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FEATURED

Milfoil attack launched on Vaseux Lake

Penticton Herald Staff Aug 9, 2022



A milfoil harvester at work on Vaseux Lake, where the invasive weed has grown unchecked for more than 30 years.

Special to The Herald



Invasive weeds that have become established in Vaseux Lake are now getting their first trim in more than 30 years.

In a press release issued Tuesday, the Vaseux Lake Stewardship Association praised the Okanagan Basin Water Board and Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen for their efforts in getting permission from senior governments to run the milfoil harvester.

"A founding premise for the establishment of the Vaseux Lake Stewardship Association in 2017 was to improve water quality and fish habitat by removing the infestation of milfoil, which is an invasive species in lakes throughout North America that contributes to declining water quality and plant diversity," said chair Norm Gaumont in the release.

"Vaseux Lake has become a very popular tourist area for those who would enjoy nature without motorized boats and large numbers of cyclists and ebikes. It is one of the last areas in the South Okanagan with a wildlife and bird sanctuary along a lake that allows people to enjoy nature peacefully."

Gaumont said his group is still working to get a milfoil rototiller into the lake, which removes the plants by their roots and provides more long-term benefits albeit with greater disturbance.

"The association has been in talks with representatives of the Okanagan Nation Alliance to collaborate on this pilot project in efforts to move forward for next year. For now, homeowners and visitors to the lake can once again enjoy swimming, kayaking and other aquatic activities without having to move through a large infestation of milfoil."

In past years, members of Gaumont's group have removed mountains of milfoil from the lake by hand while awaiting government approval to use the harvesting machine, which is operated by the OBWB.



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