

Amphibious craft eyed for Valley's battle against water weeds

RON SEYMOUR [Sep 29, 2022](#) Updated [Sep 29, 2022](#)



The Okanagan Basin Water Board has learned of a German-made amphibious vehicle that might do a better job of clearing local lakes of Eurasian milfoil, a slimy lake weed. Weeds cut by one of the existing harvesters are shown in this file picture.

Daily Courier file photo



Deployment of new weed-whacking machines on Okanagan lakes has been delayed while officials investigate the feasibility for local waters of a new German-made harvester.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board has plans to spend \$1.5 million on two new machines to control Eurasian milfoil, with one of the vessels expected to be put into service next summer and a second to follow in 2024.

However, OBWB staff have now learned of a new German-made harvester. It is an amphibious vehicle, meaning it can operate on both land and water. It has a narrower and lower profile than the current harvesters, can hold more weeds, and is driven by propellers rather than a paddlewheel.

"The amphibious machine would solve many of the significant issues with access and lake levels that we are increasingly facing today," deputy OBWB administrator James Littley writes in a report going to board directors next week.

The German vessel could go into smaller weed-infested areas, such as between docks and at marinas, and fit under low structures such as a bridge at Osoyoos, Littley says.

But a problem, he says, is that the German-made harvester costs much more than the current budget allows. As well, it's unclear if the vessel would be licensed by Transport Canada for use in this country.

It's possible that other suppliers of machines with similar design and operating advantages would be identified through a new request for proposals, Littley says.

So he'll recommend to OBWB directors, who represent various towns and cities in the Valley, at a meeting Oct. 4 that the harvester replacement program be delayed while these options are more thoroughly considered.

Milfoil is a slimy lake weed that once threatened to engulf all shoreline areas in the Okanagan. The water board was created in the early '70s specifically to institute a weed-control program that has kept the invasive weeds under control in many areas.

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