

Rate of shoreline development alarms

By [Richard Rolke - Vernon Morning Star](#)

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A Vernon politician is increasingly concerned not enough is being done to protect local lakes. A recent foreshore inventory mapping project indicated that 47 per cent of the Okanagan Lake shoreline has been substantially changed, with only 43 per cent still remaining in its natural condition.

“If the current trends continue, the plants and animals that depend on the habitat could be in trouble,” said Coun. [Buffy Baumbrough](#), who is also a member of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

The report, which was commissioned by OBWB, states the rate of change is estimated at 0.5 to two per cent of natural shoreline loss per year.

Consultant Jason Schleppe, who did the reports, estimates that at this current rate, the entire shoreline of Okanagan Lake could be developed in 15 to 20 years.

While some of the modifications to the foreshore have been authorized by levels of government, others have not.

“A lot of the modifications are occurring without permits. Better enforcement would be helpful but that’s not our jurisdiction,” said Baumbrough, adding that provincial and federal agencies are ultimately responsible.

Schleppe has suggested that the loss of shoreline can be stopped or slowed but it will require a collaborative effort between all levels of government.

However, Baumbrough isn’t sure if that can happen given that the province is moving ahead with new riparian regulations.

“If that occurs, that could reduce local government input,” she said.