



Development along the Okanagan Lake shoreline continues to encroach on the natural habitat and raise environmental impact concerns. Image Credit: Contributed

Guide to help Okanagan Lake frontage property owners

Practical solutions offered to protect lakeshore ecosystems

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Central Okanagan property owners along the Okanagan Lake shoreline will soon receive some important information in the mail.

A best management practices guide, titled A Resource for Okanagan Lakeshore Living, has been specifically developed to offer practical solutions on how they can help to protect natural areas and enhance our regions resiliency to climate change.

The guide also promotes and encourages stewardship actions that can be taken to improve and effectively manage the Okanagan Lake shoreline while supporting flood preparedness.

Related: [Using new tools to protect our remaining natural shoreline](#)

This resource, developed by the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program and the South Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program, can be used by Okanagan residents, developers, professionals, governments and other large lake communities.

Okanagan Lake is an invaluable natural and recreational asset and is one of the most popular destinations for residents and visitors in the region. However, over the last 25 years, an increase in urban and rural development has caused significant changes to the lakefront landscape.

Natural shorelines are richly diverse habitats and an integral part of a functioning lake ecosystem. The riparian vegetation found there not only provides important habitat for fish and other aquatic species, but also acts as erosion control to protect from wave action.

Related: [Protecting the Okanagan Lake shoreline](#)

Native plants found along the lake provide a permeable and absorbent buffer area that allows lake waters to rise and fall with the changing seasons.

When these sensitive areas are disturbed by development, they no longer provide these benefits. Important ecosystem services, like water filtration and flood protection, may also be permanently lost over time, unless these areas are better protected.

The Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory and Mapping 2016 update report highlighted the loss of natural shoreline habitat and made recommendations to reverse this trend.

Across the region, work is being done to enhance shoreline protection. However, a collaborative effort by all Okanagan residents and communities is required to help slow the loss of natural areas along the lake by enhancing and restoring natural ecosystems.

There are ongoing efforts across the valley for flood planning including the regional district's preparation of a Regional Floodplain Management Plan to better understand the risks and what can be done to reduce potential damage from flooding and prepare for future flood events in the Central Okanagan.

Funding for the outreach project carried out by the OCCP and the SOSCP was provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Okanagan Basin Water Board and the Real Estate Foundation of B.C.

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