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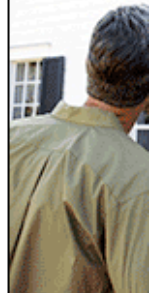
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NEWS

Beaver Lake drainage study complete in Lake Country



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A worker measures a partially blocked culvert on Beaver Lake Road as part of a study looking at ways to improve water quality in Lake Country, completed this year. — Image Credit: Contributed



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by [Kevin Parnell - Lake Country Calendar](#)
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Nearly a dozen culverts on Beaver Lake Road, from Lake Country to near Beaver Lake are in various states of disrepair and in need of work before they ultimately affect Lake Country's water quality.

That's the findings of a year-long study of drainage issues on approximately 8.5 kilometres of Beaver Lake Road that is under District of Lake Country control.

Lake Country water quality technician Patti Meger says the lack of properly working culverts could eventually affect the water quality in Lake Country as surface water coming through the watershed drains into Vernon Creek and eventually into the Lake Country water system.

"We have 11 culverts that were damaged or not up to par and each one of them needs some work done or to be taken out completely," said Meger. "If every single one fails there is a problem. No matter what, the natural flow of the water will take it into Vernon Creek but we want to ensure it's not all going in at one spot. We want to ensure all culverts are operating."

The study was undertaken thanks to a \$10,000 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement grant from the Okanagan Basin Water Board. It was done by a consultant and the results will be shared with all stakeholders involved in the area.

Beaver Lake Road is in the middle of the Vernon Creek watershed and part of a larger (141.1 square kilometre) area that includes the Oyama Creek and Oyama Lake watersheds as well. Meger says there are many parties involved in keeping the various forestry roads and culverts in working condition as the provincial ministry's of forests as well as agriculture have a stake along with private homeowners and industry. Lake Country maintains Beaver Lake Road from the time it leaves the district until it passes the second cattle guard, about 8.5 kilometres.

"What we are trying to do is be leaders," said Meger. "We don't have the funding to back us so we need the collaborative effort of all the stakeholders in the watershed to get this done. It's amazing what we have accomplished in the past three to four years. Now that we have a report showing the different culverts are not up to the standard of what we they need to be to adequately remove water from road, we can move forward to protect our water."

The study took into account a six kilometre section of Beaver Lake Road upstream from the Vernon Creek drinking water intake to the dam at Beaver Lake as well as approximately five kilometres of non-status roads and trails adjacent to the Vernon Creek canyon.

Along with the recommendations for improvements to ditching and culverts the report also

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Along with the recommendations for improvements to ditching and culverts the report also recommends further deactivation of forestry roads and a continuation of regular inspection, monitoring and maintenance of road drainage structures and downstream water quality.

Adding to the complexity of the problem moving forward is all stakeholders have different views as to what the proper standard is for culverts on forestry roads such as Beaver Lake Road, according to Meger. She said while Lake Country's standards are high and meant to ensure the safety of the drinking water, she added the different government ministries have different standards.

"There is some general disrepair and there are some culverts that really do need to get looked at," said Meger. "It's tough. The Agriculture Ministry is going by their standards, we are going by ours and the Ministry of Forests has their own. We all want to protect our water. All of this water eventually makes it into Okanagan Lake so if we can help keep it clean above we can keep it clean below."

Up next will be a meeting of the stakeholders involved at some point in the spring to decide what the next steps are to fix the issues.

