Environmental Services

This Environmental Services Sheet was developed for presentation to the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee at its meeting on November 21, 2023. The sheet was prepared using information available at the time of writing. Changes will be made if new information becomes available.

Information presented on the Okanagan Falls Incorporation is based on the following assumptions:

> *That the Okanagan Falls municipality would continue to be a participant in each of the Environmental Services currently provided by the RDOS*

THE PRESENT

➤ What service is provided?

Environmental services within the RDOS include the following services:

- Destruction of Pests
- Mosquito Control Program
- Invasive Species Program
- Environmental Conservation Service

Destruction of Pests
This service (formerly Noxious Insect Control) features monitoring, verification of infestations and public education to ensure bylaw compliance for the control of noxious insects (fruit tree pests). The service is delivered to Penticton, Summerland, Oliver, Keremeos and all electoral areas except Area "H". The program focuses on pests not addressed by the Sterile Insect Release Program (outlined later in this *Sheet*). The goal of the program is to educate individuals that are considering planting a fruit bearing tree or shrub, or already have plantings, about their responsibility to care for their fruit trees and prevent or control destructive pests.

Mosquito Control Program
This service involves the monitoring of approximately 375 – 425 properties from March to September each year for mosquito larvae. Regional District technicians check stagnant water bodies for mosquito larvae and for the predators that eat the larvae. Once each larva/predator monitoring is complete, non-toxic organic larvicide is applied as required. Until 2023 the service was provided in all electoral areas, except Area "E", and in all municipalities except Princeton and Keremeos, but in 2023 a bylaw was adopted expanding the service region-wide. The broader service area will be reflected in the 2024 budget.

Invasive Species Program
This service involves the removal of both land-based and aquatic invasive plant species, as well as prevention, education and public relations related to invasive species, delivered on a region-wide basis.

Environmental Conservation Service
This service was created in 2016 to promote protection of natural areas, habitat, water, the environment and wildlife. Participating areas include Electoral Areas "A", "C", "D", "E", "F", and "I" as well as the municipalities of Penticton, Summerland and Oliver. The service administers a Conservation Fund with the goal of providing financial support for projects that will conserve the region's valuable natural areas, and that are not the existing responsibility of the federal, provincial or local governments.

In addition to these four services, the RDOS currently participates in and contributes to two pest control partnership programs that are delivered on a multi-regional basis:

- *Nuisance (Starling) Control Program* — A service that consists of a starling control (juvenile trapping) program for the protection of agriculture and native bird species. The program is delivered in partnership with the BC Fruit Growers Association, the BC Cherry Association, BC Grapegrowers Association, Okanagan Tree Fruits Cooperative, the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) and the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO).

- *Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release (SIR) Program* — A service that exists to protect tree fruit from the invasive codling moth. SIR includes monitoring, education, enforcement and population control measures (sterile moth release, mating disruption, blossom/fruit removal, cardboard banding and/or pesticide application), and is provided in partnership with the RDCO, RDNO and Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD). All jurisdictions in the RDOS participate in the program except for Area "H", a portion of Area "I" and the Town of Princeton.

➤ Who makes decisions?

Operational decisions related to the programs delivered by the RDOS — Destruction of Pests, Mosquito Control, Invasive Species, Environmental Conservation programs — are made by the RDOS directors representing the participating areas, with input from the Chief Administrative Officer. Decisions regarding budget matters, the financial plan, regulatory bylaws or borrowing are made by the full Board of Directors.

All matters related to the Nuisance Starling Control program are considered by the Management Committee, and any recommendations are referred to the BC Grapegrowers Association's Board of Directors for decisions. The Management Committee includes representatives from the RDOS (one), BC Fruit Growers' Association, the BC Cherry Association, the BC Grapegrowers' Association, BC Ministry of Agriculture, landowners whose properties are typically used for trapping and an environmental/naturalist club representative. The total number of committee members fluctuates depending on the number of participating landowners.

The OKSIR Board of Directors is the chief governing body for the OKSIR program. All key decisions related to the program are made by the Board. The Board has eight voting and two non-voting members. The voting members are regional district directors (or alternates) appointed by the participating regional districts, and three grower representatives (one of whom is a certified organic grower). The two non-voting members are senior government representatives from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture. Only the five regional district directors vote on financial matters.

Figure 1 summarizes service governance for the environmental services.

Figure 1: Service Decision-making

SERVICE	DECISION-MAKERS
Destruction of Pests	Operational decisions made jointly by all participating directors.
Mosquito Control	Operational decisions made jointly by all participating directors.
Invasive Species	Operational decisions made jointly by all participating directors.
Environmental Conservation	Operational decisions made by all participating directors, supported by Technical Advisory Committee.
Nuisance (Starling) Control	BC Grapegrowers Association's Board of Directors (supported by Starling Control Management Committee; RDOS has 1 representative).
Okanagan – Kootenay Sterile Insect Release	OKSIR Board of Directors. RDOS has 1 director.

➤ Who delivers the service?

The Destruction of Pests and Mosquito Control programs are delivered on a seasonal basis to the participating electoral areas and member

municipalities by the RDOS Engineering Services department. The Program employs two seasonal labourers who carry out the monitoring and treatment of the identified sites. The delivery of the Invasive Species is contracted to the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society.

The Environmental Conservation service is delivered by RDOS, but is supported by contracted administrative management support, as well as a Technical Advisory Committee appointed by the RDOS Board that provides expertise in the review and recommendation of projects and recipients of the Environmental Conservation Fund.

The Nuisance (Starling) Control program is funded jointly by the program partners, and delivered on a year-round basis through the BC Grapegrowers' Association. Trapping is carried out by a team of professional trappers contracted to work throughout the three Regional Districts – RDOS, RDNO, and RDCO.

The OKSIR program was established in 1989 as an independent corporation. The program is delivered by the corporation's General Manager and approximately 22 full-time and 70 seasonal staff. SIR offices are located in Kelowna, Penticton, Vernon and Osoyoos.

➤ What is spent by RDOS on the service?

The costs of the environmental services that impact Okanagan Falls are shown in Figure 2. The amounts shown represent the total costs of these services, not only the portion that Okanagan Falls residents pay through taxes. In addition to the service costs, there are also operating and capital reserve accounts created for future expenditures. Service-related reserve totals are included in Figure 3.

➤ How are the costs recovered?

Destruction of Pests

The costs of this program are recovered primarily through property taxes in the participating rural areas (levied on assessed values for land and improvements). Contract revenues from participating municipalities pay for the services within Keremeos and Oliver

Figure 2: Service Operating Costs (2023)

SERVICE	COST[1]	TAX REQ.
Destruction of Pests	$5,811	$0
Mosquito Control	$191,754	$163,754
Invasive Species	$97,117	$63,021
Enviro. Conservation	$438,127	$438,127
Nuisance (Starling)	$25,000	$22,855
OKSIR	$972,464	$459,580
Total	**$1,730,273**	**$1,147,337**

[1] *Cost and tax requisition figures are from RDOS 2023 budget for entire service area (not just OK Falls or Area D). Administration allocation is not included*

(Summerland and Penticton have separate services). In 2023 there was no requisition for this service (it was paid using operating reserves); however, it is budgeted to have a tax impact in future years, albeit very minor. The tax requisition in future years would amount to less than $0.30 on a home valued at $500,000.

Figure 3: Service Reserves (2022)

SERVICE/RESERVE	TOTAL[1]
Destruction of Pests - Operating	$7,174
Mosquito Control - Capital	$5,176
Mosquito Control - Operating	$46,139
Invasive Species - Operating	$10,135
Enviro. Conservation - Operating	$589,697
Nuisance (Starling) - Operating	$2,779
Total	$661,100

[1] *Reserve totals are as at the end of 2022*

Mosquito Control

Costs for this program are recovered through a tax requisition, as well as transfers from operating reserves as needed. The amount to be recovered from

tax requisition was previously apportioned to each participating area based on how much time was spent by staff in each jurisdiction over the season, but the bylaw was amended in 2022 to instead levy the tax based on assessed values (land and improvements) in the participating areas. As noted previously, this program expanded in 2023 to become a region-wide service; the expanded assessment base will be reflected in the 2024 tax requisitions.

Invasive Species Program
The costs of this region-wide service are shared by all jurisdictions within the RDOS, and recovered through property tax requisition levied on assessed values for land and improvements.

Environmental Conservation
The funds for this service are raised through tax requisition, levied on assessed values in the participating jurisdictions.

Nuisance (Starling) Control Program
The RDOS participates on a region-wide basis and contributes approximately $25,000 annually towards this program, the costs of which are raised through property taxes levied on assessed values for land and improvements.

Sterile Insect Release Program
SIR is funded through a combination of property value taxes and property parcel taxes in the participating areas. The property value tax portion is allocated among the four participating regional districts using a combination of converted assessment, land and improvements (75%), and total acreage planted with pome fruit (25%). Within each regional district, property value taxes are charged to individual property owners based on assessment, land and improvements.

Parcel taxes are paid by each grower based on the number of acres planted. In 2023 grower parcel taxes paid for approximately 51%, or $508,737 of the overall SIR program costs.

➤ What is the cost to a typical residence?

The combined tax impact on residents within Okanagan Falls for the group of environmental services is presented in Figure 4. The amount owing is based on a home (land and buildings) assessed at $500,000.

In addition, under the OKSIR program, each parcel of property that is 0.3 acre or greater in size with 20 or more codling moth host trees (apple, pear, crab-apple and/or quince) is levied the parcel tax. In 2023, the parcel tax was set at $156.42 per planted acre. All properties that are levied a SIR parcel tax are assessed for a minimum of 1 acre. Area "D" does not have a significant number of contributing orchard growers – parcel taxes collected in Area "D" in 2023 totalled only $4,166.

Figure 4: Cost Impact on Typical Residence (2023)

SERVICE	RES RATE	OWING[1]
Destruction of Pests	n/a	$0.00
Mosquito Control	0.0048	$2.40
Invasive Species	0.0017	$0.85
Enviro. Conservation	0.0145	$7.25
Nuisance (Starling)	0.0006	$0.31
OKSIR[2]	0.0306	$15.32
	Total	**$26.13**

[1] *Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000. Amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee charged in unincorporated areas*

[2] *This is the amount paid by all residents. Orchard growers pay an additional per acre parcel tax*

INCORPORATION

➤ What impact would incorporation have on these services?

Incorporation is not expected to have a significant impact on any of the environmental services referenced in this *Service Sheet*. The services are all delivered to a combination of municipalities and electoral areas, and would continue to be after an incorporation. The services and the service costs, therefore, are not expected to change as a result of incorporation. Figure 5 summarizes the authority before and after incorporation.

Figure 5: Service Authority After Incorporation

SERVICE	Current Authority	After Incorporation
Destruction of Pests	RDOS	RDOS
Mosquito Control	RDOS	RDOS
Invasive Species	RDOS	RDOS
Environmental Conservation	RDOS	RDOS
Nuisance (Starling) Control	BC Grapegrowers (funded through RDOS service)	BC Grapegrowers (funded through RDOS service)
Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release	OKSIR (funded through RDOS)	OKSIR (funded through RDOS)

➤ How would decision-making change?

Once incorporated, the new municipality would become a participant in the regional services. A municipal council member would represent the municipality as a director on the RDOS Board, and the municipal director would participate in discussions and decisions regarding regional services in which the municipality participates. Okanagan Falls would therefore have one municipal director to speak on its behalf for each of the services, rather than one electoral area director representing all of Area "D".

➤ How would service delivery change?

There would be no change to the delivery of the environmental services as a result of incorporation.

➤ How would service costs change?

No changes are anticipated to the costs facing Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study residents as a result of incorporation for the group of environmental services.

SUMMARY OF TAX IMPACTS

Figure 6 presents the tax impact of the two scenarios – the current situation (RDOS) and incorporation (MUNICIPAL).

Figure 6: Tax Comparison of Regional District and Incorporation Scenarios

SERVICE	RDOS[1]	MUNICIPAL[1]
Destruction of Pests	$0.00	$0.00
Mosquito Control	$2.40	$2.40
Invasive Species	$0.85	$0.85
Enviro. Conservation	$7.25	$7.25
Nuisance (Starling)	$0.31	$0.31
OKSIR[2]	$15.32	$15.32
Total	**$26.13**	**$26.13**

[1] *Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000.*

[2] *This is the amount paid by all residents. Orchard growers pay an additional per acre parcel tax*