

**Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
02.28.2024**

The Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission acknowledges this meeting was held on the Traditional Territory of the Syilx/Okanagan Peoples.

✓ = attended X= Absent * Not required A= Alternate Attended

Advisory Committee Executive:

✓	Larson, Janice, Chair
X	Hughes-Geekie, Sharon, Vice-Chair
X	Calissi, James, Past Chair

X	Nagy, Angela
X	Quinn, Paula

Advisory Committee:

X	Alexander, Andrea
X	Barker, Phil
A	Benson, Gavin
✓	Berrie, Carla
X	Bruns, Myles
✓	Burleigh, Mark
X	Carroll, Mandi
✓	Cannan, Ron
X	Collins, Dave
✓	Csek, Nikki
✓	Dawn, Jeremy
✓	Douglas, Laurel
X	Evans, Bob
✓	Friesen, Jason

X	Ferreira, Christina
X	Gipps, Paul
A	Harper, Shauna
X	Ireland, Blair
A	Labrecque, Cory
X	Lewis, Chris
X	Popoff, Chantel
✓	Malcolm, Ryan
X	North, Steve
X	Price, Dan
✓	Rezania, Sepideh
X	Ritchie, Geoff
X	Robinson, Heather
X	Rogers, Dan

✓	Selby, Robert
A	Shaffer, Carollyn
✓	Stack, Luke
✓	Stewart, Tony
X	Sulentich, Ruth
✓	Threlfall, Rich
X	Thurnheer, Laura
X	Udzenija, Nicole
✓	Wentworth, Noel
✓	White, Jill
X	Widmer, Larry
X	Wolf, Mike

Staff and Consultants:

✓	Mallory, Krista
✓	Lesack, Sascha
✓	Weston, Eva

✓	Ververda, Bri
X	Allin, Paige

✓	Miller, Tory
✓	Stark Leader, Myrna

Guests:

Anna Warwick Sears
James Littlely

Sally Ginter
Jodie Foster

Leslie Louie
Johnathan Wall

1. *Call to Order*

Chair Janice Larson called the meeting to order at 7:32 am.

2. *Adoption of Minutes*

Minutes of January 24, 2024, unanimously approved.

3. *An Update on Okanagan Water Issues*

Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) and James Littley, Deputy Administrator of the Okanagan Basin Water Board provided an update on the Okanagan Basin Water Board's priorities including the impact the presence of invasive quagga mussels would have on our region. **See attached presentation for details.**

4. *Discussion*

The presentation commenced with a focus on water stewardship, emphasizing the importance of coordinating projects related to water management in the valley.

The group discussed ongoing outreach efforts regarding the "Make Water Work" and "Don't Move a Mussel" initiatives. These initiatives aim to raise awareness about water conservation and prevent the spread of invasive quagga mussels.

Participants highlighted the need for a drought information communication clearinghouse and emphasized the importance of educating the community about fire and water procedures.

Quagga mussels pose a significant threat due to their ability to rapidly multiply, alter water chemistry, and cause ecological damage. OBWB underscored the importance of prevention measures and the challenges associated with detection and control.

Issues related to watercraft inspection stations, prevention measures, and gaps in invasive mussel prevention strategies in British Columbia were highlighted.

Concerns were raised about the inadequacy of current prevention measures in British Columbia, including the absence of legislation requiring boaters to "pull the plug" to prevent the spread of invasive species.

OBWB outlined a series of Calls to Action directed towards provincial and federal governments, seeking support for invasive mussel prevention efforts. Attendees were encouraged to provide letters of support to relevant government ministers.

- Questions and Answers:
 - Flood and drought happen here dependent upon the timing and type of precipitation, air temperature, and the regulation of flow in creeks and lakes. The design of the plan and system is outdated and not adapted to current conditions.
 - We have a lot more work to do in shifting homeowners' day to day water use behaviour. Kelowna, for example, has 4 water utilities that are not integrated, each with different water sources. This is similar throughout the Valley and held up by politics. Working toward fire-smart, drought-tolerant landscaping. Water meters have been found to be very helpful.

- We are using some technology for water control, but it's based on historical data that needs to be updated and dependent on people cooperating with the system and keeping up with maintenance, for example with pipes in orchards.
- The monitoring efforts in place for the Okanagan Similkameen region include sampling conducted by the Okanagan Similkameen Invasive Species Society, although no invasive mussels have been found yet: however, the consensus is that if detection occurs, it would already be too late.
- Adjacent Provinces and States are doing some monitoring but also not full time. Some dogs can detect mussels via smell. Idaho had a good inspection system but it's not infallible.
- The economic losses presented seem quite low. Some regions don't think they're at high risk, but water travels and the OBWB thinks the assessment is grossly low.
- With predictive modeling of the mussels' potential movement into our area it is estimated they could be delayed for a decade if we hit on the right approach now. Hopefully in the future there will be technology to help us continue with prevention. Natural spread would probably take hundreds of years, but now people are moving large distances on a large scale. There are so many variables now and we really need to develop our plans.
- There are only 2 small places in the world where the mussels have been eradicated without significant hard approach consequences.
- When looking for a lead agency for the moratorium program the Provincial Government said it was up to the Federal Government and we haven't had a response from the Federal Government yet. This isn't a long-term goal; we need to get the word out and come up with plans and solutions to keep it safe. It has been suggested that they monitor at boat launches regionally or get boaters to use local rental companies rather than bringing their own.
- The mussels don't live in saltwater. Slightly brackish water is possible, but they are primarily freshwater organisms.
- The Columbia Basin Assessment will provide water results by mid-summer from Idaho. Their funding increased to assess if chemical treatment was successful, but it will still be considered infested for 5 years for precautionary measures.
- There has been some discussion of a Regional Passport System for boat inspection certification, but if a boat is inspected in one area, then contaminated in another and the destination is elsewhere, then an inspection can get missed and it needs to be more thorough.
- The training to teach people how to do this kind of inspection is not too arduous, but the authority to issue a quarantine order needs to be extended to conservation officer level. Decontamination is more involved.
- The OBWB will need to get back to the EDC regarding what individuals and businesses in the community can do after the March 8th meeting when OBWB will have more input and can deliver a report. Letters of support are welcome as is circulation of a template and social posts about the concerns.



4. New Business

- No new business

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 am.

