

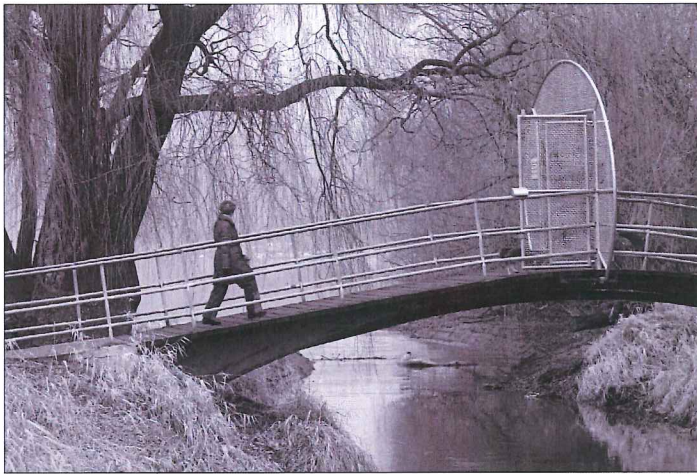
CITY

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The Daily Courier, Monday, February 15, 2016

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GARY NYLANDER/The Daily Courier

Crossing Mill Creek

A woman and her dog cross the footbridge over Mill Creek as it empties into Okanagan Lake near City Park in Kelowna.

City pumping \$150,000 into festivities for 150th birthday

By RON SEYMOUR
The Daily Courier

The City of Kelowna plans to spend \$150,000 helping residents get into the spirit of celebrating Canada's 150th birthday next year.

Rather than fund only one event to mark the sesquicentennial of Confederation, the idea is to provide grants to a diverse range of fairs, festivals and other events.

Priority is to be given to proposals that celebrate the environment, promote cultural diversity, pay tribute to historical figures and recognize First Nations.

"The intent of this program is to give the opportunity to each and every Kelowna resident to feel greater sense of pride for, and connection to, their community," says Mariko Siggers, the city's event development supervisor.

City staff believe people will be as caught up in sesquicentennial excitement as was the case in 1967, when the 100th anniversary of Confederation was celebrated.

"In 1967, virtually every Canadian caught Centennial fever. Millions participated in thousands of Centennial projects and events in communities across the country," Siggers says.

"An unprecedented surge of enthusiasm, creativity and energy swept across the nation," she says. "On many levels, the Centennial marked a period of rejuvenation and renewal in Canada.

"The intent of this (sesquicentennial) grant program is to encourage the same kind of community-driven enthusiasm," Siggers says.

In 1967, two particularly high-profile Centennial projects in Kelowna were the commissioning of Rutland Centennial Hall and the opening of the downtown museum.

No reference is made in the staff report going to council today for any similar capital project to mark the sesquicentennial in Kelowna. Instead, the \$150,000 proposed to be spent would be provided as matching grants to the organizers of new and existing events, such as Canada Day in Waterfront Park and New Year's in Stuart Park.

If approved by council, submissions for funding would be accepted this fall, and again in early 2017. No event that receives grants can be commercial in nature, and all of them must take place sometime next year.

The kind of projects that might receive funding, city staff say, include new artworks, theatrical or musical performances, fairs and festivals, sports tournaments, plaques or monuments, and commemorative publications.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Research more than child's play

Major funding announced for college research project advocating childhood outdoor play

Adding child's play to the curriculum of early childhood educators programs at Okanagan College and other post-secondary schools has just received a significant financial boost.

A research project led by Beverlie Dietze, Okanagan College's director of learning and teaching,

has received a \$185,000 grant from the Lawson Foundation.

The grant is to help develop a specialized outdoor-play training model for early childhood educators that can be delivered in person or online, at no cost to participants.

"Our research leading up to now has shown a serious gap across the country in accessible and affordable training about the immense benefit outdoor play has on children's development," said Dietze. "Our aim is to provide the tools and necessary knowledge about outdoor play discovery and learning that will encourage those teaching our children to make it a priority in their programming."

The project will develop 12 three-hour modules that will cover topics including open space, intelligent materials, physical literacy, indigenous outdoor play practices, risk taking, accessibility and diversity in children's outdoor play needs. It is aimed at 400 current ECEs working in child-care centres in Alberta, B.C. and Ontario, as well as ECE faculty at post-secondary institutions to help propel the training of the future labour force.

Last month, the Lawson Foundation announced funding for 14 projects across Canada as part of its \$2.2-million outdoor play strategy. Dietze is leading the Okanagan College project with partners that include Toronto's School of Early Childhood Studies at Ryerson University, faculty at Lethbridge College in Alberta and at Northern College in Ontario, the Justice Institute of B.C. and the Canadian Child Care Federation.

"Ultimately, our collective goal is to get children outside to play, imagine and explore," said Dietze. "Outdoor play has been proven to boost children's overall health and wellness, academic performance, self-esteem and connections to environmental aesthetics and sustainability."

Twelve proposals out of 583 letters of intent were chosen by the Lawson Foundation, along with two proposals that were previously funded. The projects were chosen based on their interest in

exploring unstructured outdoor play that encourages kids to take risks, demonstration of being early adopters in the belief of outdoor play benefits, and examples of expertise in the subject.

Dietze has been recognized as a leading Canadian research expert in the field of outdoor play as part of early childhood education. Recently, she worked with landscape architects in the Okanagan to design new playground spaces and with the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness supporting its outdoor play agenda. Her articles have appeared in a number of educational journals, and her first textbook, Foundations of Early Education (2006), was the first Canadian-authored ECE textbook focused on children's outdoor play spaces.

"We are always proud to exemplify how Okanagan College contributes to the advancement of Canadian post-secondary education by innovation in teaching methods," said Okanagan College president Jim Hamilton.

"Beverlie's accomplishment with developing this project demonstrates how we achieve our commitment to excellent teaching, programming and applied research."

"We thank the Lawson Foundation for their support in making this project a reality through this important funding contribution," said Hamilton.

— Contributed by Okanagan College

VALLEY IN BRIEF

Car-sharing group looks at Penticton

A Kelowna-based car-sharing program may expand to Penticton. Directors of the Ogo Car Share Co-op explained how the service works during a meeting last week at the Cannery Brewery in Penticton.

The co-op, which manages a fleet of seven cars shared among 200 people in Kelowna, has also launched an online survey to gauge interest in expanding the service to Penticton. For more information, see ogocarshare.ca.

More cash urged for heritage renos

The city should make more money available to help people fix up properties with heritage significance, Kelowna council will hear today.

Grants for things like repairing old roofs, renovating porches and restoring brick facades currently total about \$40,000 annually. A suggestion going to council is the amount be boosted to \$50,000.

Twelve grants for various heritage restoration projects were approved last year, with most individual grants in the range of \$3,500 to \$5,000.

Between 2007 and 2015, about a quarter-million dollars in grants were given to property owners for various fix-up projects.

Gas Tax Fund helps fuel projects

Upgrades to the chlorine room at Johnson Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre and the final phases of planning for Upper Glenrosa have received contributions under the federal Gas Tax Fund.

A news release from the City of West Kelowna said the 25-year-old JBMAC chlorine room had reached the end of its useful life and required upgrades to meet modern health and safety standards and to reduce operational costs and improve efficiencies. The project had to be completed in September to meet health guidelines and coincide with the aquatic centre's annual maintenance shutdown.

The chlorine room will receive \$85,000 from the Gas Tax Fund, representing 100 per cent of project costs.

Meanwhile, phases 2 and 3 of the Upper Glenrosa plan will focus on infrastructure servicing for the area and a secondary access/egress out of the city's largest neighbourhood by population. Work on the next phases of the plan is expected to begin in the fall.

The Upper Glenrosa plan will receive \$100,152 from the federal Gas Tax Fund, representing 100 per cent of project costs.

— The Daily Courier

ALR

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One of the highest losses of farmland, on a percentage basis, has been in the Central Okanagan. Just over 35,000 hectares were put into the land freeze in 1974, but protected farmland in the greater Kelowna area has fallen by almost 25 per cent since then, to around 25,000 hectares.

Two years ago, the government divided the ALR into two zones. The first zone consists of the South Coast, Vancouver Island and the Okanagan. The second zone includes the Kootenays, other parts of the Interior and Northern B.C.

In Zone 2, applications for exclusion of property from the ALR can more easily be made if they are deemed to serve economic, cultural or social values, or community objectives. In Zone 1, the focus remains on preserving as much land for agricultural use as possible, the ALC says.

Along with traditional agriculture, such as growing fruit, ranching and cultivation of ground crops, the government has recently opened the ALR to a wider range of acceptable uses, such as medical marijuana production and breweries, provided at least half the input comes from the farm.

In the early 1970s, about 6,000 hectares of agricultural land in B.C. were being lost annually as a result of subdivisions and other development.



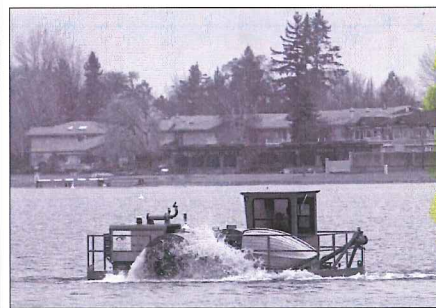
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Milfoil control

A milfoil rototiller machine — one of three in the Okanagan — works off the beach of Rotary Park on Friday afternoon.