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**NEWS RELEASE**

**OKANAGAN WATER BOARD INVITES PUBLIC TO LAUNCH OF  
NEW AMPHIBIOUS MILFOIL HARVESTER**

**Vernon, B.C. – Sylix Territory** – The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) is hosting a public launch event and naming contest for their new amphibious milfoil harvester at Paddlewheel Park, 7813 Okanagan Landing Road, in Vernon from 1 to 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 20.

“This is the newest tool in our toolbox to help control invasive Eurasian watermilfoil in Okanagan lakes,” says James Littley, OBWB Deputy Administrator. The new machine, which will replace a 1978 harvester and can be launched without a trailer, is designed to cut the top five feet of the milfoil and carry almost two and a half tons at a time to the beach. The load is then collected by a Water Board truck and the weeds are given away for compost for orchards and gardens. The new machine’s engine is more efficient, reducing emissions, and is mounted in the hull which improves stability and makes it quieter than the older harvesters.

The harvester was designed and built in Germany by Berky GMBH, an agricultural, mining, and aquatic equipment manufacturer that recently celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. After an extensive search and request for proposals for the new equipment, the Berky machine checked all the boxes to enhance OBWB operations and because it is amphibious, it adds flexibility to the milfoil control program which has faced challenges due to changing lake levels and shoreline development.

“Now we’re looking for some help coming up with a name for our new machine,” added Littley, noting a lack of creativity when it came to naming earlier machines. “Our old harvesters are called ‘long-nose Harvey’ and ‘short-nose Harvey,’ based on the length of their offloading conveyors. Our rototillers are called ‘blue roto, red roto, and orange roto,’ based on their paint colours, and ‘MRV’ for ‘milfoil rototilling vessel,’ which is also red, but ‘red roto’ was already taken,” he joked. “Our boat is called ‘ugly.’ Obviously, we need some help from the public to come up with something more catchy.” More details on the naming contest will be announced at the event.

The public and media are invited to attend the launch to check out the new machine. OBWB staff will be on site to answer questions about the milfoil control program, and a Berky representative will be available to answer questions about the new harvester.

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