



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: March 8, 2019

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OBWB Directors

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of Okanagan-Similkameen

Lisa Wilson, Okanagan Nation
Alliance

Bob Hrasko, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Denise Neilsen, Okanagan
Water Stewardship Council

The next regular meeting of the OBWB will be 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 2, 2019, at Regional District of North Okanagan in Coldstream.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Board receives report on 2018 invasive mussel partnership: Lisa Scott with the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) reported on last year's invasive mussel prevention efforts. The OBWB provides funds to OASISS to extend the efforts of the board's "[Don't Move A Mussel](#)" campaign to water recreationists, retailers, yacht clubs and more, and to conduct mussel monitoring in Okanagan lakes. In all, outreach material was delivered to 325 locations and staff report connecting with about 5,000 people. It also collected water samples from 23 locations on five Okanagan lakes, and partnered with the Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society for additional monitoring. The group also deployed substrate monitors at 18 locations in five lakes in partnership with marinas, yacht clubs and local governments. So far, testing has found no invasive zebra or quagga mussels in Okanagan lakes.

Directors updated on Environmental Flow Needs (EFN) project: Kari Alex, Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) fisheries biologist, provided an update on the EFN project, determining water needs of fish and aquatic habitat that will also help the province with water licensing decisions. Under B.C.'s Water Sustainability Act, EFN data is required to make such decisions. This project, a collaboration between OBWB, ONA and the province, began in 2016 and is almost complete. The project team is currently studying 18 streams identified as having high value (e.g. salmon) and not fully licensed. Alex noted that fish are a key indicator for the health of a water body.

LiDAR workshop garners strong interest: The OBWB, Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program and Regional District of Central Okanagan jointly hosted "Innovations in Okanagan LiDAR, and why is it so important" on March 4. The event was to raise awareness for a \$1.4 million Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) dataset that is being collected as part of a partnership between the OBWB, local governments, ONA, Emergency Management BC and GeoBC. Some data is still being collected, but parts will be available starting this spring. Practical applications for the data include floodmapping, firesmart activities, habitat mapping and more. The event attracted people from various sectors including those involved in Emergency Operation Centres, dairy farmers, forestry, local government, conservation and others.

Provincial groundwater licensing extended, board to respond: Directors were updated on a B.C. government decision to extend its groundwater licensing deadline to March 1, 2022. The board had previously submitted a request to the province for an extension, recognizing low registration numbers and the importance of licensing to understand where and how much water can be extracted. Staff were asked to send a letter to the province thanking them for the extension and provide recommendations for next steps.

Wave of water grant apps to be reviewed: The OBWB received 31 applications to its Water Conservation & Quality Improvement Grant Program with a total ask of \$678,281. Both the number of applications and funding total is above average. There is a total of \$300,000 available. Applications will be reviewed and funding recommendations provided to the board at the April 2 board meeting.

For more information, please visit: www.OBWB.ca