

News

Okanagan gains water grant

Morning Star Staff

The Okanagan Basin Water Board has secured a \$397,000 federal grant to better understand the water needs in a region known for its water challenges and Canada's largest population growth.

As a result of the funding, a two-year study will begin looking at the Environmental Flow Needs, or the water needs of fish and aquatic ecosystems, in the Okanagan. The phase of the project will include 10 stream-by-stream studies, using flow monitoring equipment in streams identified as important for fish habitat throughout the valley.

The work will be a partnership between OBWB, the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the B.C. Ministry of Forests.

"Water is precious in the Okanagan, where we have one of the lowest rates of water available per person than anywhere in Canada, but have one of the highest rates of use in the country," said Doug Findlater, OBWB chairperson.

"This is an essential process needed to sustainably manage the waters of this valley."

"The \$397,000 comes from the federal gas tax fund.

"The federal funding will help the OBWB, which serves the three Okanagan regional districts,

to plan ahead and prioritize the water needs of fish and aquatic ecosystems, helping ensure the sustainability of the Okanagan," said Stephen Fuhr, Kelowna-Lake Country MP.

According to OBWB executive director Anna Warwick Sears, the need for this project was identified in 2010 when the agency completed phase two of its water supply and demand study.

"Since then, concerns have continued to grow about the number of water licences on Okanagan streams, so we started working with the province on how to make the best licencing decisions," she said.

"But then we both realized there's a critical information gap. We need to know the needs of fish before allocating more licences. In fact, B.C.'s new Water Sustainability Act will require environmental needs be taken into consideration."

It's expected the project will also help with fishery recovery efforts.

"The Okanagan Nation holds constitutional rights including those related to our Syilx water," said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, with the ONA.

"For decades the Syilx peoples have been developing watershed-based processes and policies to ensure our water sustainability responsibly is addressed and informed by our traditional ecological knowledge in a meaningful way."

Pauline Terbasket, ONA's executive director, agrees the project is important.


"While this technical collaborative project offers opportunity for the OBWB and ONA and its member communities to support these efforts, we will be working together to develop how we collect and manage data in the Okanagan," she said.



Doug Findlater



Stewart Phillip



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Agendas for Council Meetings are posted at
www.vernon.ca/government-services/mayor-council/council-meetings

February 17 | 4th Quarter Utility Bills

4th Quarter Utility Bills for 2015 have been mailed. Payments are due by February 17, 2016. Any late payments will be charged interest @ 12% per annum.
If you had any unpaid utilities as of December 31, 2015 the balance has been transferred to your property tax account effective January 1, 2016.
To have your utility bill emailed to you, please visit vernon.ca/mycity to register and sign up for e-billing.
If you have any questions regarding your bill, or if you have not received your bill, please contact a Utility Clerk at City Hall at 250-545-1361.

Council Meeting Calendar

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Committee of the Whole of Council
Monday, February 22, 2016 • 8-40 am

Regular Open Meeting of Council
Monday, February 22, 2016 • 1-30 pm

All Meetings of Council are held in the Council Chambers at City Hall.
If you require further information, please contact Patricia Bridal, Director Corporate Services.

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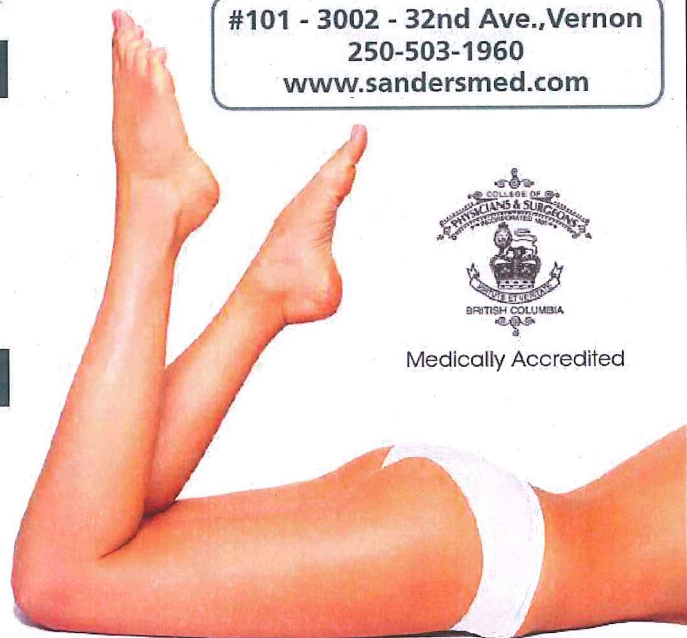
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