



Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

BOARD REPORT: November 8, 2019

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

OBWB Directors

Sue McKortoff - Chair,
Regional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Cindy Fortin - Vice-Chair,
Regional District of Central
Okanagan

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

Toni Boot, Regional District of
Okanagan-Similkameen

Rick Knodel, Regional District
of Okanagan-Similkameen

To be determined, 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,
Dec. 3, 2019 at the Regional
District of Central Okanagan in
Kelowna.**

B.C. AquaHacking Challenge 2020 now open: The board was updated on the B.C. AquaHacking Challenge which launched Oct. 29. The challenge connects post-secondary students and young professionals with mentors to help solve critical water issues, with more than \$50,000 in prize money available plus the chance to create their own start-up company. Five B.C. water issues were selected as part of the challenge: stormwater contaminants, outdoor water waste, flooding, invasive zebra and quagga mussels, and the need for potable water in Indigenous communities. Registration is now open. The challenge is hosted by OBWB and Okanagan WaterWise, among numerous additional partners. More details at <https://aquahacking.com/en/bc-2020/>.

Water Board to create Source Water Protection Toolkit: Thanks to a provincial grant, work will begin on a toolkit to help communities and their water suppliers ensure safe drinking water and healthy ecosystems. The kit will include best practices, policies and bylaws that local governments can adopt, as well as case studies that highlight collaborative processes, public education, funding programs and more. A technical advisory group that includes local governments, First Nations, Interior Health, landowners and legal experts, will help create the kit.

Winter rototilling of invasive milfoil resumes with new restrictions: With a new five-year provincial permit in place, the OBWB's milfoil crew has begun rototilling (de-rooting) milfoil in Okanagan lakes. Rototilling, considered the most effective control method, has been partially curtailed recently due to concern for the endangered native Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel (RMRM). The latest amendments to the permit have relaxed restrictions in some areas, however, significant public areas remain closed. The Board discussed next steps, including its request for a permanent exemption to allow rototilling in high use public areas and the need for research on the effects of milfoil on RMRM.

Board reviews B.C. mussel inspection stats: The board received the latest provincial invasive mussel inspection numbers. Between late April and Sept. 15, the province conducted over 50,000 inspections. Of these, 1,240 watercraft were considered high risk and 19 were found carrying invasive zebra or quagga mussels. Those 19 were travelling from Ontario (14), Michigan (2), Utah (2) and North Carolina (1) and were headed for the Lower Mainland (8), Vancouver Island (4), Okanagan (3), the Kootenays (2), Skeena (1) and Alaska (1). The seasonal program ended in October and final numbers are expected soon.

Directors adopt 2020-21 budget: Directors approved the OBWB's \$3.45 million budget with a 0% increase. The budget includes funds for the Milfoil Control Program, the Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grants Program, and the Water Management Program (which includes the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants, Water Science and Policy Research, and Communications and Outreach).

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