



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: June 6, 2024

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The next OBWB meeting will be
held on August 6, 2024 at the
Regional District of the North
Okanagan.

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Okanagan Lake dam manager speaks to lake levels & drought impacts: Shaun Reimer, B.C. Section Head, Public Safety & Protection provided an update on drought management for the inflows and outflows of Okanagan Lake. This year, because of last year's drought followed by a low snowpack, the province is capturing as much inflow as it can and allowing only minimal outflows. Reimer noted that drought response strategies were refined after the 2015 drought, and real-time monitoring of Okanagan waterways at key locations is essential for decision-making and sustainable water management.

Board welcomes pull-the-plug order: Directors discussed the B.C. government's May 16 introduction of a pull-the-plug order which the Water Board has been pushing for five years. The order requires watercraft operators to remove drainplugs before transporting their vessels. The board asked staff to report back at the next meeting on other calls to action and next steps to address the invasive mussel threat. The board also heard that its annual [Don't Move A Mussel](#) campaign is underway.

Water board expands Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grant Program: Since its inception in 1976, the sewerage facilities grant program has improved water quality by funding wastewater treatment infrastructure. The board voted to expand the funding program to assist properties with pre-2007 septic systems and introduce grants for Liquid Waste Management Plans, promoting groundwater protection and proper septic maintenance. The updated grant program will be available to communities starting in 2025.

Make Water Work launch a success: The board heard details on the May 30 campaign launch of [Make Water Work](#) (MWW) at Lakestone Villas. The Lake Country location showcases last year's successful wildfire defense through the community's adoption of WaterWise and FireSmart practices. Okanagan mayors, councillors, local government partners, firefighters, and garden centre partners were on hand, reminding residents the importance of preparing properties for fire and drought. The launch included the announcement of an updated "Make Water Work Plant Collection" list with FireSmart plants noted, indicating the ability to have plants that can be WaterWise and resist fire. Lake Country Fire Chief Darren Lee spoke to the importance of conserving water for firefighting and clarified best practices for emergency roof top sprinklers, encouraging residents who put sprinklers out to leave them off and let firefighters turn them on as needed.

Three new hydrometric stations installed for Okanagan: Board directors learned about three new hydrometric stations installed and now in operation at Irish Creek, Nashwhito Creek, and Ewer Creek in the North Okanagan. Data from these stations help local government and provincial staff make water management decisions to hold back or release water to meet the needs of aquatic ecosystems, farming and domestic use.

For more information, please visit: www.OBWB.ca