



Highlights from the Oct. 7, 2025 Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, held at the offices of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, in Penticton, B.C.



OBWB Calls on Federal and Provincial Governments to Improve Invasive Mussel Defence:

To sustain its push on this critical issue, the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) will send letters calling on the Federal and Provincial Governments for better collective action to halt the spread of invasive mussels across Canada. In its letters, the OBWB will ask the Federal Government to match provincial investments and offset the \$1 million-plus that B.C. must reallocate annually to cover the federal

responsibility of watercraft inspections at international borders. The OBWB is also calling on the Federal Government to:

- Invest in research and innovation to strengthen prevention,
- Update national risk mapping to include golden mussels, and,
- Establish public accountability for invasive mussel prevention.

To the Province, OBWB will request swift implementation of mandatory watercraft inspection regulations, interim safeguards to limit high-risk watercraft access to B.C., and the creation of a Western Canada Mussel-Free Zone in partnership with Alberta and Saskatchewan.

OBWB Seeks Partners to fully fund "Artificial K9 Nose" research project:

OBWB Directors voted unanimously to commit \$200,000 over two years to develop a rapid environmental DNA (eDNA) detection tool. This tool aims to detect the presence of invasive mussels on travelling watercraft and

could transform invasive mussel prevention across the Pacific Northwest by providing real-time, on-site results at a fraction of the cost of current detection methods. The \$200,000 commitment from OBWB will fund close to half of the research project lead by Dr. Michael Russello of UBC Okanagan.

Recognizing the project's importance, the Board will partner with Dr. Russello to pursue the remaining \$200,000 in funding required to proceed.



[Read the full OBWB News Release - click here.](#)

\$390K Grant Application to Provide Necessary Science to Support Okanagan Water Planning:

Directors approved a staff application to the Strategic Priorities Fund to modernize and apply the Hydrology Model across all 18 Okanagan sub-basins, aiming to produce the most accurate water and climate data ever produced for the region. This project, developed in consultation with the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the University of Waterloo, is vital for strengthening community resilience, supporting evidence-based decision making, and reducing future water conflicts.

Aging Water Infrastructure Key Concern for Local Governments:

OBWB Staff shared that a prevailing theme across regional districts and municipalities is looming water infrastructure challenges: aging systems, escalating costs, and limited local capacity. The OBWB will use its convening power and technical expertise to do a community needs-driven assessment to figure out how they might support conversations on best practices, coordinate advocacy for increased senior government investment, and provide science-based tools and data to support decision making.



Okanagan Drought Deepens with Record Heat: The Okanagan experienced extreme conditions this September with a significant heatwave leading to temperatures much warmer than the 1991-2020 average and possibly setting new monthly records. Directors were shown how the combination of record heat, persistent dry weather, and below-normal Okanagan Lake levels has resulted in low streamflows and warm water temperatures across many systems, creating thermal barriers that threaten fish passage and increase concerns for the 2026 agricultural season and beyond.

As of Oct. 9, 2025 the province **raised the Okanagan to Drought Level 4**—an unprecedented and critical level change for this time of year.

The next regular meeting of the
OBWB will be Tuesday, Nov. 7,
2025 held online.

[Go to OBWB.ca](https://www.obwb.ca)

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