

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Shuswap Watershed Council releases 2019 water quality report

The Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC) has just released a summary report about recent water quality monitoring throughout the watershed.

“I’m very pleased to announce that our fourth annual water quality summary report is available,” says Paul Demenok, SWC Chair and CSRD Director for Area C - South Shuswap. “We know that residents here are very interested in water quality. In view of this, a primary objective for the Shuswap Watershed Council is to report on water monitoring results on an annual basis.”

The report covers water quality in the large lakes and rivers, at swimming beaches, and it summarizes a recently completed three-year nutrient research project that the SWC did with researchers at UBC-Okanagan. The report also explains water quality issues in the region such as invasive species and algal blooms.

“From a human perspective and our enjoyment of the lakes for swimming, the water quality here in the Shuswap is very good,” explains Erin Vieira, program manager for the SWC. “This is demonstrated by the beach monitoring program overseen by Interior Health. Out of 201 water samples collected from beaches in 2019, 195 of them had acceptable results.”

The report comes after [algal blooms in the Salmon Arm Bay and Canoe areas of Shuswap Lake](#) that occurred this year.

“It’s not unusual for small algal blooms to occur in Shuswap Lake, and other lakes in the region,” Vieira says. “Algae are a natural part of a lake ecosystem. However, the blooms that we’re experiencing this year have persisted for longer than they typically do in Shuswap Lake.”

The report explains that algae blooms occur when the number of algae rapidly increase, due to a change in conditions in the lake such as an influx of nutrients or sunlight.

“As a Council, we are now working on new ways to mitigate the amount of nutrients that flow into Shuswap and Mara Lakes from the large rivers so that, ultimately, the frequency and severity of blooms don’t increase,” says Demenok. “Our research with UBC-Okanagan has shown us where we need to focus our efforts. This year, we are working with four farms in the Salmon River valley and two stewardship organizations to support new nutrient management initiatives.”



See more: [Shuswap Watershed Council grants aim to keep nutrients on farms, out of lake.](#)

Some good news covered in the 2019 report is that the Shuswap watershed continues to be free of invasive Zebra and Quagga Mussels. However, Vieira says the threat of an invasion persists.

“The most important preventative measures are for watercraft owners to always clean, drain, and dry their watercraft whenever they move it out of a lake or river. Additionally, anyone visiting or returning to BC with a watercraft needs to stop at watercraft inspection stations along their travel route,” Vieira adds.

The report can be found on the SWC’s website, [www.shuswapwater.ca](http://www.shuswapwater.ca). Print copies of the report will soon be available from all municipal, First Nations, and regional government administrative offices and at library branches across the Shuswap.

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About: The Shuswap Watershed Council is a watershed-based partnership organization that works on water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap.

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