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Osoyoos flushes out funding partners for sewer project



Municipal, regional, provincial and federal representatives were on hand for the beginning of a new sewer project for Osoyoos.

Photo

submitted

By [Kristi Patton - Penticton Western News](#)

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A new sewer project broke ground on Saturday, promising to protect the water quality in Osoyoos Lake.

Funding of \$4.65 million from the Canada - B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund will ensure 130 properties along Osoyoos Lake will be serviced by sewers, preventing potential contamination of wells and the lake.

“With this investment, public health concerns will be addressed by reducing groundwater

contamination and improving the quality of well water," said Okanagan Coquihalla MP Stockwell Day.

One-third matching funding will be provided by the benefitting properties and through municipal borrowing. Additional funding is provided by the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

"There is a number of individual houses along the lake that it will be hooked up to — this is 130 properties stretched over 10 kilometres, we won't know the final figure until it's all done. The target figure given to the benefitting properties was a maximum of \$8,000," said Osoyoos CAO Barry Romanko, adding it could come in lower or higher depending on the construction costs are.

Romanko said a study was commissioned in 1989 that identified the northwest sector as a high priority because of concerns of high phosphorus loadings into the lake. An environment assessment study was then commissioned in 1992-1993 by the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen that derived similar results.

"Those were the underlying factors that contributed to try and get the properties on the lake to an alternative sewer system to sewer fields. Several grant applications were made until finally the one was successful in 2007," said Romanko.


The Town of Osoyoos will own and operate the system under the authority of a service agreement with the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen. Osoyoos Coun. Michael Ryan said after several years of planning and negotiation he is pleased the town will undertake the northwest sewer extension, even though it is beyond the town boundaries. RDOS Area A director Mark Pendergraft agreed.

"I am elated that this project is finally underway. Without partnerships, important projects such as this would not get done. The health of Osoyoos Lake is what started this project and I am sure that there will be an improvement once it is completed."

The northwest sewer project has a slated completion date for March 31, 2012.

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