



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD AUGUST 1, 2023 AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN,
9848 ABERDEEN RD., COLDSTREAM**

PRESENT

Vice-Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Alt. Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt. Director Adrienne Fedrigo	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt. Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

REGRETS

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan

GUESTS

Mathew Keast	City of Vernon
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STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Deputy Administrator
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Director
Sandra Schira	Climate Indicators Intern
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

Vice-Chair Ireland respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 1, 2023 be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 6, 2023, held online.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on June 6, 2023, held online, be approved."

CARRIED

4. DELEGATION

- 4.1 Mathew Keast, City of Vernon Water Resources Engineer, presenting on Vernon Creek Naturalization through Polson Park, funded in part with OBWB WCQI grant

Dr. Sears introduced Mr. Keast who provided an overview of the Vernon Creek naturalization project in Polson Park, funded in part through an OBWB Water Conservation and Quality Improvement grant.

The project began in response to local flooding, and staff are now developing a master plan for the creek. Planning will include public consultation this year and next, and Phase 1 work is expected to begin in summer 2024 at Hwy 97 along Vernon Creek in Polson Park. Phase 2 will include development of multiuse paths and crossings.

Initial discussions have included a number of municipal departments, as well as B.C. Ministry of Forests regarding riparian habitat, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans regarding fish, and local First Nations regarding archeological artifacts found in the area, Mr. Keast noted.

Once work is ready to begin, naturalization will be the first step, including removal of concrete barriers, adding riparian planting, and reengaging the floodplain, he added. The naturalization will complement work by the Okanagan Indian Band and Okanagan Nation Alliance to bring sockeye and chinook back into the system and improve conditions for kokanee and Rainbow Trout.

In response to questions, Mr. Keast explained that although the channeling was done to address flooding, it was designed to a one in 100-year event standard. With climate change, the city is seeing higher and more intense flows and the channeling is no longer working, he said.

Dir. Cumming noted that OKIB members have talked about having family living in the area and that the project will have profound impact. The habitat improvements will not only address flooding, but also bring fish back and provide additional ecosystem benefits.

5. STAFF REPORTS

- 5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears told the board about OBWB staff changes, noting Ms. Garcia is leaving to work with the agricultural community to launch something similar to the Water Board's technical advisory body, the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, but for agriculture. Sandra Shira will become full-time Water Science Coordinator and Amanda Burnett has joined the team as a half-time Communications Coordinator.

The OBWB's annual meeting will be held Friday, Sept. 8, 9 a.m. to noon, and will be followed by an abbreviated regular board meeting. Staff are working on the annual report and a tracking measures update.

Dr. Sears will conduct a clinic at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)'s September conference. The session will look at how to build safely in floodplains, using local government planning policies and bylaws. District of Squamish and City of Vernon staff are among the co-presenters.

In response to a meeting with Kelowna MLA Renee Merrifield, staff are planning a community workshop to address water issues along Mission Creek, including flooding, fire concerns and more.

Dr. Sears provided a brief update on an Indigenous Engagement Institute she attended which looked at bringing First Nations laws alongside the colonial legal system to address various issues. Staff also participated in a couple of syilx language workshops, she added.

Finally, an outside consultant is being hired to review staff compensation for the 2024-25 budget year.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated July 26, 2023, be received.”
CARRIED

5.2 Deputy Administrator Report

Mr. Littley updated the board on discussions at the July Pacific NorthWest Economic Region Invasive Species Working Group annual meeting, including interest in the OBWB’s mussel vulnerability toolkit which is in development.

The board discussed the province’s recent invasive mussel economic report, the current state of the inspection program, mapping that shows the level of risk to Okanagan waterways and potential calls for action.

“THAT the OBWB send an open letter to B.C.’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, and copy Okanagan MLAs, MPs, local governments, ISCBC, OASISS, the Shuswap Watershed Council, and other partners, with updated calls to action including the following:

- 1. Commit funding to the IMDP of no less than \$4 million per year (all sources), indexed to inflation for at least 10 years.***
- 2. Provide enhanced support to recruit and retain provincial Auxiliary Conservation Officers and other staff as needed to 2019 levels of 64 inspectors annually to ensure sufficient staffing for the IMDP.***
- 3. Commit to introducing “pull-the-plug” legislation to be in effect prior to the 2024 boating season.***
- 4. Update the provincial Early Detection, Rapid Response Plan, including a round of consultation with partner organizations prior to finalization.***
- 5. Introduce a provincially-led process to create long-term response, containment and control plans in regions at high risk of introduction from water-based tourism, and high risk of infestation from water chemistry, including the Okanagan, Shuswap and Kootenay Regions, working with regional partners.***

CARRIED

There was some discussion about partnerships in invasive mussel prevention, including with Okanagan Nation Alliance. Concern regarding floatplanes moving from one water body to another was also raised. OBWB directors noted that the focus of the UBCM resource breakfast on Fri., Sept. 22 is on water, and that the mussel issue should be raised in a coordinated way with the B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship who will be in attendance.

The board was briefed on a City of Vernon grant application to the OBWB’s Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grant Program for a sewer extension in the Okanagan Landing area.

“THAT Sewage Facilities Application for the City of Vernon - Okanagan Landing 2021 sewer extensions project be approved as presented.

CARRIED

“THAT the Deputy Administrator’s Report, dated July 24, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

5.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel told the board about a presentation at the June 6 OWSC meeting by Dr. Pete Millard, General Manager of Science at Manaaki Wheuna Landcare Research, speaking on “Waiti: How Aotearoa, New Zealand is Dealing with Water Quality and Other Environmental Issues.” This month Erin Vieira, representing Shuswap Watershed Council will be speaking. Dr. Fyke added that the council is creating work plans with four committees: Policy, Agricultural Irrigation and Environmental Flow Needs, Water Quality, and Organizational Readiness.

Directors were also briefed on a recent workshop looking at new technology that will help the OBWB’s Hydrometric Service Program collect data safely in high flow periods. It will also be able to determine environmental flow needs (EFNs) and critical flow needs at various life stages for kokanee and Rainbow Trout. Work is being done to also provide this information for sockeye and chinook. This information can then help develop appropriate water management strategies.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated July 24, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

5.4 Policy and Planning Director Report

Ms. Garcia provided an update on meetings with the province’s Thompson Okanagan Regional Drought Response Team, noting the Okanagan is currently in Level 3 drought (of 5) as of July 6. It was noted that drought levels are different than local water suppliers’ water restriction stages which depend on water availability and other factors. Many utilities are in stage 1 restrictions, while others are moving to higher restriction stages, she added. Drought Bulletins with information on current water supplies and concerns were sent out in June and July to water suppliers, elected officials, media and others. Currently there is growing concern for Shuttleworth, Inkaneep and Vaseux Creeks which are very low and do not receive water through upland storage.

Work is also being done to update the Okanagan Flood Story website, Ms. Garcia added.

“THAT the Policy and Planning Director’s Report, dated July 25, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

5.5 Climate Indicators Intern Report

Ms. Schira gave an update on her climate indicators research, explaining that she requires at least 30 years of data, but some communities have 100 which is helpful. Looking at the data, there is a clear trend that shows the Okanagan is getting warmer across all locations studied (Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton) and all seasons. Cold events still happen and can be extreme but you can see a shift to warmer, she added.

Summer average temperatures in these communities are showing a 1-degree increase (some years it’s higher, sometimes lower, but the average is 1 degree). The number of days where the temperature was above 30C has increased, especially in the last 10 years, she added. At one time, Kelowna would see an average of 25 days above 30C, but now it experiences 35 days above

30C. There is a clear pattern since 2000, Ms. Schira concluded noting this data can help determine infrastructure needs, EFNs and more.

“THAT the Climate Indicators Intern’s Report, dated July 25, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

6.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson gave an update on communication efforts to help address the current drought including the Make Water Work campaign, as well as ads on TV and radio, encouraging residents to follow local watering restrictions and find conservation tips at www.MakeWaterWork.ca. Support is also being provided for public drought forums being organized by the province and RDOS in Oliver, Keremeos and Princeton, and potentially in Kelowna and Vernon.

We have a contract in place with the Okanagan Xeriscape Association and they have been doing outreach with our garden centre partners, encouraging WaterWise purchases, including those on the Make Water Work Plant Collection list. In response to questions, Ms. Jackson said that the list will be revised to also note FireSmart plants.

Work this summer has also focussed on the Don’t Move A Mussel campaign, raising awareness for invasive mussels and prevention of their spread into Okanagan waters. The website (www.DontMoveAMussel.ca) has been updated. Billboard, radio and digital advertising is running, and a number of outreach materials have been created, including rack cards, posters, mussel-muscle shirts, dry bags and more. The materials are being distributed by the Okanagan Similkameen Invasive Species Society as part of our contract with them to do invasive mussel public outreach.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated July 26, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- 6.1 OBWB letter to B.C. Ministers Cullen and Heyman regarding Potential Economic Impacts of Zebra and Quagga Mussels in B.C.
- 6.2 OBWB letter to B.C. Ministers Kahlon and Kang, regarding sewage pollution risks from the B.C. Homes for People action plan
- 6.3 RDOS letter from Christopher Garrish, Senior Manager of Planning to OBWB regarding one-hectare policy for the Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grant Program
- 6.4 Response letter from Ministers Cullen and Heyman

In discussing the correspondence, Dr. Sears explained that OBWB staff are working on updating the SFA grants program, adding that she understands the pressure to densify on properties with septic. The review will include what powers communities have to act and new technology will be looked at as part of the update.

“THAT the correspondence be received.”

CARRIED

7. NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be an abbreviated meeting on Friday, Sept. 8 at 12 noon, following our annual meeting at Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna.

8. ADJOURNMENT

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Aug. 1, 2023 be adjourned at 1:30 p.m."

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director