

News

Government acted proper in 2017 floods

By Barry Gerding

Provincial ministry staff could not have done anything different to prevent the widespread flooding across the Okanagan Valley last spring, according to an independent review.

The review, carried out by Associated Environmental Consultants Inc. (AEC), found the actions of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development staff were appropriate in response to flooding that occurred in Okanagan, Kalamalka and Nicola lakes.

The report, which was completed by Brian Guy, a retired geoscientist with AEC and member of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, concluded that a wetter-than-average spring, combined with unusual weather conditions in the previous fall and winter, were the primary drivers behind the severe flooding in the Thompson-Okanagan region.

"When B.C. communities are impacted by flooding or wildfires, we have a responsibility to make sure we are doing all we can to keep residents safe," said Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. "Last spring's flooding in the Thompson



Crews install a bladder dam at Pritchard Park in West Kelowna last spring to combat flooding concerns. Photo: Alistair Water/Capital News

Okanagan was quickly followed by an unprecedented wildfire season throughout

the province. It's important to review our response actions and determine how we can

do better."

The ministry initiated the independent review last year to determine the effectiveness of the ministry's flood response and to see what could have been done differently to reduce flooding impacts.

The report states high inflows to Okanagan Lake, Kalamalka Lake and Nicola Lake in the spring of 2017 were part of a general pattern of high flows in creeks and rivers in this area of B.C. that resulted in widespread flooding. Both Okanagan and Nicola Lakes experienced their highest May inflows on record.

The report, titled *A Review of 2017 Flood Response: Okanagan Lake Regulation System and Nicola Dam*, contains 65 recommendations regarding staffing levels, experience and training, and streamflow forecasting models in the face of climate change.

The review looked at the operational management of the ministry-owned and ministry-operated Okana-

gan Lake Regulation System and Nicola Dam, and included an extensive analysis of the information, data and models used to make decisions on both systems.

The ministry has already started implementing some of the report's recommendations and is developing an action plan to address the remaining recommendations.

At the request of the B.C. government, George Abbott and Chief Maureen Chapman are conducting a similar strategic review of the 2017 freshet and wildfire seasons. The B.C. Flood and Wildfire Review will provide a comprehensive assessment of government activities related to planning and preparedness, prevention and mitigation; response; and recovery.

It's anticipated that Abbott and Chapman will take the findings of the Thompson Okanagan technical flood review into account in their report, which is expected to be delivered by April 30.



5

ST PADDY'S DAY SHENANIGANS at Big White

Looking for some St Patrick's Day fun? The luck of the Irish must be with you. Big White will be the center of the craic. We can't promise you'll find the pot of gold here at Big White, but you'll be seeing the rainbow through emerald tinted goggles. From green runs to green beers there's Irish fun for the whole family.

1 Don yer finest greenery for a day on the slopes

With March comes some of the Okanagan's best skiing. With over 300cm of snow underfoot and the sun shining high, conditions are perfect to show off every shade of green.

2 Drink green beer by The Woods NEW Snow Bar

Located in the heart of the action is The Woods patio with its NEW Snow Bar that will offer Grilled Guinness Sausage on Brioche with Guinness Mustard (on special for \$6 or \$11 to add a green beer) all day long on March 17. Top it off with \$5 PBR beer and fireball shots and you'll be sticking to green runs for the rest of the day!

3 Ski with a Leprechaun

Ireland isn't known for its ski hills, so we've found its leprechauns have been wintering at Big White. The Loose Moose caught one of these leprechauns and was hoping he'd come out to play on St. Paddy's Day. If you see the leprechaun, make sure to wish for some gold coins!

4 Do an Irish jig at The Blarney Stone Irish Tavern

Not just a turn of phrase, The Blarney Stone Irish Tavern will be offering a Celtic dance demo at 6pm. Join their genuinely Irish team for live music from 10:30am onwards. The patio will be host to the Carlsberg tent party with its very own DJs. Guinness and Jameson will be on special and draws for prizes will run all day long!

5 Sessions Taphouse goes Irish!

Cap off the evening with \$6 Stout and Porter at Sessions Taphouse and dance your Irish heart out to DJ C-bass from 10pm until late.

From all of us at Big White, we wish you a Happy St. Paddy's Day filled with four leaf clovers and clever limericks

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DIVAS & DIAMONDS

Ladies Night Out!

**April 21st, 2018
at 6:00 pm**

Westbank Lions Hall

HOSTED BY:
Peachland Lions Club

M/c'd by Kelowna's own: **Maxine DeHart**

Catered by: **"Blind Angler Grill LAKESIDE PATIO"** Leigh Faust, Chef

Libations by: **The View Winery**

PROCEEDS GO TO: KGF FOUNDATION
together we can change lives

**THERE WILL BE A FASHION SHOW, CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION
AND A GRAND PRIZE DRAW AT THE END OF THE NIGHT!**

REVERSE DRAW EVERY 10th TICKET WINS!!

TICKETS \$85 per DIVA: www.peachlandlions.com or at www.eventbrite.ca
OR BY CALLING: Lynne Herrin (250) 767-6225 or Shelley Sweeney (250) 212-2025

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