



BOARD REPORT: February 7, 2024

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Okanagan Basin

WATER BOARD

OBWB Directors

Blair Ireland - Chair,
Regional District of Central
Okanagan

Doug Holmes - Vice-Chair,
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Victor Cumming, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Rick Fairbairn, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Christine Fraser, Regional
District of North Okanagan

Wayne Carson, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Charlie Hodge, Regional
District of Central Okanagan

Rick Knodel, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

Sue McKortoff - Chair,
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Tim Lezard, Okanagan Nation
Alliance

Bob Hrasko, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Jeremy Fyke, Water
Stewardship Council

**The next regular meeting of the
OBWB will be Tuesday, March
5, 2024 online.**

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Water Board elects new chair and vice-chair: After four years as OBWB chair, Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) representative Sue McKortoff announced she would remain on the board but was making way for new leadership. Regional District of Central Okanagan representative Blair Ireland was elected chair and RDOS appointee Doug Holmes was elected vice-chair.

Directors hear preliminary climate change indicators report: OBWB Water Science Specialist Sandra Schira presented research looking at Okanagan climate change indicators over the past 30 to 100 years. The data indicate that seasonal temperatures, and especially the number of hot days, are increasing. The growing season has also increased by two weeks, she added, noting this could affect agricultural water use. Once the research has been completed it will be uploaded to a website aimed at sharing the data with the public and local government decision-makers so they can understand Okanagan-specific climate change, and how to prepare for the future.

Okanagan water survey results shared: In December, the Water Board conducted a mail-out survey with Okanagan residents to gather their opinions and understanding of local water-related issues. Of 391 survey respondents, the results show residents are most concerned about forest fires, water shortages, and ensuring enough water for fish and ecosystems. Some 90% of respondents said they practice water conservation, and 72% said they take actions to protect water quality. Awareness for the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise "Make Water Work" conservation campaign is 57%. Awareness of invasive zebra and quagga mussels is 86% (95% among watercraft owners) and 64% for the OBWB-OkWaterWise's "Don't Move a Mussel" campaign (77% among watercraft owners).

Countdown to Environmental Flows Conference: The board was updated on the upcoming siwtk^w (Water) for all – Co-creating Futures Environmental Flows Conference, co-hosted by the OBWB and the Canadian Water Resources Association, March 13 - 15 in Kelowna. The conference will bring together national and international water researchers, fisheries people and water managers, First Nations, local and senior government policy-makers, NGOs, and funders to look at best practices for setting environmental flows. It will profile recent work in the Okanagan, elsewhere in Canada and the U.S. More information and registration can be found at <https://environmentalflores2024.ca/>.

Water grant intake deadline nears: Directors were briefed on the upcoming deadline to apply to the OBWB's Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) grant program. Grants are available to non-profits, local governments, irrigation districts and schools. This year's theme is "drought resilience," with extra consideration given to applicants that address that theme. Deadline for applications is Feb. 23, 4 p.m. Applicants are encouraged to submit directly online using the Water Board's new online application portal at <https://obwb.ca/wcqi/>.

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