



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD DECEMBER 3, 2024, ONLINE**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice Chair Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C

**REGRETS**

Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
James Littlely	Deputy Administrator
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
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 we work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm̓x̓w̓úlaʔx̓w̓ (land) of the syilx (Okanagan) people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honour and respect this land and the siwl̓k (water) which flows through the valley and connects us all.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

No late items.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*“ THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 3, 2024 be approved.”*

***CARRIED***

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

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

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

**CARRIED**

## 5. **DELEGATION**

Dr. Peter Mortifee, Co-Founder and Chair of the Chute Creek Stewardship Society (CCSS) presented on the CCSS's Lower Chute Creek Restoration and Reconstruction Project.

Dr. Mortifee introduced the CCSS's members and their roles; Heather Fleck, Kelly Terbasket, Sheila Reynolds, Lauren MacPherson, and himself; Peter Mortifee.

The Board heard about the history of Lower Chute Creek, CCSS's founding purpose, and the organization's previous and current work on the creek through the Lower Chute Creek Restoration and Reconstruction Project, which is funded by the OBWB's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program.

In 1962 channelization was done in Lower Chute Creek to prevent flooding in the spring and subdivide the lots for residential sale. This construction led to the destruction of fish and other animal habitat. In 2017 the concrete banks of the Lower Chute Creek failed and led to destruction of both private property and public infrastructure.

The Lower Chute Creek Restoration and Reconstruction project has three main goals:

1. Flood protection for the community of Indian Rock in Naramata.
2. Ecosystem regeneration for both in-stream and riparian areas.
3. Community engagement and learning opportunities - this project is a micro-example of a macro-issue.

Directors heard about the CCSS's collaborative approach to this project, which includes partnering closely with and/or receiving advice from the Pacific Salmon Ecology and Conservation Laboratory, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, sylix Advisors, the Penticton Indian Band and the Okanagan Nation Alliance.

Since the restoration began, kokanee spawned at the creek mouth for the first time in 60 years.

Peter Mortifee answered questions from Board Directors about the project. He was thanked for his presentation and exited the meeting.

## 6. **STAFF REPORTS**

### 6.1 Executive Director Report – Dr. Anna Warwick Sears

Dr. Sears presented about her work on the beginning phase of grant applications to the Watershed Security Fund for an updated Mission Creek Water Use Plan, in collaboration with the Okanagan Nation. The last time a Water Use Plan was created for Mission Creek was 2010 by the Ministry of Environment, Black Mountain Irrigation District, and the South East Kelowna Irrigation District. This updated Plan is of some urgency, since significant changes have happened in the area since 2010. These changes include the City of Kelowna taking over the Southeast Kelowna Irrigation District, infrastructure changes by Black Mountain Irrigation District, residential development, and more frequent extreme flows (high and low). Large numbers of sockeye and chinook salmon are also expected to return to Mission Creek soon thanks to ongoing rehabilitation efforts and will require increased water flows to support spawning. The update process will involve collaboration with various local and regional organizations, as well as smaller

water utilities and local First Nations.

Dr. Sears also reported on the progress of a survey OBWB is conducting with local water utilities about their water rates. Staff are waiting to hear back from some municipalities to complete the survey.

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

#### 6.2 Deputy Administrator Report - James Littlely

Mr. Littlely provided the Board with an update regarding invasive mussels, reporting that he would attend an upcoming Pacific Northwest-wide meeting with updates of the mussel infestation in Idaho and all other jurisdictions.

He also reported that in October, California discovered the invasive golden mussel in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – the first introduction in North America. Originally from China, golden mussels represent a significant threat to infrastructure and habitats, similar to zebra and quagga mussels but with a broader temperature tolerance and lower calcium requirements. This could put previously safe water bodies at risk. Despite this new threat, the existing prevention strategy, including mandatory watercraft inspections remains unchanged.

Mr. Littlely also reported to the board about a partnership opportunity with the Interior Health Authority to support calls to action on invasive mussels to protect drinking water quality and determinants of public health.

***“THAT the Deputy Administrator’s Report, dated November 25, 2024, be received.”***  
***CARRIED***

#### 6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel

Dr. Jatel provided the board with a summary of the November 14 Water Stewardship Council (WSC) meeting, where Council members heard from guest speaker Stephen Morrison, a geologist with over 35 years experience in government and environmental consulting. His presentation about the need for co-management in resource management advocates for inclusive decision-making with Indigenous groups, public engagement, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. With successful Northern Canadian water boards as an example, he indicated that co-management leads to better governance, particularly in handling challenges like climate change.

Director Fyke provided a report as the Chair of the WSC. The WSC discussed ongoing efforts in modernizing water regulation systems, water demand models, and quality research. Effective adaptive water management strategies and the importance of comprehensive water usage data were topics of interest for optimizing regional water resources.

The next Water Stewardship Council meeting is December 12, 2024 and will include updates on the ONA-led watershed initiative by Scott Boswell and Tessa Terbasket, following the recent agreement that advances collaborative water stewardship.

Dr. Jatel also presented to the Board with updates on his ongoing projects:

The Cyanobacteria Threat to Drinking Water Working Group held a meeting to improve water source management through enhanced monitoring and collaborative strategies, with plans for a

follow-up and an advisory committee being laid out.

The Hydrometric Program Advisory Committee will discuss program enhancements to support drought and flood responses on December 12.

Dr. Jatel is working on multiple studies on Mission Creek's water dynamics to support Dr. Sears grant application for the Mission Creek Water Management Plan, to improve management effectiveness for ecological and hydrological sustainability.

Dr. Alberto Ceccacci, the post-doc fellow sponsored in-part by the OBWB is conducting an economic analysis of irrigation water use in the Okanagan, involving stakeholder surveys approved by UBCO Ethics Review Council, aimed at informing policy and decision-making of agricultural waters in the Okanagan.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated November 25, 2024, be received.”  
CARRIED.***

#### 6.4 Water Science Specialist Report – Sandra Schira

The Board heard from Ms. Schira about a weather report and expected conditions for the upcoming winter. Based on the US Nation Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) prediction of La Nina persisting into spring, the Okanagan might expect cooler temperatures and rainy and snowy conditions. La Nina conditions have been seen already in other parts of B.C., especially in regions that experienced the “bomb cyclone” and atmospheric river. However, according to current rainfall and temperatures in the Okanagan, most areas have been at or below normal expected rainfall and temperatures compared to historic data.

***“THAT the Water Science Specialist Report, dated November 26, 2024, be received.”  
CARRIED.***

## 7. IN CAMERA

The Board entered an in-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(a) and 90(2)(b) of the Community Charter) at 11:51 p.m.

***“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board enter into an in-camera session.”  
CARRIED.***

The board exited the in-camera session at 12:20 p.m.

## 8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Budget Features Memo – Proposed Budget 2025-26 (updated) – Presented by Dr. Anna Warwick Sears.

Dr Sears presented a revised budget as directed by the board in November.

***“THAT the OBWB adopts the updated 2025-2026 budget as presented.”  
CARRIED***

9. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, February 4, at 10:00 a.m., online.

**NOTE:** Meetings of the Okanagan Basin Water Board are open to the public, and only closed for in-camera sessions as set out in the B.C. Community Charter. From time-to-time, the board will be holding its meeting online. If you are interested in attending an online meeting, please contact [Carolina.Restrepo@obwb.ca](mailto:Carolina.Restrepo@obwb.ca) for further details.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

***“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 3, 2024 be adjourned at 12:26 p.m.”***  
**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
<b>Chair</b>		<b>Executive Director</b>