



**Okanagan Basin**  
WATER BOARD

**BOARD REPORT: April 2, 2024**

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## **OBWB Directors**

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Similkameen

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Similkameen

**Tim Lezard,** Okanagan Nation  
Alliance

**Bob Hrasko,** Water Supply  
Association of B.C.

**Jeremy Fyke,** Water  
Stewardship Council

**The next OBWB meeting will be  
an abbreviated session May 7,  
2024 at Kelowna Yacht Club,  
followed by a joint Board-Water  
Stewardship Council meeting.**

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## **Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights**

**Directors hear from Environmental Emergency Program staff:** After the Nov. 17, 2023 transport truck incident in West Kelowna and resulting chemical fire, OBWB Directors had inquiries regarding the impacts to water supplies and broader emergency response protocols. To answer their concerns, Senior Environmental Emergency Response Officer Kandis Lipsett from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Sustainability provided a briefing at the April Board meeting. She provided information to the Board about the provincial response strategies for emergency spills, and gave an important opportunity for all to ask questions, share insights and bolster communication channels between OBWB and Ministry staff.

**OBWB bracing for another year of drought:** the board was provided with an update on the snowpacks in the Okanagan. Snow measurement devices in the Okanagan show that current snow levels are below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of their historical records. While the public may notice lake levels are still high, this is due to provincial dam operators holding back water in anticipation of drought conditions.

**Board hears updates on Milfoil Control Program:** OBWB staff provided an update on the shift from winter to summer milfoil control measures. Winter deep-water rototilling operations will be completed by the end of April, at which time we will transition to summer milfoil harvesting. During the winter, OBWB rototill operators followed board policy to prioritize beaches and public areas. The new amphibious milfoil harvester has also arrived and been tested by OBWB staff. The machine is functioning and ready for its first launch.

**Water Conservation & Quality Improvement (WCQI) Grants Awarded:** Directors received staff recommendations to fund 14 of the 23 WCQI grant applications received, using 100% of the \$350,000 available funds. The theme for this year's grant is drought resilience. All applications received were very strong and the selection process was very competitive. Projects awarded funding include a dam impact assessment in the McDougall Watershed, and a Swan Lake Wetland Restoration project, among others. All projects selected for funding must demonstrate that they will advance water conservation or quality improvement, and ideally fit the grant's annual theme and have an impact valley wide.

**'Don't Move A Mussel' 2023 campaign report findings presented:** The board received the wrap-up report on its 2023 'Don't Move A Mussel' campaign. In all, the campaign delivered 6.1 million impressions, using a number of tools including public service announcements on billboards and radio as well as ads on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Castanet and Google. In a recent survey conducted by OBWB, 'Don't Move A Mussel' has grown in awareness among Okanagan residents from 47% in 2014 to 64% awareness in 2023.

**For more information, please visit: [www.OBWB.ca](http://www.OBWB.ca)**