



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD SEPTEMBER 8, 2023 AT ROTARY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS,  
421 CAWSTON AVE., COLDSTREAM**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Christine Fraser	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt. Director Gord Lovegrove	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt. Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

**REGRETS**

Director Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Deputy Administrator
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m.

Chair McKortoff 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 Sept. 8, 2023 be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 1, 2023, held at Regional District of North Okanagan.

***“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on August 1, 2023, held at Regional District of North Okanagan, be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**4. STAFF REPORTS**

#### 4.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears provided background on the annual Strategic Plan tracking measures memo, noting that the results shown are not cumulative and an overview looking at the lifespan of the plan will be provided next year.

The board was told of an upcoming clinic at the Union of B.C. Municipalities conference looking at building safely in floodplains, bridging the topics of flood mapping and the housing. The clinic, led by Dr. Sears, was to include representatives from City of Vernon, District of Squamish and City of Grand Forks.

Dr. Sears said staff are organizing a meeting regarding Mission Creek. As the largest tributary to Okanagan Lake, there are a number of competing goals and objectives when it comes to water management, including environmental flow needs, domestic and farm irrigation, logging and more. The executive director noted that she was invited and is planning to attend a transboundary mining conference in Osoyoos, hosted by the Lower Similkameen Indian Band in October.

Directors were told that the three recommendations OBWB provided to the B.C. provincial budget consultation have been included in the final report to the government. The recommendations included funding for prevention, early detection and rapid response for invasive mussels, increased funding for B.C.'s Watershed Security Fund (WSF) and funding to review the Okanagan Lake Regulation System and Operating Plan. Increased funding for the WSF was echoed in the OBWB's submission for the federal budget consultation.

Work is underway on the OBWB's 2024-25 budget which will be presented to the board at the November meeting.

There is a 95% chance of El Niño continuing through the winter, resulting in a warmer than normal fall and winter, and lower rainfall.

***"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated August 29, 2023, be received."***

**CARRIED**

#### 4.2 Deputy Administrator Report

Mr. Littley provided an update on the invasive mussel issue, noting that in response to OBWB lobbying efforts and the efforts of others, the province implemented an inspection program in 2012 and since then has conducted 250,000 inspections, and intercepted at least 150 infested watercraft. As well, the Water Board has pushed for greater partner cooperation, for example with Canada Border Services Agency which has led to stronger enforcement, and water monitoring which has also expanded. Looking at this year's inspection program, the board discussed additional action that could be taken. Dr. Sears said that was approved to have a meeting with Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture Kelly Greene at UBCM and invited directors to attend with her.

The board was updated on the milfoil control program and told that summer harvesting is complete. As well, repairs are underway to the milfoil shop following an inspection and in compliance with the lease agreement in place with RDNO.

***"THAT the Deputy Administrator's Report, dated August 28, 2023, be received."***

**CARRIED**

#### 4.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel told the board that Jennifer Vigano, Director of Watershed Strategies and Governance for the B.C. Ministry of B.C. Water, Land and Resource Stewardship would be presenting at the next Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting.

Dir. Fyke provided an update as OWSC Chair and as Coordinator at Environment and Climate Change Canada, noting that August was the warmest month on record since recording began. El Niño warms and is also drier, so this has been amplified, he added, saying that we can expect to see this more every 4-6 years.

Directors noted that they have several meetings at UBCM with Premier Eby and various ministries, and the possibility of raising various water issues. Dr. Sears offered to attend and support directors in these discussions.

The board was told about plans for a second Environmental Flow Needs conference, March 13-15, 2024, building on the one held in 2018.

Work on the Hydrometric Monitoring Program is continuing, providing important information on water flows, helping water managers make decisions that meet the needs of fish, farmers, and domestic users. Dr. Jatel explained that these data can also play an important role in land-use decisions, infrastructure planning, and promoting sustainable practices in the community. Dir. Fraser noted that despite efforts by the Township of Spallumcheen to improve Deep Creek for fish, low water levels led the province to issue sec. 88 fish protection orders this summer to some area licencees. However, some water users refused to follow the order, referring to First in Time, First in Right. Dr. Jatel explained that the B.C. Water Sustainability Act allows for a Water Sustainability Plan to be developed that would supersede FITFIR.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, August 29, 2023, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

#### 6.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson gave an update on the ongoing Level 5 drought and communication efforts, including the development and delivery of a drought bulletin on Aug. 4 announcing the Government of B.C.’s declaration of Level 4 drought for the Okanagan, and then on Aug. 17 when the region was declared at Level 5. The bulletin is provided to local government electeds, MLAs and MPs, utility staff, OWSC members and media. They provide an update on current water supplies, helping policy-makers make water management decisions, and encouraging agriculture customers and residents to conserve. The bulletins are also posted on the OBWB’s social media channels. Drought ads were also created and are airing on local TV and radio, encouraging residents to follow local watering restrictions and find conservation tips at [www.MakeWaterWork.ca](http://www.MakeWaterWork.ca).

Directors were also told the Don’t Move a Mussel campaign will continue until mid-October, with two more long-weekends around the corner. The latest B.C. inspection numbers show that the greatest number of visitors with mussel-infested watercraft name the Okanagan as their destination. Dir. Lezard noted the importance of keeping the mussels out of the region and the potential impact on fish and the sylix community, adding that contact should be made about making a presentation to the Okanagan Nation Alliance’s Chief Executive Council. Staff agreed to follow up.

***“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated August 29, 2023, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

5. **IN-CAMERA**

5.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(k) and 90 (1) e) of the Community Charter)

1:47 p.m. Came out of in-camera.

6. **NEXT MEETING**

6.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, Oct. 3 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, or online TBD.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

*“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 8, 2023 be adjourned at 1:48 p.m.”*

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director