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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VANDALISM TO OKANAGAN MILFOIL MACHINE PUTS BRAKES ON WEED CONTROL EFFORTS

Kelowna, B.C. – With only weeks left to rototill milfoil in Osoyoos Lake before winter freeze-up, vandalism and theft from one of the Okanagan Basin Water Board's (OBWB) machines has effectively stopped efforts to control the invasive weed in the South Okanagan Lake.

"It's really unfortunate," said OBWB Office and Projects Manager James Littlely. "The Water Board is already limited by environmental work windows and has added extra operator hours, during the work time available, to try and remove as much milfoil as possible. All of this is in an effort to ensure we have less of the troublesome weed in the lake for the upcoming summer and tourist season."

Rototilling is the most effective method of controlling the weed since it deroots the plant, allows it to float to the surface, and die. However, rototilling is only an option in the winter, explained Littlely. It can't be done in summer since the plant will re-root in warmer conditions. Instead, in the summer, the Water Board harvests (mows) the weed and only to a depth of about 6 feet. This is really more an esthetic treatment, he added.

This incident will delay rototilling at least a few days to allow staff to repair the machine and replace specialized safety equipment. It is unclear the cost of the damage and lost equipment at this time. The incident has been reported to Osoyoos RCMP.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact Osoyoos RCMP at (250) 495-7236.

- 30 -

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