

CENTRAL OKANAGAN

Dock do's and don'ts discussed

by Grant Scott - Story: 81729
Oct 12, 2012 / 5:37 am

Property owners who have built docks on lakefront property in the Okanagan may soon find themselves having to come into compliance with the provincial government's regulations regarding docks on Okanagan lakes.



File photo: Kelly Hayes

A senior land officer and senior enforcement officer from BC's Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) addressed the Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting on October 4.

The officials addressed the issue of unlicensed and unregulated docks in Okanagan lakes.

There is concern over the building of structures and the altering of the foreshore without understanding or following permitting requirements.

The Province is seeking input on the best way to ensure compliance with laws.

"They are now looking to direct efforts towards enforcement," says Corinne Jackson, Communications Director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

"A lot of work has been done along our foreshores with people putting in docks and that sort of thing without the required licensing, so they are now looking to get on top of that, recognizing that we need to act."

Jackson adds that any change to foreshore has far reaching effects.

"The Province's concern is, when people put in a dock they are messing with fish habitat and other environmental issues, so that's why they want to..work with local government to try and address these issues."

MFLNRO will be making presentations and consulting with local governments in the coming months.

The Water Board also used the meeting to urge the federal government to take action on Zebra Mussels.

"Thank God for Idaho!" says OBWB Chair Stu Wells as directors discussed an Idaho program of inspecting boats and trailers for invasive Zebra and Quagga mussels.

Once introduced, these mussels create huge costs, clogging water intakes and other lake infrastructure.

They also harm the ecosystem and affect the tourist economy.

The OBWB is urging federal and provincial governments to institute an inspection program for boats entering BC to stop or delay introduction of these species.

The Tap by Tap Program in the South and Central Okanagan was also brought forward during the meeting.

Tap by Tap is a partnership between City Green Solutions, FortisBC, Environment Canada, the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program, Oliver, Osoyoos, Penticton and Summerland, distributing free water and energy-savings kits.

Residents who pledged to "Make Water Work" were entered to win WaterWise landscaping.

Thanks to donations from local businesses, a total of \$4,000 in yard improvements was awarded. The Tap by Tap program is now moving to the Central Okanagan and OBWB officials say they are looking forward to extending their partnership with the program in the coming year.

The Board also officially endorsed a position statement on the importance of irrigation efficiency, developed by the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council in consultation with the local agricultural community.

Irrigation for agriculture, parks, golf courses and residential landscaping accounts for 85 per cent of Okanagan water use.

How does this story make you feel? (270 total votes)

Castanet *MoodMeter*

Indifferent

1.9%

Annoyed

26.7%

Disappointed

1.9%

