



Flood damage in lower Glenrosa area of West Kelowna. Photo: Capital News files

Bracing for spring flooding across Okanagan

Cool spring will slow down melting of record-high snowpack

BARRY GERDING / Apr. 3, 2018 3:15 p.m. / [COMMUNITY](#) / [NEWS](#)



A record-high snowpack has raised concerns about the potential for widespread flooding across the Okanagan Valley this spring.

But while the snow levels are worrisome, the most important weather factor is how fast it will melt, says Anna Warwick Sears, executive director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Where last spring saw extreme snow and rainfall conditions in March and April that caused Okanagan Lake to overflow, it's anticipated this spring the streams feeding into the lake will be of greater concern to area residents.

That concern extends beyond the melting snow, to also trees and debris plugging up or diverting streamflows and the high level of ground saturation reducing the level of run-off absorption.

Related: [Heavy rain causes flooding in Okanagan](#)

"Because of last year's flooding experience, the province has been reducing the level of the lake since late January to capture the snowpack buildup when it starts melting," said Warwick Sears at Tuesday's OBWB meeting in Coldstream.

"They are putting the (Okanagan River) channel to the test and making the sacrifice of some loss of salmon eggs in the gravel bars along the river to reduce the lake level because of the amount of snow that has accumulated."

West Kelowna Mayor Doug Findlater said his community is resigned to the reality of potential flooding with the municipality having already made 50,000 sandbags available for local residents with a commitment to get more if needed.

"We have three major creeks running through our municipality and while we have done some dredging work, it never seems to be enough. There is a significant amount of snow this year and we just hope it doesn't all come at us at once," Findlater said.

Nelson Jatel, OBWB water stewardship director, said flooding concerns were raised at a meeting last week with George Abbott, who along with Maureen Chapman, hereditary Chief of the Skawahlook First Nation, is conducting a review of last year's flood and wildfire season across the province.

Jatel said Abbott acknowledged the need for a long-term sustainable funding source for flood prevention and mitigation measures, suggesting perhaps the carbon tax revenue might be an appropriate funding source.

Abbott and Chapman will submit their report to the provincial government this month.

But OBWB director Rick Fairbairn cautioned if this latest review will result in any long-term flooding response solutions.

"We have been dealing with this for the last 20 years and nothing gets done. When a flood comes and is over, everything just carries on until it happens again," said Fairbairn, suggesting that the millions of dollars it would cost to develop a comprehensive flood response plan across the province is why it hasn't happened.

"It goes on and on and I don't know...this study like others that have been done will likely bring up some good ideas but where will it all end up?"

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combed through the argument of the insurance company and found it to be lacking. To start, when investigators went to the house they saw signs of mischief.

... In this case, there was no evidence connecting the plaintiff to anyone who might be the arsonist, despite investigations having been conducted by both the RCMP and

square-feet it was far too large for himself as a widower," said Meiklem. Apostolidis also planned to relocate to Hawaii, where he had previously lived and

loss. One might think that having obtained an accepted offer after two price drops over several months of market exposure, Mr. Apostolidis would be optimistic that he had

Bracing for spring floods

By Barry Gerding

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Continued on Page A10



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ing and the city to address a number of the safety concerns businesses and employees in the area

plan to be stepping up their efforts to get guarantees from the city and BC Housing they will take “ap-

understand the need for the city and BC Housing to provide an emergency shelter while other more

to believe that the current location of Cornerstone should not be viewed as a long-term solution.”

Flood prep well underway

Continued from Page A7
ment to get more if needed.

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