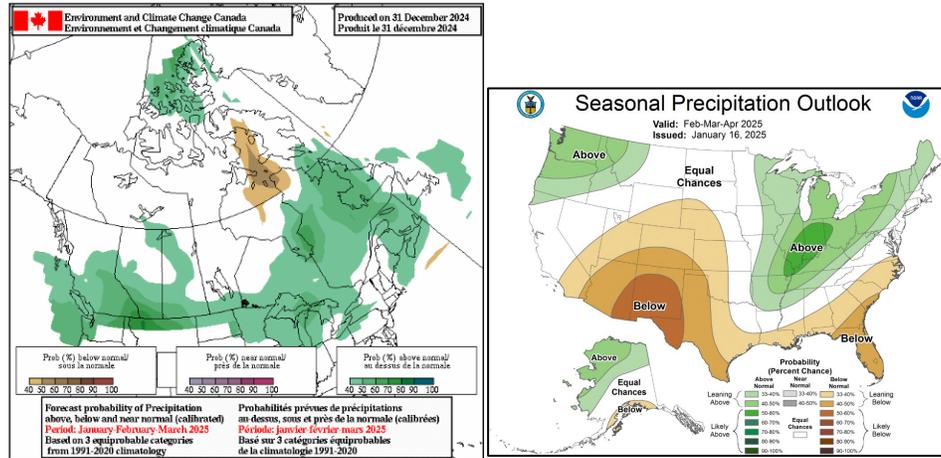


Figure 7 3-Month Seasonal Precipitation Forecast from ECCC⁷ (Jan-Mar) and NOAA⁸ (Feb-Apr). Green areas are projected to be wetter than normal and brown drier

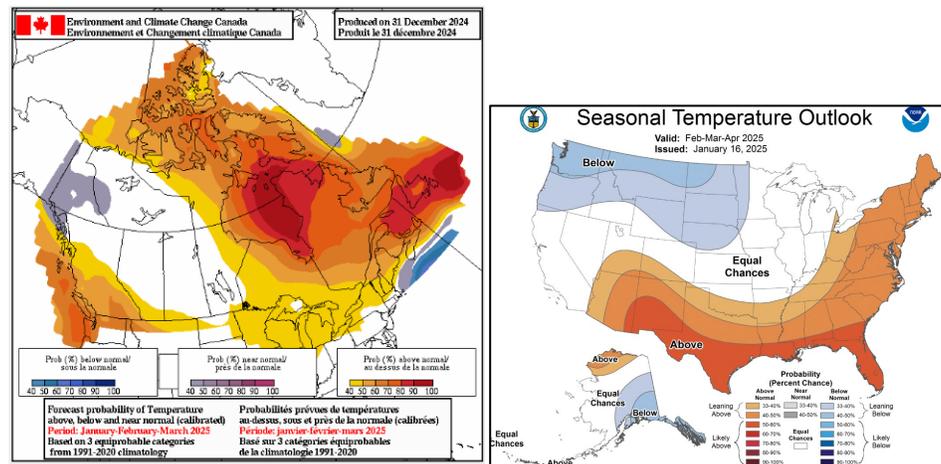


Figure 8 3-Month Seasonal Temperature Forecast from ECCC⁷ (Jan-Mar) and NOAA⁸ (Feb-Apr). Red areas are projected to be warmer than normal and blue areas colder

⁶ECCC 3-Month Seasonal Forecast https://weather.gc.ca/saisons/prob_e.html

⁷NOAA 3-Month Seasonal Forecast

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi_season/13_seasonal_outlooks/color/churchill.php

MEMORANDUM

To: OBWB Directors
From: Anna Warwick Sears and James Littley
Date: January 29, 2025
Subject: **Review of BC Greens-BCNDP Agreement and Mandate Letters**

Okanagan Basin Water Board Regular meeting February 4, 2025 Agenda No: 7.5

The new ministerial mandate letters were released this month, following a delay related to the establishment of an agreement between the BCNDP and the BC Green Caucus. I've selectively gone through these documents, and pulled out points that are relevant to the OBWB. In general, the mandates seem to be focused on urban environments and on reducing immediate costs for consumers. I've included some commentary, in blue text. As well, Mr. Littley thought that this would be a good exercise to put to ChatGPT. That response is given in the second section. I thought it was surprisingly good for a high-level overview.

Section One – Selections and commentary on specific elements of the mandate letters

OBWB-Relevant Aspects of Agreement with Greens:

- Government will work with the BCGC to undertake a review of BC forests with First Nations, workers, unions, business and community to address concerns around sustainability, jobs, environmental protection and the future of the industry. Government will work with the BCGC to establish the detailed terms of reference for this review, which are subject to the approval of both parties. The BCGC will be fully involved in all elements of the review and the resulting report will be made public within 45 days of completion. *[Anna: Hard to tell where this will go, but it could be relevant to Okanagan water.]*
- Government will strengthen collaborative local processes around water management at the watershed level and identify clear actions to improve local governance that will be implemented in later years of its mandate. *[Anna: This is a potentially significant commitment, more or less consistent with the direction of the (still unreleased) Watershed Security Strategy. Depending on how this is implemented, it could support initiatives like the Duteau Plateau project to protect water sources.]*

OBWB-Relevant Aspects of Mandate Letters

Lana Popham: Minister of Agriculture and Food

- Expand affordability and food security in the province by working with farmers to find ways to control costs for them and for the BC families who rely on their products, and by advocating with the federal government for fair programs for British Columbia food producers.
- Strengthen our regional food systems by supporting farming, expanding local food processing, identifying supply chain disruption vulnerabilities, and by increasing economic opportunities through FeedBC and BuyBC.

- *[Anna: nothing explicit about water in the Ag letter, but farmers are definitely talking about the costs of irrigation, and the last government provided a large lump-sum to the Investment Agriculture Foundation to support on-farm water infrastructure.]*

Harwinder Sandhu: Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture

- Work with farmers and food and beverage producers in the Okanagan valley who have been impacted by significant weather-related crop loss. *[Anna: This is an important local issue, and depending on what type of crops are replanted, could be significant for local water availability.]*

Kelly Greene: Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

- Support the Minister of Forests to identify ways to mitigate wildfire risk that simultaneously assist in ensuring consistent fibre supply to businesses that produce wood products or are reliant on wood byproducts in our province. *[Anna: Wildfire has a very significant impact to water quality and supply. The OBWB should be sure that this ministry understands the specific importance of protecting water sources.]*
- Lead cross-ministry coordination for our government's work to enhance BC's resilience, such as our work through the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy and the BC Flood Strategy, and seek a more appropriate level of support from the Federal Government. *[Anna: Water is a prominent part of climate adaptation and, of course, flood strategy.]*
- Develop provincial and regional hazard risk assessments, including modernized tools for access, to improve transparency, awareness, and informed planning and preparedness for communities to enhance resilience.
- Support BC's energy transition and climate targets by directing the Environmental Assessment Office to proceed with the exemption of wind power from Environmental Assessment Act provisions. Further, exempt other relevant classes of projects from environmental assessment where the assessment is duplicative, delays projects with environmental advantages, or offers only limited value while impeding projects that will benefit the province as a whole. *[Anna: This could be good or bad for water, depending on how it's implemented.]*

Ravi Parmar: Minister of Forests

- Continue to bring together industry, First Nations, and communities through forest landscape planning tables – to chart a path forward for the stewardship of BC's forests and forest industry. *[Anna: This could support initiatives like the Duteau Plateau project to protect water sources]*

Josie Osborne: Minister of Health

- No mention of water. *[Anna: Given the role of health authorities in drinking water protection, it would have been nice to see some recognition of the relationship between source protection and population health.]*

Christine Boyle: Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

- Build partnerships that advance reconciliation in measurable ways and create tangible benefits for First Nations and all British Columbians, such as building more affordable housing, generating clean energy, creating good jobs, and protecting our environment. *[Anna: 'Protecting our environment' is carrying a lot of weight here. Environmental Flows for fish are a huge issue for many First Nations across B.C.]*
- Given the strains of conflict over boundaries, and the legal costs and uncertainty associated with unclear boundaries, work with First Nations partners to prioritize Action 1.1 of the Declaration Act

Action Plan relating to overlap and boundary dispute resolution. *[Anna: This is an important point tangentially related to water management in disputed areas.]*

Bowinn Ma: Minister of Infrastructure

- Recognizing BC's growing communities and aging infrastructure, ensure faster delivery of cost-effective, high-quality generational investments. *[Anna: Our whole issue with the update of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System, and the replacement of the dam in Penticton fits here.]*

Randene Neill: Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

- In order to protect key services that British Columbians rely on, work with the Minister of Finance to review all existing Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship programs and initiatives to ensure our programs remain relevant, are efficient, are responsive to the needs of British Columbians, grow the economy, and protect our land and waters. This is important in the context of current Provincial budget constraints and the priorities of communities in the province. *[Anna: I really hope that this ministry isn't subject to big budget cuts, as it's important to have adequate staffing levels for water allocation, licensing, etc.]*
- Support cross-government work in partnership with First Nations to improve timing and transparency of permitting processes to support sustainable economic growth, housing, and infrastructure while maintaining our world-leading environmental standards. *[Anna: This could relate to future water allocations, especially for groundwater licensing in the Okanagan.]*
- Where opportunities are available to reach large-scale agreements on land use and critical metal and mineral development with First Nations in a manner that expedites permits, protects the environment, offers investor security, and increases prosperity for British Columbians, prioritize your Ministry's role in this work to ensure timely implementation. *[Anna: Likely the biggest issue locally would be the permitting of gravel extraction.]*
- Work with communities affected by drought, or expected to face water shortages, to support **community-based priority setting between industrial, agricultural, residential, and environmental uses for water**. Ensure better coordination between water regulators and local communities in advance of drought to support effective response during an emergency. *[Anna: I don't know how they would implement the "community-based" section above. It is potentially very contentious. Who speaks for what part of the community? How much weight is given to different sectors? It's much more complicated than it sounds. The only process I can think of that is like this is the Water Use Planning process – perhaps they want to rebrand it.]*
- Work with your ministerial colleagues across government to balance land use that advances conservation measures and supports a diversified economic strategy, supporting a wide range of industries, including energy, technology, tourism, and resource development. *[Anna: Who decides the priorities for balancing land use? How will different land uses be 'balanced' relative to one another? It's quite subjective.]*
- Continue land use planning with First Nations, industry, and local communities. *[Anna: This also could support initiatives like the Duteau Plateau project to protect water sources.]*
- Work collaboratively to protect critical ecosystems alongside First Nations, communities, workers, industry, organizations, and the public in a way that upholds rights and title claims, and contributes to long term, inclusive economic growth that benefits all British Columbians. *[Anna: This is also quite subjective, although I agree that we need to work collaboratively to protect critical ecosystems. Who decides what's critical, and how that is weighted against 'economic growth'?)*
- Continue our work to restore estuaries, inter-tidal zones, and critical salmon spawning habitats. *[Anna: It would be good to see continuing work to restore our salmon spawning habitats.]*

Section Two – ChatGPT analysis of the mandate letters and their relevance to the OBWB

Questions to ChatGPT 4.0:

1. *Can you please review the latest government of BC mandate letters and compare them to the mandate of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, highlighting any relevant information?*
[James: Initial response was too generic, so I asked a clarifying question]
2. *Could you expand on potential ways that specific details in the mandate letters could interact with the role of the OBWB?*
[James: I could have gone one step further and asked for a breakdown by Ministry]

The following response, including the recommendations, is from ChatGPT:

Answer: Certainly! There are multiple ways the Government of BC's latest mandate priorities could intersect with the Okanagan Basin Water Board's (OBWB) role, especially since water resource management impacts economic development, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Here's a breakdown of key areas where the mandates overlap and how they could interact:

1. Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

The mandate letters highlight a focus on advancing environmental goals, addressing climate change, and enhancing biodiversity protection.

Potential Interaction with OBWB:

- **Drought Mitigation and Adaptation:** As the OBWB manages sustainable water supplies in the Okanagan Basin, they could support provincial climate resiliency objectives through their work on drought planning and promoting efficient water use, especially in agriculture and urban development.
- **Healthy Watersheds Initiative:** The province's emphasis on environmental restoration could align with OBWB's ongoing work to protect lakes, streams, and wetlands. Collaborating on joint projects such as riparian area rehabilitation or invasive species management could amplify both organizations' impact.
- **Climate Policy Implementation:** The OBWB could provide data and expertise to provincial climate programs, ensuring that water-related climate policies are regionally informed and actionable.

2. Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

The government aims to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility, particularly in sectors like agriculture, tourism, and housing.

Potential Interaction with OBWB:

- **Agricultural Water Use:** The OBWB's mandate overlaps with the province's goals for sustainable agricultural growth by supporting farmers in adopting water-efficient irrigation technologies. This is crucial in a water-scarce region like the Okanagan.
- **Tourism Development:** The province's support for tourism aligns with the OBWB's efforts to maintain clean lakes and streams, which are vital for the Okanagan's recreation and tourism industries. Collaborative water quality initiatives would directly support this goal.
- **Sustainable Urban Growth:** As the provincial government promotes housing development, particularly affordable housing, the OBWB could partner with municipalities to ensure that new developments incorporate water conservation measures, such as rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling.

3. Indigenous Reconciliation and Collaboration

The mandate letters emphasize implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) and advancing reconciliation through collaboration with Indigenous communities.

Potential Interaction with OBWB:

- **Indigenous Partnerships in Water Management:** The OBWB could support the province's reconciliation goals by deepening partnerships with Indigenous communities to co-manage water resources in the Okanagan Basin. This includes collaborative planning for watersheds and addressing water quality issues on Indigenous lands.
- **Indigenous Knowledge Integration:** Incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into water management strategies could enhance the OBWB's approach to sustainable water governance while aligning with DRIPA commitments.

4. Public Health and Safety

The government has prioritized public health improvements and community safety, including addressing systemic health issues.

Potential Interaction with OBWB:

- **Safe Drinking Water:** The OBWB's work on source water protection directly supports provincial public health objectives by safeguarding the quality of drinking water for communities in the Okanagan.
- **Flood Management:** With climate change increasing flood risks, OBWB programs such as floodplain mapping and flood management planning could tie into provincial disaster preparedness strategies.
- **Community Engagement:** The OBWB could expand its public education initiatives around water conservation, aligning with the government's goals of building healthier, more informed communities.

5. Infrastructure Investment and Economic Recovery

The government is focused on post-pandemic economic recovery, including investment in infrastructure.

Potential Interaction with OBWB:

- **Water Infrastructure Upgrades:** The OBWB's role in funding water treatment and sewage infrastructure projects complements the government's broader infrastructure investment goals. Coordinating provincial funding with OBWB grants could enhance the effectiveness of regional water systems.
- **Green Infrastructure Projects:** The province's push for "green" infrastructure aligns with OBWB's focus on sustainable water management solutions, such as stormwater management systems and naturalized flood mitigation measures.

6. Housing Affordability and Urban Growth

Increasing housing supply, particularly affordable housing, is a major priority.

Potential Interaction with OBWB:

- **Water Availability for Housing:** The OBWB could work with the province to ensure that water resources are considered in urban planning and housing developments, preventing strain on limited supplies in the Okanagan.
- **Sustainable Community Design:** The OBWB's expertise in water-efficient design could contribute to provincial initiatives encouraging sustainable urban growth and reducing the environmental footprint of new housing projects.

Recommendations for Collaboration

1. **Joint Funding Opportunities:** OBWB could seek partnerships with the province for co-funding initiatives like water infrastructure upgrades and watershed restoration projects.
2. **Policy Alignment:** The OBWB could participate in provincial consultation processes to ensure that water management policies in the Okanagan reflect both provincial goals and local realities.
3. **Cross-Government Collaboration:** Establishing working groups with provincial ministries (e.g., Environment, Agriculture, Municipal Affairs) would strengthen alignment between the OBWB's water strategies and provincial priorities.
4. **Regional Water Governance Models:** OBWB could position itself as a leader in regional water governance, providing a model for other BC regions as the province advances sustainability and reconciliation goals.

By aligning efforts, the OBWB and the BC government can create synergies that advance shared objectives of sustainability, reconciliation, and community well-being while addressing the unique challenges of the Okanagan Basin.