

Report to Council



Date: May 4, 2012
File: 6130-00
To: City Manager
From: Ian Wilson, Park Services Manager
Subject: Beach Water Quality Sampling

Recommendation:

THAT Council directs staff to work with the Interior Health Authority to collect water samples from Kelowna's public beaches for the purpose of testing and results distribution by the Interior Health Authority;

AND THAT the amount of \$5,000 be transferred from the City's Other Working Capital account to fund the on-going Beach Water Quality Sampling program;

AND FURTHER THAT the 2012 Financial Plan be amended accordingly.

Purpose:

Interior Health Authority (IHA) no longer has summer students who collect water samples from public beaches in the Okanagan. IHA has asked local governments for assistance with collection of water samples.

Background:

For a number of years, IHA has collected and tested water samples from public beaches in the Central and South Okanagan to help protect public health and inform the public about possible beach advisories. Early this year, staff met with representatives from IHA who indicated that they no longer have budget and summer students available to collect water samples. IHA indicated that they will continue to pay for the costs of testing the water samples, however they have asked local governments to help collect samples during the summer months at the local government's cost.

While staff are quite disappointed with the IHA decision to download this responsibility to local governments, IHA indicated that other jurisdictions within IHA (outside of the Central and South Okanagan) have already been conducting water sampling. To date, Lake Country, Penticton, West Kelowna and Summerland have also decided to take on the responsibility for collecting water samples.

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Kelowna's beaches are very important to the local economy as evidenced by a 2011 Kelowna Tourism study which cited "Lakes, Beaches and Parks" as the number one attraction for summer visitors. While the public health risk is likely very low (Kelowna has not experienced a beach water quality advisory in the last 15 years), continued beach water testing would help to reassure residents and tourists that Kelowna's beaches are safe. Therefore staff recommends that the City assists IHA with the collection of samples, which would be preferable to the alternative of no testing at all.

Financial/Budgetary Considerations

The estimated cost to collect beach samples and forward them to IHA is \$5,000. This work would be performed by staff from Utility Services who already conduct water quality sampling in creeks.

Internal Circulation:

Financial Services
Communications
Utility Services

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Alternate Recommendation
Legal/Statutory Authority
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
Personnel Implications
Existing Policy
External Agency/Public Comments:
Communications Comments

Submitted by:



I. Wilson, Park Services Manager

Approved for inclusion



Joe Creron, Director, Civic Operations

cc:

John Vos, General Manager Community Services
Joe Creron, Director Civic Operations