

Parties Agree to Collaborate on Protecting Watersheds

KELOWNA -- On Feb. 15, at a meeting facilitated by the Integrated Land Management Bureau at the Central Okanagan Regional District office, representatives of Lakeview Irrigation District and the Okanagan Trail Riders agreed to collaborate on finding a balance between independent recreational activities and protecting water supply in the Lambly Creek and Powers Creek Community Watersheds. The Lakeview Irrigation District and the Westbank Irrigation District had raised a particular concern about the increased recreational activity in the watersheds and the potential for long term damage to drinking water quality.

The parties along with representatives from the Interior Health Authority, the Ministry of Environment and MLA Thorpe's office discussed a number of actions to address this concern in the watersheds. These include immediate steps and longer-term activities as follows:

- Increasing the use of signage and educational materials to raise awareness and foster responsible recreation in the watersheds;
- Carrying out watershed rehabilitation projects in high priority areas and addressing recreation activity in particularly sensitive areas;
- Forming a technical advisory committee to consider the immediate priority actions and with the long term goal of completing a watershed assessment and assessment response plan;
- Exploring opportunities to create additional recreational areas to reduce future pressure on these watersheds;
- Exploring opportunities for increased conservation officer presence during high use times including major dirt bike events;
- Working cooperatively with the Province to communicate any recommendations resulting from the off-road vehicle report prepared by the Coalition for Licensing and Registration of Off-Road Vehicles.

The Province has agreed to provide limited funding and resources to help the groups involved act on the high priority outlined activities immediately.

The Okanagan Trail Riders and Lakeview Irrigation District are most encouraged by the support of the government agencies and look forward to working with all the stakeholders in creating positive long term solutions. Both groups are committed to better management of the watersheds in order to protect water quality.

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For more information please contact

Meeting Participants/Stakeholders:

- ✓ Lakeview Irrigation District
- ✓ Westbank Irrigation District
- ✓ Okanagan Trail Riders
- ✓ Ministry of Agriculture and Lands-Integrated Land Management Bureau
- ✓ Interior Health Authority
- ✓ Ministry of Environment
- ✓ MLA Rick Thorpe's Constituency Office
- ✓ Regional District of Central Okanagan
- ✓ Tolko Industries Ltd.