



RDOS urges local citizens to make ‘WaterWise pledge’ in coming weeks

By [staff1](#) on August 14, 2013

Summer is heating up, putting additional demands on our water supplies.

Traditionally, this region begins to observe slow increases in volume usage beginning late April and into May.

This year a cool, wet spring helped to ease the pressure on the water utilities pumping and treating infrastructure. The downside was when summer came, temperatures soared and we were plunged into a heat wave.

It takes a few weeks of slowly raising temperatures to allow humans, animals, and the land to adjust to summer conditions.

When the heat comes suddenly, with moisture still in the air and soil, it can be shocking. Humidity makes the temperature ‘feel’ hotter.

In response to those conditions, we crank up the air conditioner, turn on the sprinklers and use water, water and more water.

That can be hard on water utility infrastructure; intake, pumping and treatment plants.

In the Okanagan Valley, the average household uses 675 litres per person per day, twice the Canadian average. Watering restrictions are devised to ‘balance the demand’ on the water system, as well as conserve water.

We can ‘make water work’ and get the most from our water by following some simple steps:

- Water landscape, gardens and agricultural crops at or between dusk and dawn. Up to 50 per cent of the water evaporates when watering in the hot sun
- Water plant material only – grass, gardens, lawn and crops – NOT pavement, roadways, or sidewalks. Outdoor water consumption accounts for 24 per cent of household usage
- Leave grass 2-3 inches long, leave clippings as mulch
- Aerate and top dress your lawn with an inch of compost in the fall

- Change out conventional lawn for drought tolerant turf, or turf some turf, and remove some lawn.

To inspire South Okanagan residents to Make Water Work, local governments and the Regional District of the Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) have partnered with the Okanagan Basin Water Board's 'Waterwise' program.

We urge all citizens to take the "WaterWise pledge" for a chance to win a \$5,000 WaterWise yard improvements and makeover.

It's easy to register. Go online and log on to www.makewaterwork.ca. Please take the pledge to do one or more of the steps above, and you will be entered to win. If you do not have the need for a makeover, you can gift it to a registered charity of your choice.

This initiative is a win-win for everyone and our precious water resource. By taking this pledge and taking small steps to try and conserve our precious water resources, you will be doing your part to ease the burden on local water infrastructure.

Thank you for being WaterWise and participating in this very worthwhile project.

(This column was submitted by Zoe Kirk, RDOS Water Conservation Ambassador. She can be reached by email at zkirk@rdos.bc.ca or by phone at 250-492-0237.)

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