



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

INFORMATION RELEASE

June 19, 2017

Keep Flood Protections in Place / Provincial Support for Private Properties

All private properties are asked to keep sandbags and other flood protections in place. High lake levels continue to be a threat to properties even as lake levels slowly recede. Residents should not remove any sandbags at this time as windstorms and boat wakes can still potentially damage property.

Over 500,000 sand bags have been distributed throughout the Okanagan-Similkamen. Residents are advised not to intentionally empty sandbags along the banks or foreshore of any creeks, rivers or lakes. Instead the Province of BC will pay Local Governments to remove full sandbags. The disposal process will be coordinated by Local Governments and there will be no cost to residents.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Province for covering the costs incurred by Local Governments for the removal of sandbags from private properties,” states Karla Kozakevich, RDOS Chair. “Residents should keep sandbags in place for now. Local Governments will be organizing clean up teams to remove sandbags in the near future. Residents will be advised once the programs are developed as to the potential steps and timelines.”

Property owners should not intentionally empty sandbags along creeks, rivers and lakes as this could damage local fish and other aquatic species habitat. The foreshores of the lakes are habitat for many endangered or rare species, and any extra sand could seriously affect these ecosystems. The Provincial Water Sustainability Act strictly prohibits intentionally dumping materials along the foreshore.

“The Province of BC requires that sand not be dumped along watercourses,” explains Kozakevich. “Instead they are paying for people to come to private properties to remove sandbags. Residents should know they are going to get help and that they should keep their sandbags in place until we know it is safe to remove them.”

Residents can use the soil on their property well away from lakes and creeks. Clean sand can be used as fill, in sandboxes or other uses. If sandbags may have come in contact with septic waste, bacteria, chemicals or oils, getting the sand and sandbags off your property is advised. Sandbags will be collected for free by Local Governments once the go ahead to remove sandbags is given for an area.

For more information on please visit www.rdos.bc.ca, e-mail info@rdos.bc.ca, call 250-490-4225 or toll-free 1-877-610-3737.



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