

Area “E” Director Newsletter

Information from the desk of Adrienne Fedrigo

July 2026

July RDOS board meeting highlights

The Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen Board of Directors met twice in July, addressing a broad range of regional issues including emergency management, infrastructure, community grants, development, and utility services.

The RDOS Board approved several building bylaw enforcement actions related to unpermitted construction in Electoral Areas “E” and “H”, along with development permit and land use matters. Support was also provided for community initiatives through gaming grant letters and local funding programs, including accessibility improvements at Kenyon Beach and upgrades to Kobau Park.

A significant discussion in July focused on the Vintage Views wastewater system. As the system currently lacks capacity for additional connections, the RDOS Board approved a temporary holding tank bylaw that will allow property owners to proceed with home construction while long-term wastewater solutions are explored. I asked staff whether alternative technologies are being considered as part of future treatment system upgrades, and staff confirmed that innovative options will be evaluated alongside conventional approaches.

Emergency preparedness remained a key priority, with the Board approving new inter-agency agreements to strengthen collaboration with First Nations and local governments. Staff also reported that more than 80 RDOS personnel and 37 Summerland staff have now received Emergency Operations Centre training.

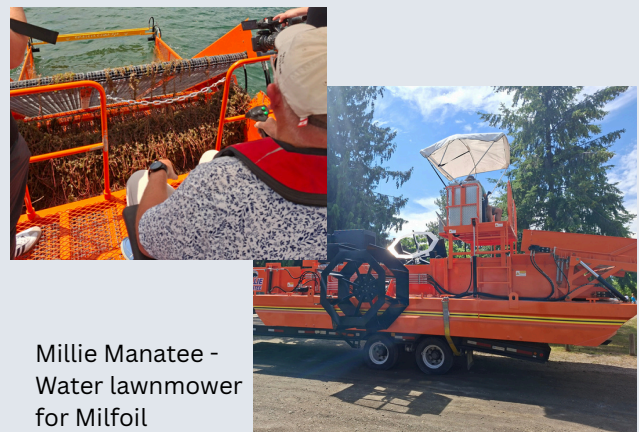
The RDOS Board received updates on the incorporation of the new District of Okanagan Falls, which will officially become a municipality in November 2026. The RDOS will continue providing contracted services during the transition period through 2028.

Other highlights included improvements planned for the Adra Tunnel corridor, expansion of RDOS pop-up offices, support for local tourism initiatives, and a review of a new Utility Acquisition Policy aimed at improving transparency, public engagement, and long-term planning when utilities are transferred to RDOS ownership.

Okanagan Basin Water Board

<https://obwb.ca>

The OBWB received a sobering update on watershed conditions across the Okanagan. Presenters noted that lake levels are at their lowest since 1999, groundwater levels remain significantly below normal, and ongoing drought conditions are being intensified by climate change. Discussions highlighted aging water control infrastructure, the need for improved watershed governance, and increased investment in both water security and critical infrastructure. OBWB Staff continue working closely with local water providers to coordinate drought response and long-term planning.



Millie Manatee -
Water lawnmower
for Milfoil

Director Fedrigo

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Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

One Region Working Together

Ministry of Transportation and Transport

Various Directors with the RDOS met with the Ministry of Transportation and Transport (MOTT) Senior staff at the Penticton office. There was great discussion about various items that impact not only the specific electoral areas and municipalities, but all areas of the RDOS. Items that I specifically spoke to include:

- Active Transportation in the Alley ways - what is needed for the province to support our initiatives and work being done? Area “E” is working on a transportation plan. Volunteers are currently beautifying some alleyways. Active transportation is supported. MoTT would not sell alleyways.
- Pedestrian bridge over Naramata Road - future planning - what is needed from RDOS Area “E”? - Location: near the firehall, proposing a pedestrian bridge. Future collaboration with RDOS could be possible. MoTT would want to see infrastructure on both sides of the highway.
- Golf carts being allowed on the roadways in Naramata. MoTT engineering provided comments: reviewing community golf cart programs in Qualicum Beach and Chase. MoTT does not have something to base decisions on with unincorporated communities. Currently, these programs are always within a municipality.
- Invasive species in right-of-way - removal, upkeep, etc. There are invasive species in the following areas, including provincial RoW and private locations. MoTT says invasive species removal is not dictated in the maintenance contract. The contractor is not obligated to remove them. Mowing is for sight distances. Resident feedback noted lack of maintenance on Arawana Road, Ellis Road, and Bartlett Road. Invasive species on RoW within RDOS and municipalities — bylaws are not enforceable by MoTT. Naramata / Arawana invasive species are growing in this area. Partnerships with MoTT, RDOS, or the municipality would be more feasible for funding options.
- RV's parked on roadways; RCMP is aware and will not take action. There is no RDOS enforcement. MoTT states: unless the RV is blocking the road, maintenance, or creating an environmental issue, unsightly is not something that can be enforced by MoTT/RCMP.

Canada Day Celebration

Canada Day in Naramata was another great success, thanks to the hard work and dedication of organizer Deb Linton and her volunteers. Residents enjoyed live music by the band Loose Change, beer gardens, and time together at Spirit Park. The only hiccup of the evening came when the washrooms unexpectedly locked at 8:00 p.m., requiring a quick response from RDOS staff to get them reopened and available for attendees.

It was a great inaugural community event held at Spirit Park.



Okanagan Regional Library - Heating and Cooling Centre

At the May 21st RDOS Board of Directors meeting, a motion was approved to enter into an agreement with the Okanagan Regional Library (ORL) allowing library branches within the RDOS to serve as designated warming and cooling centres during extreme weather events. This partnership helps ensure residents have access to safe, welcoming public spaces during periods of extreme heat, cold, wildfire smoke, or other emergencies.

As the RDOS representative on the Okanagan Regional Library Board, I asked for this agreement because I strongly support the important role libraries play in community well-being. Beyond books and programming, our libraries provide accessible community spaces where residents can find comfort, information, internet access, and a safe place to go when weather conditions become severe.

With climate-related events becoming more frequent, this agreement strengthens community resilience and helps ensure all residents have access to essential public facilities when they need them most. Libraries continue to demonstrate their value as trusted community hubs that support residents every day, and especially during emergencies.

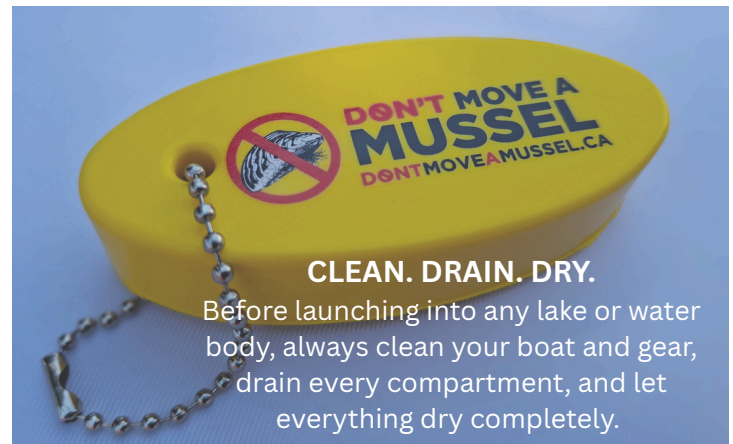
The Naramata branch, and other RDOS ORL Branches were open as an official cooling centres on Tuesday, July 21, Wednesday, July 22, and Thursday, July 23rd. On Thursday July 23rd, residents were especially thankful for the branch being open as it was very smokey that day and the library provided a space for solace. The RDOS will continue to utilize the spaces as official reprieve locations from extreme weather events.

I want to thank Ms. Smiley and her team for being available and working longer than normal hours. Their dedication to our branch is appreciated and noticed.

SILGA

The SILGA Conference will be held in Penticton in 2027. I have joined the conference subcommittee to represent the RDOS and Penticton on the SILGA Board. A subcommittee meeting was held on July 24th to discuss the Theme, speakers, tours, and activities for delegates to do in Penticton.

I advocated for a tour to Naramata to learn about NaramataSlow and the broader CittaSlow movement. As well, so delegates can also learn about Dark Skies. It was also suggested to take a tour of the ADRA Tunnel to learn about how volunteers do great things in our communities and how we can support them as elected officials.



August - Meetings

RDOS Board Meetings
Aug 6, 20

SILGA Board Meeting
August 7