



REPORT

To: Electoral Area Directors Committee

Report Number: ENV-EADC-045

From: Environmental Services

Date: July 24, 2025

Subject: Aquatic Harvester Pilot Program Business Case

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Electoral Area Directors Committee receive the attached “Aquatic Harvester Pilot Program Business Case” inclusive of the program cost estimates for Charlie Lake and Swan Lake, for information.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On April 10, 2025, the Regional Board passed the following resolutions:

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board authorize development of a cost estimate to undertake aquatic harvesting at Charlie Lake and identifies potential funding sources available for the project.

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board authorize development of a cost estimate to undertake aquatic harvesting at Swan Lake and identifies potential funding sources available for the project.

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board apply to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship for an extension for the 2026-2027 Aquatic Harvester Approval # 9000856 for Charlie Lake.

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board apply to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship for an extension for the 2026-2027 Aquatic Harvester Approval # 9000857 for Swan Lake.

A cost estimate, based on the parameters as outlined in the attached “Aquatic Harvester Program Business Case”, is included in the financial considerations. At this time, the estimated cost of running a 2-year pilot program in both Charlie Lake and Swan Lake will cost \$1,164,360 at a cost share of 60% to Charlie Lake (Area C) and 40% to Swan Lake (Area D). This program budget is solely reliant on external contractors and does not include Peace River Regional District (PRRD) staff time needed to support the implementation of the program. These requirements and costs would need to be identified should the program move forward.

As directed by the Regional Board, Staff applied for extensions for the Swan Lake and Charlie Lake Aquatic Harvester approval permits. The extension requests were approved by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship for the 2026-2027 harvesting seasons. Should a funding model be adopted, the program would start in July 2026, after the equipment is purchased and training is

completed. Harvesting would happen each summer in select harvesting areas according to the permits, while staying clear of environmentally sensitive zones.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Electoral Area Directors Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

☒ Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

The cost estimate for a two-year Aquatic Harvesting program is described in detail in the attached 'Aquatic Harvester Program Business Case'.

The cost estimate for the two-year program is presented below and will require a variety of Electoral Area C and Electoral Area D grant funding sources to cover the capital and operational costs, pending funding availability.

Program Costs		Charlie Lake (60%)	Swan Lake (40%)
Capital Equipment Purchase	\$570,600	\$342,360	\$228,240
Labour & Operational Costs (QEP, Operator)	\$296,880	\$178,128	\$118,752
Total Budget Year 1	\$867,470	\$520,488	\$346,992
Total Budget Year 2 (Labour)	\$296,880	\$178,128	\$118,752
Total Pilot Program Budget	\$1,164,360	\$698,616	\$465,744

Cost exclusions: Delivery of harvesting equipment, storage and disposal of aquatic vegetation.

It is assumed the labour and operational costs will be split between Charlie Lake and Swan Lake based on level of effort to harvest each lake. The cost breakdown would appropriation 60% of the capital and labour costs to Charlie Lake and 40% to Swan Lake.

Capital Expenditures may be utilized from Peace River Agreement Funds or Community Works Gas Tax to fund equipment purchases at a cost-sharing rate of 60:40, Area C: Area D, and will be operated through Function 120-Legislative Electoral Areas until a service function and service areas can be established through referendum.

Operational Expenditures may be funded utilizing Fair Share Funds at a 60:40 cost share ratio between Area C and Area D until a service function and service areas can be established through referendum.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

If the program proceeds, the Have Your Say page will be updated, and a public notification campaign will be launched.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

The aquatic harvesting permits have been approved on a 2-year term. Renewal of the permits is not guaranteed.

Attachment:

1. Aquatic Harvester Program Business Case

External Link:

1. [Electoral Area Directors Committee Recommendations from March 27, 2025, ADM-BRD-593](#) – See Item# 8.2 on the Regional Board Meeting Agenda dated April 10, 2025.