



BOARD REPORT: February 4, 2025

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trict of North Okanagan

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Charlie Hodge, Regional
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Subrina Monteith - Alt., Re-
gional District of Okanagan-
Similkameen

Sue McKortoff,
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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
4, 2025, online.**

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Okanagan Basin Water Board Meeting Highlights

OBWB seeks public support to strengthen invasive mussel prevention: The OBWB is asking citizens to help in the fight to prevent invasive mussels from coming to B.C. and the Okanagan. Currently, watercraft entering the province are only required to stop if they pass an open inspection station on their route. However, if a watercraft comes in when the station is closed, out of season, or on a different route, there is no legal requirement to get it inspected before launching into B.C. waters. You can help change that by emailing WildlifeActReview@gov.bc.ca and telling them to “make inspections mandatory for all watercraft entering B.C. to prevent invasive species, especially invasive mussels.”

The Water Board and several partner organizations also wrote to Minister Neill, Water, Land and Resource Stewardship calling for increased inspection station funding, mandatory watercraft inspections, more federal support, and interprovincial cooperation.

Directors hear from Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society: Lisa Scott, Executive Director of the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) delivered a presentation to the OBWB about the outcomes and impacts of invasive species campaigns in the Okanagan during 2024. With 1 supervisor and 2 staff, OASISS conducted 986 surveys at 15 boat launches, interacted with over 5,200 members of the public at 24 community events, and presented to 677 youth at 7 summer camps and 4 schools throughout the Okanagan. OASISS also conducted invasive mussel monitoring at 25 sites for invasive mussels, with no mussels detected.

OASISS is currently hiring – learn more at <https://www.oasiss.ca/employment>

Board receives 2024 weather summary and 2025 forecast: 2024 was an eventful year starting off with a sudden cold snap in early January 2024 which caused significant damage to Okanagan fruit trees and vines. Despite some summer rain, the Okanagan remained in drought throughout 2024 due to low snowpack, an early melt, and a prolonged July heatwave. Looking forward, seasonal forecasts for 2025 are indicating a wetter, warmer spring in the Okanagan, which could have impacts on Okanagan droughts this year.

Cyanobacteria Threat to Drinking Water - Working Group makes progress: On December 11, 2024, the committee held its second meeting to refine the project scope and tackle key water quality challenges in the Okanagan. Co-chaired by Ed Hoppe (City of Kelowna) and Krista Derrickson (Westbank First Nation), discussions focused on assessing subbasin water quality, expanding nutrient monitoring, and developing a model for improved predictions. Members emphasized better data harmonization, enhanced monitoring systems, and advanced predictive modelling to manage cyanobacteria risks effectively.

OBWB Director Rick Knodel remembered: At the Water Board meeting, Directors took time to remember OBWB and RDOS Electoral Area C Director Rick Knodel after his passing on January 7th. Many Directors shared personal stories and anecdotes and spoke of his dedication to his work, to serving Okanagan residents, and of his passion for protecting water in the Okanagan.

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