



Many of the Winfield Community Garden's growing plots were submerged in water last year. —Image: Barry Gerding/Black Press

Lake Country preparing for floods

District staff are performing assessments and mitigation efforts to prevent flooding

CARLI BERRY / Mar. 28, 2018 12:58 p.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



The District of Lake Country is performing mitigation procedures and assessments on its creeks to prepare for floods, said Lake Country's mayor.

Mayor James Baker said remediation work is still being done from last year's floods.

For this time of year, the snowpack is 150 per cent above average and Ellison Lake's watershed is also above average levels for this time of year, he said.

Baker said with climate change, the district will have to meet the Central Okanagan's changing weather conditions.

Assessments are being performed on Middle and Upper Vernon Creek. Crews are also keeping an eye on a beaver dam that could cause the creek to overflow, but jurisdiction lies with the province, said Baker.

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 the flooding that occurred in Okanagan, Kalamalka and Nicola lakes.

The report, completed by Brian Guy, a retired geoscientist with AEC and a member of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, concluded 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.

After the 2017 flooding in Lake Country, the Oyama Creek and Vernon Creek intakes were both cleaned and repaired. Both projects were funded by Emergency Management BC, said Matthew Salmon, public works manager.

The Oyama Creek Intake Cleaning Project cost \$42,000 and 900 cubic metres of debris, compressing of rock, soil and organic matter was removed. The Vernon Creek Intake Cleaning Project cost \$221,000 and 15,000 cubic metres of debris was removed.

"Improvements to the drainage system are being made. Beaver Lake and Oyama Lake levels are being drawn down by staff in preparation for freshet and with consideration to the snowpack level," according to a district news release.

"An assessment of Middle Vernon Creek as it flows through Lake Country identified areas of creek bank erosion and large woody debris obstructions. The woody debris will be removed by an arborist. Water levels in the creek are not yet a concern."

"Property owners along Middle Vernon Creek will be provided with information on actions they can take to address the potential risks caused by bank erosion."

Sandbags are also available through the district and the Central Okanagan Emergency Operations centre.

Heavy rain last week, (March 22) caused [flooding in West Kelowna](#) and Kelowna city staff said a meeting was held recently to deal with flood planning.

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