



BOARD REPORT: May 6, 2025

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

OBWB Directors

Blair Ireland - Chair,
Regional District of Central
Okanagan

Doug Holmes - Vice-Chair,
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Victor Cumming, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Rick Fairbairn, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Bob Fleming, Regional Dis-
trict of North Okanagan

Wayne Carson, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Charlie Hodge, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Subrina Monteith, Regional
District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Sue McKortoff,
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Tim Lezard, Okanagan Nation
Alliance

Bob Hrasko, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Jeremy Fyke, Water
Stewardship Council

**The next regular meeting of the
OBWB will be Tuesday, June 3,
2025 at the offices of the
RDOS in Penticton, 101 Martin
St, Penticton, BC.**

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New Water Quality Project Manager begins at OBWB: The Okanagan Basin Water Board's (OBWB) May Board meeting included the introduction of Christina White, the new Water Quality Project Manager. A Registered Professional Biologist with 12 years of experience in aquatic biology, White's appointment will expand the OBWB's capacity and support ongoing programs such as invasive watermilfoil control, invasive mussel prevention, and water quality research.

Joint OBWB-OWSC Meeting Strengthens Collaboration: The OBWB and the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) held their second annual joint meeting at the Capri Hotel in Kelowna. The session focused on strengthening communication and coordination between the OBWB and its technical advisory body. By bringing together local elected officials and water experts, the meeting fostered strategic alignment ahead of the OBWB's 2025-2029 planning cycle and encouraged deeper collaboration on critical water issues affecting the Okanagan.

OBWB thanks ONA for Letter: At the May meeting, Water Board Directors expressed their appreciation for the Okanagan Nation Alliance's recent letter to the B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship. The letter supports a recent [OBWB statement](#) opposing the use of chemical aquatic herbicides in Okanagan lakes, streams, and reservoirs. The ONA's letter was written in response to recent federal and provincial approvals of chemicals, including the aquatic herbicide "ProcellaCOR FX," and an aquatic pesticide formulation of potash. Directors were encouraged by the ONA's letter and reaffirmed their commitment to protecting Okanagan water from chemical contamination.

Launch of 2025 public outreach campaigns Directors were informed that the 2025 "Make Water Work" and "Don't Move a Mussel" public outreach campaigns are in their final stages of preparation. This year, staff are pleased to announce a collaboration between the Make Water Work campaign and FireSmart™, promoting WaterWise landscaping practices that also create fire-resilient yards. The annual spring launch of Make Water Work will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at the xeriscape gardens in front of Armstrong City Hall. Community leaders and WaterWise garden experts are expected to speak at the launch.

OBWB Advances Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring Initiative: Water Stewardship Director Dr. Nelson Jatel updated Directors on collaborative efforts with the City of Kelowna and Westbank First Nation to monitor harmful algal blooms in Okanagan Lake. Together, the partners have submitted a funding proposal to Environment and Climate Change Canada for a project titled "Collaborative Monitoring and Early-Warning System for Harmful Algal Blooms." With a proposed budget of approximately \$180,000, the project aims to develop a region-wide monitoring network and early-warning system for cyanobacteria blooms, running from September 2025 to August 2027. The application requests 50% funding through EcoAction, with OBWB contributing \$30,000 and significant in-kind support for coordination and data management. Designed to be both scalable and transferable, the system offers long-term value for Canadian water utilities facing climate-related water quality challenge.

OBWB Awards Hydrometric Monitoring Contract to ONA: The OBWB Board of Directors has approved a \$344,080 contract with the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) for the 2025-26 operation and maintenance of hydrometric stations under the OBWB Hydrometric Information Network Program. This decision reflects the ONA's proven technical expertise and reinforces the strong, ongoing partnership between the two organizations in support of regional water monitoring.

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