



The Morning Star

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Mussels action sought

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 by [Richard Rolke - Vernon Morning Star](#)
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Vernon's mayor has taken the fight over invasive mussels right to a senior federal official.

Rob Sawatzky met recently with Gail Shea, fisheries and oceans minister, and topping the agenda is the damage quagga and zebra mussels could cause if they arrive in Okanagan lakes.

"I was clear in expressing the urgency and priority of the need for a federal and provincial preventive surveillance response to the most important issues of the invasive mussels risk," he said.

"I had 69 pages of communication that was compiled by the Okanagan Basin Water Board and Councillor Juliette Cunningham. The response from the senior Department of Fisheries and Oceans staff person was to expect legislation on the issue this fall."

The mussels clog water intake pipes, pumps and boat motors, while depleting food sources for fish and producing toxins that kill fish and birds and contaminate drinking water.

Beaches could also be covered with razor-sharp shells.

OBWB has estimated that it could cost about \$43 million a year to manage the mussels if they take hold in the Okanagan.

Predator Ridge fire hall proceeds

The City of Vernon's new Predator Ridge fire hall could soon be open.

City council has approved \$4,167 in operating funds so the new facility can function for the remainder of 2014.

"Completion of station three construction is anticipated for the end of October," said fire chief Keith Green in a memo.

Construction on the fire hall originally wasn't expected to be wrapped up until the end of 2014 so no operational funds were budgeted by the city for this year.

Winter Carnival garners support

A winter tradition will get a financial boost.

Vernon city council has agreed to provide Vernon Winter Carnival with \$10,000 for the 55th annual festivities from Feb. 6 to 15.