

# local news

## ▼ LAKEVIEW IRRIGATION DISTRICT

# Help required to prevent watershed degradation

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The Lakeview Irrigation District is asking the province to enforce its laws on watershed trespassing after trying and failing to control damage itself.

In a Nov. 17, 2005 letter to Okanagan-Westside MLA Rick Thorpe, LID manager James Moller says the province can no longer turn a blind eye to watershed degradation.

Moller has made his concerns heard before but was

told by the province to work with local community groups, including motorbike trail riders, to show a little more respect.

While Moller praises the Okanagan Trail Riders Association for their efforts, he says it still isn't enough.

"We believe that the district along with other registered stakeholders have exhausted the available avenues to encourage all watershed users to respect and protect the watershed," he wrote in a letter being received by the Central

Okanagan Regional District Monday.

"The damage to the watershed has increased over the past year, not decreased, and it is now time for the government to take the lead to protect the watershed.

"Dialogue, signage and education are not solving the problems. What is needed is enforcement of existing government legislation and regulations."

He said riders likely not involved in the club, continue to use closed trails causing erosion and threats to the sole

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water supply for some 13,000 people.

"It is our obligation to report threats to the watershed, that's why we brought forward this notice," he said.

"We can't do this on our own, nor should we be expected to."

He said there are some 300 riders a week on average in the watershed in the summer and the damage caused is just not sustainable.

He recommends that the government designate spaces for riders and even help them to regulate themselves. He says the upper West Kettle River near Highway 33 and Big White Road be considered and suggests the government could enter into a lease with riders to encourage

investment in sustainable trail development.

If riders have a safer place to go, they should be encouraged to do so.

If not, he suggests that a conservation officer be put in place for enforcement in the summer. "The attitude across Canada in the last year such as Newfoundland and Ontario, they all put in stronger, more stringent water protection acts and I think that is a positive note and I hope B.C. will take that lead," Moller indicated.

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