



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD AUGUST 6, 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 Bob Flemming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt-Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt-Director Shirley Fowler	Regional District North Okanagan
Alt Director Adrienne Fedrigo	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Bob Hraske	Water Supply Association of B.C.

REGRETS

Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)
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DELEGATIONS

Nicole Pyett	B.C. Ministry of Water, Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Water Resources Section Head; Thompson- Okanagan Region
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STAFF

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10:00 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

None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 6, 2024 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 6, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on August 6, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan, be approved.”

CARRIED

5. DELEGATION

- 5.1 Presentation by Nicole Pyett, B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS), Water Resources Section Head; Thompson-Okanagan Region

Ms. Pyett presented to Board Directors about her role within the provincial government with authorizations and water licences, as well as her department’s work in watershed scale decision making, the provincial drought and water scarcity response plan. She also presented on the Ministry of WLRS’s increased focus on preparing, planning and communicating around the province’s more regular drought conditions, as well as the efforts being made to improve communication on drought management under the Water Sustainability Act.

Concluding her presentation, Ms. Pyette answered questions from OBWB directors, and took information to follow up with individuals.

6. STAFF REPORTS**6.1 Executive Director Report**

Dr. Sears updated the Board on two changes to OBWB directors appointed by the Okanagan’s regional districts. Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) Dirs. Fleming and Fraser have exchanged places with each other for OBWB director and alternate, and Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) has reduced their number of alternates to one.

Dr. Sears spoke about the approaching completion of the 2024 Annual Report, in preparation for the upcoming OBWB Annual Public Meeting on September 6th, in Kelowna. She provided the board with an update on her work with the tracking measures report for the 2024 fiscal year.

The Board received information from Dr. Sears about the UBCO Endowment Fund, which began in 2010. At the request of the Okanagan Regional Districts, the OBWB began funding \$100,000 annually for five years to secure a provincial grant for a BC Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Management at UBC Okanagan. The 2023-2024 Report for the fund was provided to the Board.

Dr. Sears also spoke about the final report on the November 17th, 2023 truck fire in West Kelowna. A high-level remediation plan has been prepared to address the known areas of impact and to further delineate any unidentified impacted areas. During remediation, discoloured soils along the roadway and culvert were removed and samples collected. Water sampling in Trepanier Creek did not exceed standards or guidelines except for some metals that are consistent with a standard upstream background sample.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received.”

CARRIED

6.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel reported that the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (WSC) is on summer break with no meetings during July and August. The next WSC meeting is scheduled for Sept. 12, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna.

Dr. Jatel also reported on the OBWB's Hydrometric Monitoring Program's work to track stream flows throughout the summer. Throughout the summer, the team measured stream flows and water levels, executed new installations, and updated the hydrometric station map to close data gaps for future water management planning.

In partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Fisheries Department, OBWB continues to improve on a communication tool that provides real-time hydrometric data, including stream-specific information on fish and environmental flows. During July, this data showed that there was extreme stress in several Okanagan streams, underscoring the value of accurate and real-time flow data for informing water management decisions.

Dr. Jatel announced the appointment of Alberto Ceccacci, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Bologna, as the recipient of a MITACS grant for a two-year project with UBC Okanagan. Ceccacci's expertise in ecosystem services and climate change adaptation will contribute significantly to evaluating the economic value of irrigated agriculture in the Okanagan. The project, which is a partnership involving UBCO, RDCO, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, the BC Fruit Growers Association, and several local governments, will deliver critical insights into agricultural water needs today and in the future.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received."

CARRIED

6.3 Deputy Administrator's Report

Mr. Littley provided an update to the board about invasive mussels, including that he attended the PNWER summit, where he highlighted the OBWB's efforts against invasive mussels by distributing about 80 copies of the OBWB's Vulnerability Assessment Guide.

Mr. Littley recommended that the board write to Minister Cullen and AB MLA Grant Hunter to encourage cross-provincial collaboration to establish Western-Canada 'Mussel Free Zone' and consider a ban on watercraft outside of the current mussel free provinces (Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C.). He suggested renewing calls for mandatory watercraft inspections, supplemented with certified inspectors from the private sector who could offer this as a paid service to watercraft owners. There is also a need to secure financial supports for Western Canadian provinces from the federal government to increase invasive mussel defence work and for western provinces to align invasive mussel related policies and fines.

"THAT the OBWB send letters to Minister Cullen, Minister Hunter, and the ONA respectively, as outlined above."

CARRIED

Mr. Littley answered Board questions regarding mussel sniffing dogs, specifically about the OBWB seeking opportunities to facilitate funding for senior levels of government to add a new invasive mussel defence dog to the B.C. program. The Board proposed encouraging B.C. Hydro

to invest in the B.C. invasive mussel sniffer-dog program. Staff estimate that to invest in a sniffer-dog could cost upwards of \$50,000. Mr. Littley also provided an update on the Snake River invasive mussel situation in Idaho, stating that after applying pesticides to the river, there have not been any positive samples of quagga mussels found yet, but that 5-years of mussel-free samples would be needed to consider the Snake River mussel-free again.

A Milfoil program update was provided to the Board, where the Board heard about the conclusion of summer harvesting in Wood and Osoyoos Lakes, with work continuing around Vernon in Okanagan Lake. It was noted that ongoing surveys of milfoil growth throughout the valley showed little milfoil growth in most areas, likely due to cooler spring weather.

In regards to the naming contest for the new amphibious milfoil harvester, Mr. Littley provided the board with a list of the name submissions. After reviewing all submissions, the board voted on and selected "Hippo" as the new name for the new milfoil harvester. Hippos are amphibious and also eat aquatic plants.

"THAT the Board vote to accept the name 'Hippo' for the new amphibious milfoil harvester."

CARRIED.

Mr. Littley provided an update on the milfoil harvesting equipment. He relayed that during the spring maintenance cycle, corrosion-induced holes were found in the hull of the 1978 harvester, indicating that it may be unsafe for use beyond this summer without major repairs estimated to cost between \$25,000 and \$35,000. This cost would only extend its use for approximately 10 more years, and other components may still require attention. Notably, the harvester is thought to be the oldest in operation in Canada, at 46 years, surpassing usual equipment lifespans as outlined by the BC Government.

As an alternative to repairs, acquiring a new harvester at a cost of \$350,000 to \$385,000 CAD was proposed, with delivery by summer 2025. This aligns with the original Asset Replacement Plan, which recommended replacing both harvesters by 2023-24, though the plan was amended to delay replacement in favor of a new amphibious harvester, intending to operate the old harvester until at least summer 2027.

Mr. Littley recommended that the board authorize the purchase of a new standard harvester for summer 2025 to circumvent repair costs and account for inflation, adjusting the milfoil equipment budget to a minimum of \$200,000 and maintaining a minimum equipment reserve of \$100,000.

"THAT staff include a minimum \$200,000 milfoil equipment reserve transfer in the upcoming budget cycle, pending final budget approval, AND THAT staff issue an RFP to procure a new standard harvester for summer 2025 with a maximum contract price of \$385,000 CAD (Excluding GST)."

CARRIED

Mr. Littley reported to the board on his attendance at a technical exchange and field tour in Oroville, Wash. in regards to the use of aquatic herbicides on the U.S. side of Osoyoos Lake.

"THAT staff work to create a position paper as an official statement of OBWB's position against the use of aquatic herbicides in Okanagan lakes."

CARRIED

Mr. Littley also reported that he will be hosting the upcoming Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) grants information session for Local Governments on Aug. 8th. The session will provide updates and clarifications on recent changes in the OBWB's SFA program. During this session, Mr. Littley will present on new funding opportunities for older lots, developments in Liquid Waste Management Plans, changes to the 1.0 Hectare Policy, and application processes. Madelaine Martin, from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, will discuss provincial infrastructure grants related to the 1.0 Hectare Policy. Cassandra Caunce, from the Ministry of Environment, will explain the Liquid Waste Management Plans and provincial approval guidelines. All eligible local governments have been invited, and there are 44 registered attendees so far.

"THAT the Deputy Administrator's Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received."

CARRIED.

Director Lezard exited the meeting 12:56 p.m.

6.4 Water Science Specialist Report

Ms. Schira presented a 2024 Drought Timeline. She noted that the Okanagan region has spent more than half of 2023 in persistent drought conditions. The winter's below-normal snowpack, coupled with above-normal temperatures, caused early snowmelt and led to early freshet concerns about the water supply.

Ms. Shira shared that in May, after some precipitation, the region's drought level was momentarily lowered. However, a July heatwave with temperatures between 35 C and 40 C exacerbated the situation, escalating the drought to level 3 by July 25, indicating severely dry conditions with potential for significant ecological and socio-economic impacts.

"THAT the Water Science Specialist Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received."

CARRIED.**6.5 Communications Director Report**

Ms. Jackson outlined the Water Board's response to the current drought, mentioning ongoing collaboration with the Thompson Okanagan Regional Technical Drought Working Group to monitor conditions. She highlighted the issuance of two "Drought Bulletins" following changes in provincial drought levels, aiming to keep stakeholders informed.

Additionally, the "Make Water Work" campaign was a focal point, with efforts to boost outdoor water conservation through updates to the campaign's website, marketing across various media, and local outreach initiatives. Jackson encouraged board members and the community to actively participate in water conservation efforts by pledging on the campaign's website.

Ms. Jackson also provided the Board with a report on the "Don't Move A Mussel" outreach efforts focusing on peak watercraft launching season from May to October. She noted updates to the campaign's website, including details on B.C.'s inspection stations for 2024, new regulations, and recent mussel discoveries in other regions. Similar to the "Make Water Work" campaign, extensive advertising through billboards, radio, and digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube was employed, targeting terms related to local boat launches. Filming also took place to showcase potential risks to local ecosystems and infrastructure from mussel

James Littley 2024-8-28 9:14 AM

Comment [1]: Don't change it, but this is a very passive sentence. Something for the future.

Amanda Burnett 2024-8-28 10:29 AM

Comment [2]: Thank you

infestations.

Additionally, Ms. Jackson informed the Board about the news conference for the launch of a new milfoil harvesting machine and supported the media launch of the OBWB's new Climate Indicators Dashboard.

"THAT the Communications Director Report, dated August 6, 2024, be received."

CARRIED.

7 OBWB FINANCIAL RESERVES MEMO

"THAT the OBWB Financial Reserves Memo, dated August 6, 2024, be received."

CARRIED.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

There were two official correspondences received. One letter from Minister Nathan Cullen of the B.C. Ministry of WLRS regarding the Water Security Fund, and one email from Director Eric Nicholls of the B.C. Ministry of Planning and Land Use Management regarding the Homes for People Plan. Both letters can be found in the August Agenda Package.

"THAT Correspondence to the OBWB, dated August 6, 2024, be received."
CARRIED.

9 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be following the Annual Public Meeting, on Friday, Sept. 6th, 2024, at Mary Irwin Theatre, Rotary Centre for the Arts, in Kelowna at 12:30 p.m.

10 ADJOURNMENT

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of August 6, 2024 be adjourned at 2:03 p.m."

CARRIED

James Littley 2024-8-28 9:16 AM
Comment [3]: Confirm spelling.

Amanda Burnett 2024-8-28 10:29 AM
Comment [4]: Confirmed

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director