

Regional District and Water Board Team Up for Huge Savings

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Reclaiming and reusing water at the Westside Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant is saving water and money.

Since a water reclamation project was completed this summer, there's been a dramatic reduction in the amount of potable drinking water needed for everyday use around the Gellatly Road plant which treats a daily average of nine-million litres of wastewater from homes and businesses in West Kelowna, Peachland and the Westbank First Nation Reserves #9 and #10.

Last spring, the Regional District of Central Okanagan, which maintains and operates the plant, received a \$25,000 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement program grant from the Okanagan Basin Water Board. The grant along with just over \$10,000 from the Regional District was used for a major upgrade to a small water reclamation system that was in use at the plant.

Communications Officer Bruce Smith says, "We've always used a small amount of treated plant effluent water around the facility but were using a vast amount of treated, potable drinking water. With the grant, we were able to substantially upgrade our system by retrofitting two existing pumps; purchasing and installing new filters that use minimal electricity and water for backwashing and converting plumbing from the treated drinking water system to use the newly filtered treated plant water in appropriate areas of the plant."

He adds, "As a result, we've significantly decreased our use of regular quality drinking water and we've seen our water bill plummet."

For example, last summer the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant used 3,212 cubic metres of potable drinking water, a drop of 67% from the same period in 2012, before the water reclamation project. Now that the expanded water reclamation system is in place, over the course of a year, the plant's total water consumption is expected to drop by at least 25,000 cubic metres, saving about \$12,000 a year.

Reclaimed water is used throughout the Westside Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant to cool pump bearings, flush mechanical seals, wash-down equipment and through spray nozzles to control foam and the build-up of solids. It's also used during the spring and summer months for outdoor irrigation. Regular quality drinking water isn't needed for these operations around the plant.

You can learn more about the plant by visiting www.regionaldistrict.com/wastewater.