



Ian Horner, milfoil control supervisor, looks at a paddlewheel element of the new rototiller under construction. Photo: Contributed by OBWB

## New milfoil rototiller nears completion

New tool to assist Okanagan Basin Water Board milfoil program

BARRY GERDING / Feb. 15, 2018 11:00 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



A new milfoil rototiller machine being designed by a Kelowna firm is expected to be complete by April.

MultiPower Products has been contracted by the Okanagan Basin Water Board to build the machine, used to de-root the destructive milfoil weed from lakes across the Okanagan Valley.

The new machine will be added to the existing roster of two rototillers and a shallow water cultivator used to combat the milfoil.

The OBWB has been responsible for milfoil control within the Okanagan Basin since the 1970s, with the focus to harvest in the summer and rototiller the root systems on shallow portions of the lake floors in the fall and winter.

Water milfoil is very aggressive. Once introduced to a waterbody, it will displace native aquatic vegetation within a couple of years if left unchecked. Once established, eradication of the plant is almost impossible.

Currently, the machinery, which ranges in age between 14 and 34-years-old, continues to work in the Kelowna area around public beaches.

One machine is currently under repair, but will move to Kalamalka Lake once its operational to work near the Greater Vernon water intake.

**Related:** [Warm spring gives milfoil head start in Okanagan Lake](#)

Winter milfoil harvesting work is now complete in Wood Lake, the West Kelowna shoreline and north end of Okanagan Lake.

Further work may be done in Osoyoos Lake once the water level is sufficient to relaunch the machine.

Progress is also being made on a Vaseux Lake request for milfoil control as Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Osoyoos Indian Band continue working to identify issues and concerns related to milfoil.

Those concerns touch on areas such as fisheries, habitat, water quality, and cultural/archaeological sites.

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