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Salmon Arm pushes for action on invasive mussels

By Salmon Arm Observer

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The City of Salmon Arm is adding its voice in the call for preventative action on invasive mussels.

Municipal council agreed to write a letter supporting the Okanagan Basin Water Board's (OBWB) call to action by the federal government on preventing invasive zebra and quagga mussels from entering B.C., which could "irrevocably harm our environment, economy and way of life."

The OBWB's request was presented to council in a letter to the feds by the Village of Midway, which supports the federal government taking a lead in the matter, including the passing of regulations to prohibit the transportation of invasive mussels into Canada.

Midway's letter also asks that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Public Safety Canada allocate funds to train and equip border agents to inspect boats and prohibit their entry without documentation.

Coun. Ken Jamieson said this was something council had to get behind.

"We're lucky we don't have a big problem in the Interior of B.C. with these, but it won't take long before a problem could start if we aren't really aggressive in the way we approach this issue," said Jamieson.

Coun. Debbie Cannon noted how, in her role as city representative on the Columbia Shuswap Regional District board, she got to hear a presentation on the invasive mussels and the problem they have caused in the Great Lakes.

"The thing about this species is that it can be so dormant and then it really produces, so they really can take over a lake," said Cannon, noting a resolution for action was passed at the recent Southern Interior Local Government Association, and will be taken up at the next Union of B.C. Municipalities convention.

Council agreed to send a letter to the federal government, as well as the B.C. government.

Coun. Marg Kentel said she hopes UBCM will take a strong stand in lobbying the province.

"I haven't listened to a whole lot of presentations, like at CSRD, but even just minimal, you can just tell what we're in store for. It could be just a major disaster," she commented.

District of Sicamous council recently agreed to write a similar letter to the provincial and federal governments.

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