

Water supply under threat from ATVs

Over the past year, the district has met with various stakeholders including the Okanagan Trail Riders (the local club that represents some of the off-road motorcycle interests), Tolko Industries Limited that holds the forest license for TFL 49, and representatives from the former Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP) that manages the Land and Resource Management Plan.

In addition, the district helped WLAP organize a stakeholder meeting that involved all stakeholders and interested parties in the watershed.

The objective of all of this work was to inform all users of the Lambly Creek Community Watershed that the watershed is the only water supply for approximately 13,000 residents and that protection of the watershed and the water supply is everyone's responsibility. The district also involved the drinking water officer from Interior Health to explain to all parties that the Drinking Water Protection Act has as a priority source protection.

In spite of all the efforts by the district, damage to the watershed, primarily from uncontrolled use of off-road motorcycles has expanded and is now a threat to the district's water supply.



Photo contributed

The Lakeview Irrigation District submitted this photo to show some of the damage being done to the Lambly Creek watershed.

Although the clubs have worked to develop trails away from sensitive areas and tried to close trails within sensitive zones, it appears that increased use of the watershed by riders who may not belong to the club or respect the environment have continued to use the "closed" trails as well as develop new trails throughout the lower watershed.

Despite the efforts by the forest company to maintain its roads and drainage works, ditch lines are filled with sediment from trails crossing the roads and runoff is

diverted away from natural drainage courses, causing further unnecessary erosion.

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.

The damage to the watershed has increased over the past year, not decreased. Dialogue, signage and education are not solving the problems.

The type of destruction of the environment that has occurred in the lower watershed would not be tolerated had it been caused by a licensed stakeholder, and is inconsistent with the intent of the Okanagan

Shuswap LRMP, the policies of the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Health.

The Lakeview Irrigation District recognizes that there is a need for an area for off-road riding. It appreciates the efforts that the clubs have made control the activities in the Lambly watershed, but it is apparent that they have no control over riders who are not members.

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