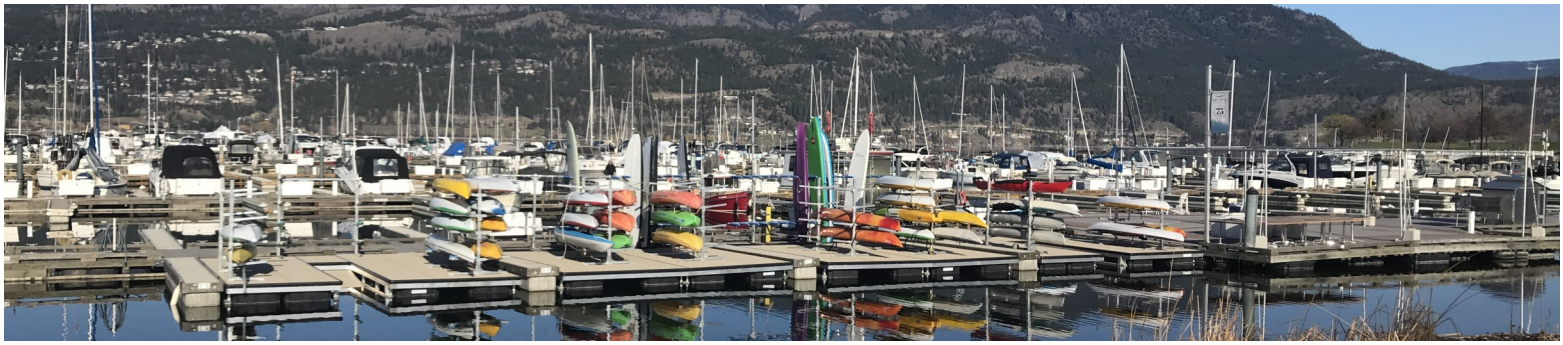




BOARD REPORT: April 9, 2021



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

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Cindy Fortin - Vice-Chair,
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Chris Derickson, Okanagan
Nation Alliance

Bob Hrasko, Water Supply
Association of B.C.

Denise Neilsen, Okanagan
Water Stewardship Council

The next meeting of the OBWB will be an abbreviated session May 4, 2021 at 9 a.m. online. This will be followed immediately by a joint Board – Water Stewardship Council meeting.

Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Water Board receives Okanagan Source Water Protection paper: Renee Clark, a member of the OBWB's Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (and former Regional District of North Okanagan Water Quality Manager), presented a paper from the council's source protection committee with recommendations for action. Specifically, the report recommends the board ask the B.C. government to clarify the state of source protection in the province; acknowledge Indigenous values and commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in source protection planning; advocate to the province for a lead water agency and dedicated resources to support source water protection planning in the Okanagan. Find the full paper at <http://bit.ly/source-protection>. The board also heard that the OBWB received \$50,000 through the province's Healthy Watersheds Initiative to advance work on its source protection toolkit for local governments.

OBWB delivers report on Okanagan lake level review to Province: Directors were briefed on the Water Board's submission to the B.C. government, with a gap analysis and recommendation of studies to update the Okanagan Lake Regulation System. The report was developed under contract to the province. As such, its release must come from Victoria. The report follows a package of letters sent by the OBWB and Okanagan local governments to the province, calling for an updated lake operating plan that considers climate change, managing for potential flooding and drought.

Update on invasive mussel-infested moss balls provided: The board was updated on zebra mussels that entered B.C. on infested moss balls, sold in pet stores and online. The moss balls, a species of green algae, are used to improve aquarium water quality. The infested product originated in Ukraine, known to be home to the mussels. However, as a precaution, B.C. Conservation Officers seized all moss balls from stores that sold the plant, regardless of origin. In all, 1,100 sellers were contacted, and 3,000 moss balls were surrendered. Testing found none of the mussel-contaminated balls were viable, however, jurisdictions in Eastern Canada and the U.S. have found live mussels on the product. Find safe disposal info. at <https://bit.ly/3fVkJLLV>. Learn more about the risk to Okanagan waters at www.DontMoveAMussel.ca.

Board celebrates 15 years of water grant program: The Water Board marked a milestone in Okanagan water protection this week with the awarding of its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants. Since the program began in 2006, and with this week's award of 16 grants worth \$350,000, the board has now provided 300 grants to Okanagan non-profits, First Nations, local governments and irrigation districts, worth \$5.1 mill. Find our news release with more information at <http://bit.ly/WCQI-2021>.

"Our lakes" art show features Okanagan water: The water of the Okanagan, and the faces and the organizations behind some of the efforts to protect it, are featured in an art exhibit by Penticton's Lyse Desellier. The show, "Our lakes: Connecting the dots." runs Wed. - Sat. until April 24 at the Osoyoos Art Gallery. More information at <https://bit.ly/3dENfXw>.

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