



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: March 3, 2022

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www.obwb.ca

OBWB Directors

Sue McKortoff - Chair,
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Cindy Fortin - Vice-Chair,
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Victor Cumming, Regional District of North Okanagan

Rick Fairbairn, Regional District of North Okanagan

Bob Fleming, Regional District of North Okanagan

James Baker, Regional District of Central Okanagan

Colin Basran, Regional District of Central Okanagan

Doug Holmes, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Rick Knodel, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Chris Derickson, Okanagan Nation Alliance

Bob Hrasko, Water Supply Association of B.C.

Scott Boswell, Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

The next regular meeting of the OBWB will be held April 5, 2022 at 10 a.m. Location TBD.

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

Water Board expands full voting rights to Okanagan Nation Alliance: The three regional districts of the Okanagan have approved a significant change to the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB)'s governance structure, ensuring equal voting powers to the Okanagan Nation Alliance representative. In 2006, three new directors were added to the OBWB recognizing the board would be stronger and that its decisions would reflect a broader perspective. Since then, the board has recognized that the ONA representative should have the same standing as the local government appointees and, in recent weeks, Okanagan regional districts voted to adopt this change. A news release with more details is available at <https://bit.ly/3KbupGi>.

B.C. budget's focus on water and climate issues recognized: The board was provided a brief overview of the newly released provincial budget related to water and climate. Of note is funding to expand climate monitoring networks, the B.C. River Forecast Centre and floodplain mapping – items the OBWB has advocated for. A new Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship has also been created and will incorporate land use policy and planning which it is hoped will help address source protection and water management issues. And, the budget includes \$30 mill. to renew the [Healthy Watersheds Initiative](#) (HWI). This initiative, which helped fund the OBWB's [Source Water Protection Toolkit](#) project, was launched last year as part of an effort to support job creation through investments in community-driven water conservation and restoration projects. Renewed funding will likely support continued work in this area.

OBWB to press province for stronger invasive mussel action: The board voted to send a letter to B.C.'s Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy with calls for action to prevent invasive zebra and quagga mussels from entering the province. In particular, the board will be asking that core program funding be maintained, that the province implement "pull-the-plug" legislation, requiring all watercraft to remove drain plugs before travelling on B.C. roads, and that the province review and update its Early Detection, Rapid Response Plan and allow for public input. Additional recommendations include providing resources for local governments to address water infrastructure vulnerability, additional funding for invasive species groups to conduct water monitoring and outreach to water recreationists, and legislation requiring all out-of-province watercraft be inspected before launching in B.C. waters. For more on the risk to Okanagan waters, prevention information and more, visit www.DontMoveAMussel.ca.

Annual U.N. World Water Day film screening and panel event planned: The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB)'s Okanagan WaterWise is hosting a special online screening of CBC The Fifth Estate's documentary "Come Hell... B.C. Under Water," followed by a panel discussion on Wed. March 16, 7-9 p.m., ahead of UN World Water Day. The documentary examines the devastation in B.C. after last November's catastrophic flooding, the impacts of drought, fire, forestry, and the effects on farmers, First Nations and neighbouring communities. Hear from those working in the Okanagan for urban utilities, in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and on regional water management about how the valley is responding to extreme weather events. This is a free event, but numbers are limited. Pre-registration through Eventbrite is required at https://comehell_bcunderwater-okanagan.eventbrite.ca.

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