

## **NAVIGABLE CHANNEL TRAINING OF THE THOMPSON RIVER SYSTEM**

The city of Kamloops is situated at the confluence of the South Thompson and North Thompson Rivers, which form the Thompson River and flow about 20 kilometres west to Kamloops Lake.

Kamloops Lake has been underutilized as a recreation amenity throughout history by difficult river navigation to the lake from Kamloops and other points up river. In recent years, the development of Tobiano, including its boat launch, and Tranquille on the Lake present new opportunities for addressing the river navigation issue.

At the same time, a dramatic increase in recreational use of the river system itself has created issues of crowding of boat traffic, conflicts with drift-tubing, water skiing and wake boarding, and has accelerated riverbank erosion.

Each spring, the creation of vast new sandbars and ephemeral channels make consistent and safe boating access to the lake difficult despite directional buoys placed and maintained by the Thompson-Nicola Regional District.

The river channel between Kamloops and Kamloops Lake shifts every year due to the natural sinuosity of the water flow in combination with the annual dominant discharge (spring freshet).

Dredging of the silt bottom is no longer carried out as it is deemed to be financially impractical, unfriendly to salmon stocks and ineffective at maintaining a sufficiently deep and consistent channel for boating.

However, what is sometimes called “channel training” or “natural dredging” might hold the key to creating a stable self scouring channel in this section of river. This would involve strategic rip-rapping, wing walls or sheet pilings in order to take advantage of the natural power of the river to create a deeper, cooler channel that would benefit both recreation (by significantly increasing safety and convenience) and the environment, specifically the salmon runs (by reducing the solar load on the water).

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Provincial Ministry of the Environment take steps to commission a hydrologic study of the Thompson River between Kamloops and Kamloops Lake to determine the following:

- 1 the best route for a permanent channel, taking into consideration protection of the new Kamloops Airport boat launch, sewage plant outflow and Cooney Bay.
- 2 design of infrastructure to facilitate navigable channel training.

Submitted by the Policy Committee