

MEDIA RELEASE

City of Williams Lake



For Immediate Release

October 21, 2021

450 Mart Street
Williams Lake, BC
V2G 1N3

City Urges Province to Expand Lake Harvester Permit

On October 18, 2021, the aquatic vegetation harvester was put into action by City of Williams Lake's certified operators in Williams Lake, accompanied by a professional biologist to monitor for the western painted turtle and other aquatic life. Operating within the permitted area for a total of six hours, approximately four wheelbarrow loads of vegetation were extracted, with no aquatic life detected.

The City has undergone a strenuous multi-year permitting process through the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development's Water Management division. In November 2020, the City received approval to remove aquatic vegetation at the existing public areas of Scout Island and Dutch Point boat launches, Scout Island public beach, and within the vicinity of the aerodrome on the northern shore of Williams Lake near Scout Island, at depths no less than 2 meters. All works must take place between October 15 until the lake freezes.

"The City has received numerous complaints and concerns from residents and visitors to our community regarding the volume of aquatic vegetation in the lake," said Mayor Walt Cobb. "Under Council's direction, the City has sent an urgent letter to the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development requesting a discussion to determine next steps to address the ongoing struggle to maintain the aquatic vegetation growth in our lake to something that is practical, and balances safety and aesthetic issues with aquatic wildlife protection."

"While the machine exceeded our expectations with regard to removing aquatic vegetation in the constrained area we were able to harvest, the City is extremely concerned that the limited results from this initial test do not provide enough quantitative data to determine the viability of implementing the lake harvester," said Chief Administrative Officer Gary Muraca. "The City must have an expansion of the approved areas to harvest if we are to have measurable vegetation control in our lake. We believe an expansion of the existing permit areas is reasonable and will achieve a balance between safety and access to our lake and ecosystem preservation. Time is of the essence for us to gather this data, as the lake will freeze soon."

For more information contact Rob Warnock, Director of Municipal Services, at 250.392.1783 or rwarnock@williamslake.ca.

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