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November 19, 2014 2:30 pm

Vandalism delays Osoyoos Lake weed control



By **Neetu Garcha**
Reporter

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Vandalism to Okanagan milfoil machine brings weed control efforts at Osoyoos Lake to a halt.

Okanagan Basin Water Board

OSOYOOS, B.C. – Vandalism and theft from one of the Okanagan Basin Water Board's (OBWB) machines has effectively stopped efforts to control the invasive milfoil weed in Osoyoos Lake.

"It's really unfortunate," says OBWB Office and Projects Manager James Littlely. "The Water Board is already limited by environmental work windows and has added extra operator hours, during the work time available, to try and remove as much milfoil as possible."

He adds rototilling is the most effective way to control the weed because it deroots the plant, allows it to float to the surface and die. He says it's the only option in the cold winter months and can't be done in the summer because the plant tends to de-root in warmer conditions.

"All of this is in an effort to ensure we have less of the troublesome weed in the lake for the upcoming summer and tourist season," says Littlely.

He adds there are only weeks left to rototill milfoil before winter-freeze up in the lake, but the incident has delayed rototilling for at least a few days. Staff are spending that time repairing the machine and replacing specialized safety equipment.

Corinne Jackson with OBWB says the vandals tore off three locks, they ruined the door locking mechanism to the cab, damaged the fuel line and ripped off the locking fuel cap. The suspects also took other equipment and threw it around. Jackson says equipment was found strewn around the area near the Osoyoos Marina, where the machine was parked.

She adds two life jackets, a GPS, a personal locator beacon and tools including safety equipment such as ropes and a special hammer were stolen.

She says it's not clear the cost of the damage and lost equipment and that the incident has been reported to the Osoyoos RCMP.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact police.

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