

Report to Council



Date: July 15, 2019
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Okanagan Lake Protection Strategy
Department: Planning and Development Services

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the Report from Planning and Development Services dated July 15, 2019 with respect to the Okanagan Lake Protection Strategy;

AND THAT Council authorizes the Mayor, on behalf of Council, to write a letter of support for the Okanagan Lake Protection Strategy to the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program and the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program.

Purpose:

The Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program and the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program are requesting an expression of support for the Okanagan Lake Protection Strategy from the City of Kelowna.

Background:

The Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP) is a partnership of organizations and government focused on conservation issues in the Okanagan basin of British Columbia. The OCCP exists in part to act as a hub of information and resources that help our community act to improve environmental protection in the Okanagan.

The South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program is a partnership of fifty organizations that work together to conserve the unique biodiversity and environment of this region. The membership is a diverse array of government, non-government, First Nations and academic institutions. SOSCP has been working collaboratively in the South Okanagan Similkameen community, coordinating and facilitating partner activities and improving the effectiveness of conservation efforts for over 17 years.

In 2016, an updated Foreshore Inventory and Mapping (FIM) project for Okanagan Lake identified significant, cumulative losses of natural shoreline areas. Increased development and loss of natural areas impacts the ecological functioning of the lake and has negative consequences for the health and well-

being of our communities, including reducing the ability of the lake to provide safe drinking water and habitat for fish and wildlife. The loss of natural areas also negatively impacts recreation values and opportunities to attract investment to the region.

Findings from the 2016 FIM reinforced the importance of previous foreshore assessment recommendations, including the development of a collaborative Shoreline Management Plan, and an education program to increase public awareness of the lake's critical importance. Currently, an outreach initiative is being coordinated by the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program and the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program to provide practical information on best practices for lakeshore landowners. What is needed now is enhanced collaboration to improve effective shoreline management through the participation of all agencies, local and provincial government, First Nations, environmental organizations, and community groups.

Foundations for Collaborative Management:

The goal of the Okanagan Lake Protection Strategy is to identify policies, regulations, and best practices to enhance multi-jurisdictional shoreline management to protect water quality and environmental values of Okanagan Lake.

This initiative is supported by the objectives and policies of all three Regional Growth Strategies in the Okanagan with regards to water stewardship, ecosystems, and natural lands and additionally, aligns with both the 2016 *State of the Basin Report*, and the ongoing implementation of *Keeping Nature in Our Future* – A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Okanagan Region.

Deliverables for Phase 1 (2019):

As supported by OCCP and SOSCP, the collaborative working group will:

- Engage with all applicable agencies, First Nations, and partners to gather input, build consensus, and establish support for developing an approach/model for a region-wide protection strategy for Okanagan Lake.
- Formalize a Terms of Reference.
- Review existing policies, discussion papers, and other previous works related to shoreline development for Okanagan Lake, and review shoreline management plans that have been developed in other jurisdictions in British Columbia.
- Conduct a high-level gap analysis and create recommendations for policy and direction to effectively manage shoreline development.
- Establish a Communications Strategy for public engagement.
- Develop a framework for the Okanagan Lake Protection Strategy.

Existing Policy:

The City of Kelowna has established policy and regulations that are delivering on Council's commitment for protection of Okanagan Lake, including:

Official Community Plan

- OCP Objective 6.1. "Protect and enhance Kelowna's biodiversity."
- OCP Objective 6.3. "Maintain and enhance Kelowna's natural resources."

- OCP Chapter 12: Natural Environment Development Permit Guidelines
- OCP Chapter 13: Hazardous Condition Development Permit Guidelines

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

There are no financial or budgetary implications. Support of this collaboration may leverage funding from senior levels of government for initiatives to protect Okanagan Lake.

Submitted by:

C. Davis

Approved for inclusion:



Terry Barton, Development Planning Department Manager

Attachments:

Request for Expression of Support – Okanagan Lake Protection Strategy

cc:

Department Manager, Policy and Planning