



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: August 9, 2024

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The next regular meeting of the
OBWB will be an abbreviated
session on **Sept. 6, 2024** following
the Annual Public Meeting at
Rotary Arts Centre, Kelowna.

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Directors hear from province on drought response: Nicole Pyett, Water Resources Section Head with B.C. Ministry of Water, Lands and Natural Resources (WLNR) presented on the province's drought management and underscored a deliberate policy shift towards enhanced collaboration and communication. She said the 2024 drought response has included community outreach meetings, and at least weekly meetings with local utility, provincial, Indigenous, federal and agricultural partners. An updated B.C. Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan is also guiding response, helping determine drought levels based on several indicators (e.g. snowpack, streamflow and groundwater levels) to ensure best possible outcomes when addressing drought.

Okanagan remains at drought Level 3 "Severely Dry": Drought levels are set by the Province of B.C. in consultation with regional partners, including utilities, agriculture and fisheries staff. The Okanagan is at Level 3 where serious ecosystem or socio-economic impacts are possible. Residents are being encouraged to follow their local water restrictions, determined by their water supplier. The OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program leads a valley-wide water conservation initiative, Make Water Work. Residents can find water restrictions, conservation tips, and a pledge contest to win 1 of 2 \$500 WaterWise yard upgrades at www.MakeWaterWork.ca.

Cross-provincial cooperation looked at to prevent invasive mussels: Following recent conversations with elected officials across the Pacific Northwest, board directors instructed staff to draft letters to B.C. WLNR Minister Nathan Cullen, and Alberta's Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force Chair Grant Hunter. The aim is to collaborate and designate B.C., Alberta, and potentially Saskatchewan, a "Western Canada Mussel-Free Zone." The purpose would be to restrict watercraft from outside these provinces to protect local ecosystems, support tourism, and reduce the threat of invasive mussels from infested areas like Ontario and Manitoba.

OBWB hosts talk on the "world's most litigated river system": Zane Marshall, Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA)'s Director of Water Resources, will be presenting the keynote address at the OBWB's Annual Public Meeting on Friday, Sept. 6. The talk will be on "Lessons Learned Through Water Scarcity on the Colorado River." Marshall leads seven divisions at SNWA that oversee water, land and environmental resource management, water conservation, climate change, plus much more. His talk will focus on water management in Southern Nevada and the Colorado River, known as the most controlled and litigated river system in the world. More details to follow at www.OBWB.ca.

New milfoil harvester name selected: Water Board Directors reviewed contest submissions to name the OBWB's new amphibious milfoil harvester and settled on the name "Hippo." Stay tuned for details on a naming ceremony.

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