

# CITY

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## Prepare for future water woes

■ Conservation efforts alone will not be enough to quench thirst of a growing Okanagan, say report authors

By Daily Courier Staff

Aggressive conservation measures as well as development of new sources will be needed to ensure the Okanagan's water needs are met in the future, the authors of a new study say.

If nothing is done, demand for water would exceed supply by 2050, according to a report that

looks at the combined effects of climate change and population on the region's watershed.

"Practising greater water conservation measures won't be enough on their own to offset the supply-demand gap," the report's co-author, Stewart Cohen of the University of B.C., said Monday evening.

Along with fellow researcher Tina Neale, Cohen suggests supply could be enhanced by developing more groundwater sources, building additional reservoirs or drawing more water from Okanagan Lake.

They say care must be taken, however, to avoid "mining" the lake, which could negatively affect

aquatic ecosystems.

Conservation strategies include a sliding scale for water charges, with higher fees paid by higher volume users, public education, encouragement of xeriscaping and promotion of low-consumption plumbing fixtures.

"Water metering can significantly reduce demand, but the combined effects of full retrofits and xeriscaping would reduce water use far more," part of their report reads.

The report was released in advance of the first Okanagan workshop, a planning exercise that aims to draw public input on how the Valley should develop in the future.