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This South Okanagan lake is open for recreational use again

Dan Walton



Milfoil harvesters remove the invasive seaweed when it becomes a problem in freshwater lakes.

Image Credit: SUBMITTED/Vaseux Lake Stewardship Association

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Vaseux Lake in the South Okanagan can be enjoyed by swimmers and kayakers again.

Every summer for years, the lake has been overwhelmed by milfoil – an invasive seaweed that is able to prosper in small, warm bodies of water like Vaseux.

“For now, home owners 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,” according to a media release from the Vaseux Lake Stewardship Association.

A milfoil harvester was recently used to remove the seaweed. It’s an effective, albeit temporary solution. But for more than 30 years, red tape was preventing the machines from entering the water, and the milfoil ran amok, especially over the past decade. The release thanks James Littlely from the Okanagan Basin Water Board for helping to overcome those regulations.

READ MORE: [Harvester anticipated to finally fight milfoil problem in South Okanagan lake](#)

The lake became so infested with milfoil that it was no longer usable for swimmers and kayakers, and it engulfs so much of the ecosystem that it causes environmental concerns.


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“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,” the release says.

“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.”

The Stewardship Association’s next goal is to get permission through a pilot project to use a rototiller – a machine that removes the roots of the milfoil.

“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.”

Vaseux Lake Stewardship Association continues to advocate through a pilot project to get a rototiller in the lake, which is better at permanently removing the milfoil by its roots. 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.

READ MORE: [Invasive milfoil will thrive in Okanagan lakes impacted by climate change](#)



Heavy patches of milfoil pushed up against the shore of Vaseux Lake in 2016.

Image Credit: Submitted by Norm Gaumont



If milfoil is left unchecked, this is what lakes will look like. This shot was taken near the north end of Osoyoos Lake in 2010

Image Credit: Submitted by Okanagan Basin Water Board