



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD APRIL 2, 2024, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN  
9848 ABERDEEN RD., COLDSTREAM, B.C.**

---

**PRESENT**

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice-chair Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

**REGRETS**

Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen

**GUESTS**

Kandis Lipsett	B.C. Environmental Emergency Program
----------------	--------------------------------------

**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
James Littley	Deputy Administrator
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

He respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

6.5.1 Late item added to the Communications Director Report.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

***"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 2, 2024 be approved as amended."***

**CARRIED**

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 5, 2024, held online.

***“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on March 5, 2024, held online, be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**5. DELEGATION**

Kandis Lipsett, Senior Environmental Emergency Response Officer with B.C. Environmental Emergency Program (EEP), presented to the board in response to director inquiries about the Nov. 17, 2023 Coquihalla Connector truck fire.

Ms. Lipsett presented on the provincial EEP, including new program regulations, legislative authority, and the province’s response model to environmental spills.

Following the presentation, directors provided feedback on local perspectives following environmental spill incidents.

Ms. Lipsett was thanked for her presentation and she exited the meeting.

**6. STAFF REPORTS**

**6.1 Executive Director Report**

Dr. Sears outlined a new staff service recognition program. Since this was the OBWB’s first formal recognition, it was determined that long-term employees would be acknowledged for the actual length of service and, from hereon, employees would be recognized on a regular basis as they reached various milestones. Certificates were then handed out to employees Pat Field (32 years), Anna Warwick Sears (17 years), Nelson Jatel (16 years), Corinne Jackson (14 years), James Littlely (13 years), Dave Hoogendoorn (8 years), and Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo (5 years).

The board also heard that Dr. Sears would be attending the International Joint Commission’s semi-annual meeting in Washington D.C., April 8-11 as a representative to its International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control. One of the topics of discussion will be the potential transition of the Osoyoos board into a Watershed Board with a more inclusive mandate. There will also be presentations from other IJC boards, and a workshop on Indigenous collaboration. Dr. Sears will be a panelist at a Women in International Water Diplomacy workshop sponsored by the IJC.

Dr. Sears also announced that she would be presenting to the House of Commons’ Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on April 18 as part of a panel of witnesses testifying about freshwater.

The board also heard about the newly released provincial Flood Strategy.

Finally, Dr. Sears provided the board with an update on Okanagan snowpacks, noting that current snow levels are below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for their historical records. While the public may notice lake levels are still high, Dr. Sears pointed out that this is due to provincial dam operators holding back water in anticipation of drought conditions.

***“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated March 27, 2024, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

**6.2 Deputy Administrator Report**

Mr. Littlely provided a summary of the March 8 inaugural Invasive Mussel Working Group meeting,

noting over 100 people attended from across the Interior, including First Nations, local government staff and electeds, provincial staff, marina operators, chambers, lakefront stratas, Rotary Club members, BC Wildlife Federation, invasive species societies and more. Feedback from the meeting was sombre but positive, with several groups highly engaged on actions for moving forward. Mr. Littlely also noted the number of invites to present on the invasive mussel issue to local governments and other organizations in the last few months, suggesting growing interest in the topic.

Mr. Littlely spoke to his recent attendance at the Western Aquatic Plant Management Society's annual conference in Nevada and discussions with manufacturers of a milfoil harvester and a lake aerator. Following the conference, he visited Lake Mead and the lake's permanent invasive mussel decontamination station.

***“THAT the Deputy Administrator Report, dated March 27, 2024, be received.”***  
***CARRIED***

### 6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel reported that the March Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting was cancelled due to the Environmental Flows: Siwłkʷ (Water) for All Conference held in Kelowna, March 13-15, adding that a summary report is being developed.

The next OWSC meeting will be held April 11 and include presentations from Ute Holweger and Meghan Sullivan from the Canada Water Agency.

As OWSC chair, Dir. Fyke provided a brief update on the various council committees and noted that the Building Ethical Space for Water Stewardship Committee (BESWSC) will be chaired by Sheena Spencer. This committee will explore collaborative water governance with the intention of laying the groundwork for meaningful collaboration with Indigenous governments. The main task of the BESWSC includes improving education and understanding around Indigenous issues and creating a resource kit for water in the Okanagan. Delivery of this resource kit is expected in the spring of 2025.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated March 27, 2024, be received.”***  
***CARRIED***

### 6.4 Office and Grants Manager Report

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo provided a brief report to directors, noting the value of First Nations attendance and voices at the Environmental Flows Conference. Tamayo also noted the attendance of Grand Chief Stewart Phillip as keynote speaker and thanked all involved in making the conference a success.

***“THAT the Office and Grants Manager's Report, dated March 26, 2024, be received.”***  
***CARRIED***

### 6.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Burnett gave an update on Ms. Jackson's behalf, noting the partnerships listed in her memo for the upcoming 2024 Make Water Work campaign, encouraging outdoor water conservation spring through fall. It was noted that the Make Water Work Plant Collection is being revised to promote FireSmart plants that are also WaterWise.

The Don't Move A Mussel (DMM) wrap-up report was also provided. Highlights included the use of several tools to get the mussel message out, including billboards, ads on Facebook and Instagram, radio, ads on Castanet, YouTube, and on Google (i.e. if someone looked up key words such as water skiing, fishing, inspection stations, invasive mussels, they would be delivered a DMM ad). In all, the campaign delivered 6.1 million impressions (i.e. the number of times an ad has been seen).

Funds were also provided to the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society to do additional DMM outreach at boat launches, and partners like Kelowna Yacht Club, Dockside Marine and others helped promote the message on their social media and web pages.

The board heard that the campaign cost \$43,186 and with \$24,500 provided in-kind, OkWaterWise delivered a campaign worth \$67,751. And, as noted at the February board meeting, a mail-in survey of Okanagan residents conducted for the OBWB found: recognition for invasive mussels was at 86% (95% of boat owners), and 64% for the Don't Move A Mussel campaign (77% among boat owners). In reviewing the survey and previous ones in 2014 and 2020, awareness for Don't Move A Mussel has gone from 47% in 2014 (one year after the campaign launched) to 64% in 2023.

It was noted that Ms. Jackson has already had meetings with partners to discuss both the DMM and Make Water Work conservation campaign for 2024.

***"THAT the Communications Director's Report, dated Feb. 28, 2024, be received."***  
**CARRIED**

7. **IN-CAMERA**

6.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(m) and 90(1)(c) of the Community Charter)

The board exited the in-camera session at 1:30 p.m. to rise and report.

8. **RISE AND REPORT**

***"THAT the OBWB approve the 2024 grant funding as presented; AND THAT the OBWB rise and report the 2024 grant funding as approved."***

**CARRIED**

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

***"THAT the letters from District of Coldstream to federal government, cc'd to OBWB regarding invasive mussels, and that the letter from B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to the OBWB regarding the Water Board's invasive mussel vulnerability guide be received."***

**CARRIED**

10. **NEXT MEETING**

10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be an abbreviated meeting on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 9 a.m. at the Kelowna Yacht Club, followed by a joint Board-Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

***"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 2, 2024 be adjourned at 1:35 p.m."***

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director