

June 7, 2019



Re: Request for Expression of Support - Okanagan Lake Protection Strategy

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 your organization. At the workshop in November 2018, participants identified the need for formal support by way of council resolution or a letter of support from their respective agencies, local government, or First Nations to help foster regional collaboration, commitment and communication for this project. Formal support will enable elected officials and decision makers with the opportunity to discuss and address local water challenges and the importance of protecting Okanagan Lake.

The Project

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.

Background

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 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

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.

Respectfully,



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OCCP Program Manager



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For more information regarding the project, please contact:

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