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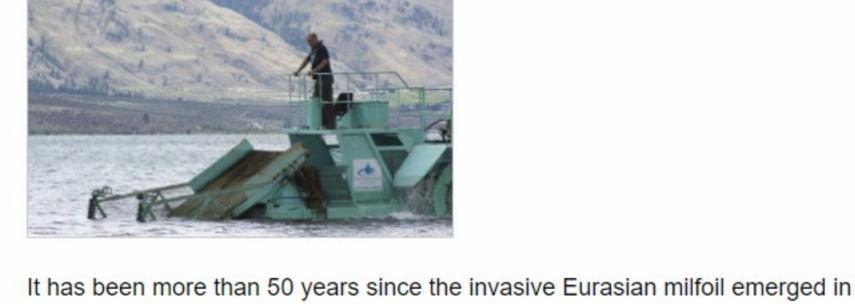
## plague Okanagan watershed Maintenance program effective but still absence of eradication solution

Milfoil infestation continues to

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the Okanagan Water Basin.

have since spread throughout the Okanagan Valley watershed from Osoyoos to the north end of Okanagan Lake.

Some 4,100 metric tonnes of milfoil have been harvested since 1981, as the

Okanagan Basin Water Board continues to fund a milfoil control program which

The weed growth has no maintenance cure, as the plants were introduced and

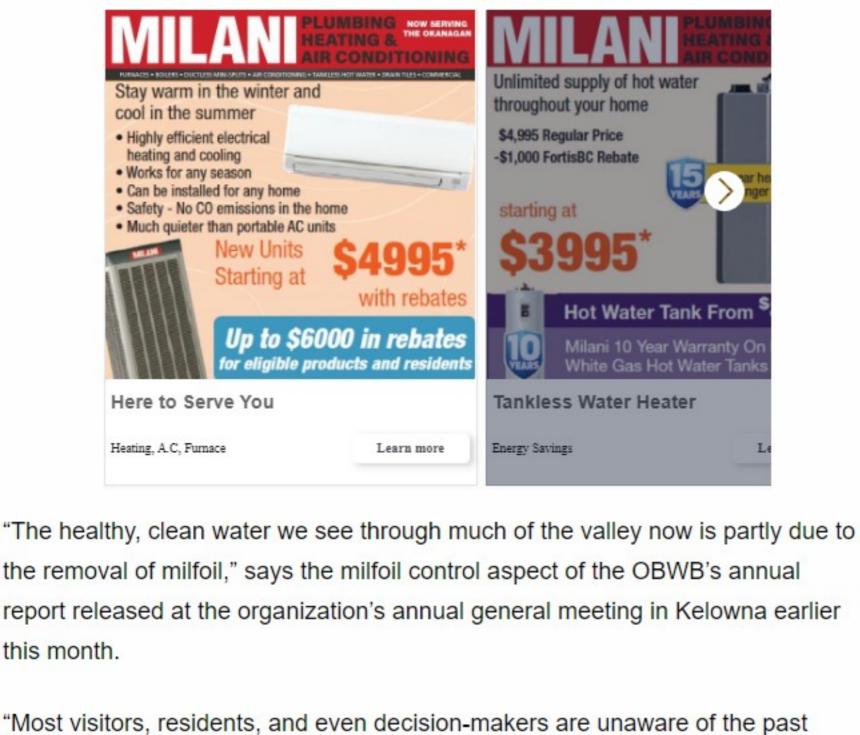
entails derooting or rototilling in the winter and harvesting in the summer at a cost of \$780,000 annually.

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harms caused by widespread and uncontrolled milfoil in the Okanagan, as well as its continued harmful ecological and economic effects."

James Littley, OBWB operations and grants manager, spoke about the milfoil control program at the annual general meeting, talking about the history behind

it and how research efforts, some led by UBC Okanagan, on maintenance

techniques.

dedicated solution," Littley said.

but remains the most cost-effective and neutralizing control option.

Chemical treatments have not worked, with one effort in the '70s to use the controversial herbicide 2,4-D leading to public protests banning its use.

"Ultrasonic treatment methods held some promise for a time...technology offers

Littley said removing the milfoil is arduous and never-ending work at this point,

Milfoil's characteristics of impacting water quality and negatively impacting the ecosystem are a foreshadowing of why the threat of invasive mussels is a high priority for the water board, another invasive element to the watershed with no treatment solution that could pose an economic disaster for the region.

"The challenge with chemical eradication of milfoil or the mussels is the sheer

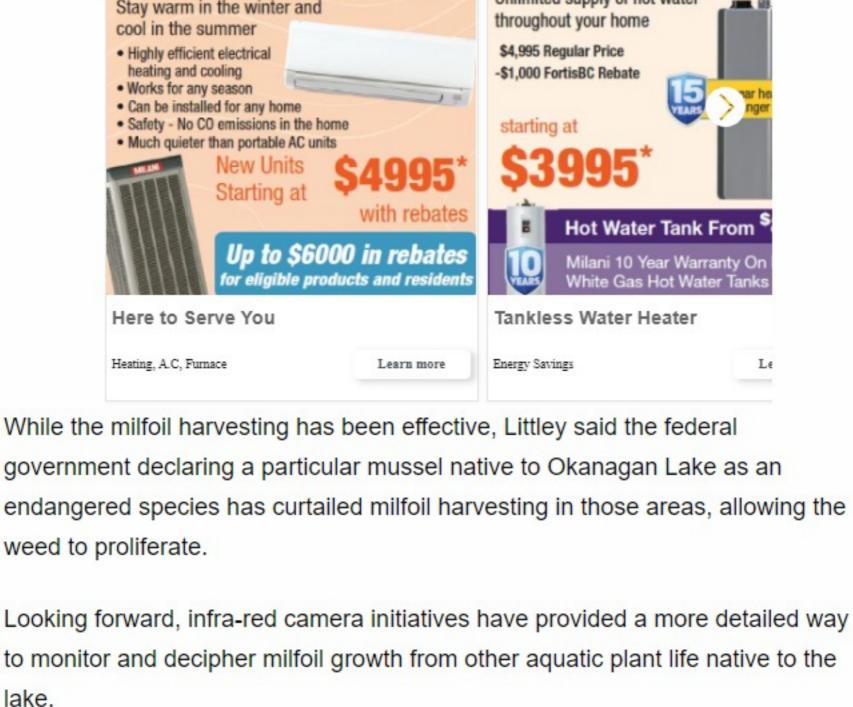
size of Okanagan Lake. There is no way it can work like it might on smaller

some hope for new methods to be developed but so far there has been no

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The UBCO School of Engineering has also designed a new way to reduce the volume of harvested weeds to store them on a barge or boat without requiring

nearby transfer sites on shore.

"Our reality is we have to learn how to live with the milfoil problem. Our taxpayers are on the hook for this without provincial government funding support which ended in the 1990s, chemicals are not a solution and research holds out

As well, the harvested milfoil has found a recycling purpose for use by local

hope to control the ecosystem balance," Littley said.

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