



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: June 3, 2025

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OBWB Directors

Blair Ireland - Chair,
Regional District of Central
Okanagan

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

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District of North Okanagan

Rick Fairbairn, Regional
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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.

Sheena Spencer, Water
Stewardship Council

**The next regular meeting of the
OBWB will be Tuesday, August
5, 2025 at the offices of the
RDNO, 9848 Aberdeen Road,
Coldstream, BC.**

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Push for Okanagan's Inclusion in Federal Designation: Okanagan Water Board Directors plan further advocacy with federal agencies regarding Canada Water Agency's Freshwater Action Plan. This plan notably excludes the Columbia watershed, including the Okanagan basin, from its designated eight [fresh water bodies of significance](#). Directors are concerned this omission could reduce access to funding for critical projects that would protect or restore our Okanagan waters.

Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage: Zoe Eyjolfson, Fluvial Geomorphologist at the Okanagan Nation Alliance, presented on the [Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage project](#), currently being constructed in Penticton at the Okanagan Lake Dam. This project will give salmon a safe path to cross the dam into Okanagan lake for spawning and will be another huge step towards bringing salmon back to our lakes.

Continued Advocacy for Invasive Mussel Funding: OBWB Directors encouraged staff to continue to advocate for consistent, long-term funding for invasive zebra and quagga mussel prevention. This push will be part of their June 10 presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the Province of B.C.'s 2026 budget, emphasizing the critical need to protect B.C. waters.

New Provincial Drought Ratings Discussed: Directors discussed the Province of B.C.'s update to its drought level communication system. The province is updating how it communicates and sets regional drought ratings in B.C. Directors expressed concerns about effectively communicating these ratings and how they differ from local watering restrictions, which can vary significantly (e.g., between Armstrong and Osoyoos). Residents should always check with their local water provider for accurate watering restrictions.

OBWB Staff Present at National Water Conference: Directors heard that OBWB staff presented on key Okanagan water initiatives at the Canadian Water Resources Association (CWRA) National Conference in Penticton in May. OBWB staff presented on the [Climate Indicator Dashboard](#), and the new real-time [Environmental Flows Monitoring App](#), a tool that provides real-time information about stream water levels across the Okanagan.

Okanagan Mayors Square Up: Directors heard about the successful launch of the 2025 Make Water Work, Plant FireSmart™ campaign that saw Armstrong Mayor Joe Cramer and Lake Country Mayor Blair Ireland challenge each other's communities to [Take the Make Water Work Pledge](#) — a long-standing contest for the most pledges per capita. Last year, the Town of Oliver took home the title of Community Champion, but this year Osoyoos Mayor Sue McKortoff also has her eyes on the prize, promising to secure the win for her town. Osoyoos and Oliver are currently leading, while Armstrong is in third place. Take the pledge for a chance to win a \$500 gift card for a WaterWise yard upgrade.

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