

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Okanagan groundwater monitoring project to launch next spring

By [Judie Steeves - Kelowna Capital News](#)

Published: **December 16, 2010 6:00 PM**

Updated: **December 16, 2010 6:17 PM**

An innovative groundwater monitoring project involving all levels of government and the Okanagan Basin Water Board should result in creation of the first six monitoring wells by spring next year.

The Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study, substantially completed earlier this year, pointed to a number of sensitive aquifers in the valley that could be at risk of either contamination or over-use, explained Nelson Jatel, stewardship director for the OBWB.

In the Central Okanagan, that includes aquifers in the Joe Rich area, one south of UBC Okanagan and one in the Glenrosa area of West Kelowna.

Whenever there is increased land use above an aquifer, concerns about contamination and water quality increase, and, particularly in confined aquifers, there are concerns about water quantity with increased use.

Because there is no licensing of groundwater in B.C., there aren't the controls on use of it that there are for surface water.

However groundwater licensing is being discussed as part of the Water Act Modernization process.

Jatel said the project team was particularly gratified at the response from local governments who have been very supportive in sharing the cost of drilling monitoring wells. The costs range from \$11,000 to \$30,000 a well.

“There seems to be a strong consciousness from local government and its relationship with land use management decisions,” commented Jatel.

Data from those wells will be gathered by the environment ministry as part of the B.C. Groundwater Monitoring Network and it will be posted on its website.

In addition to the six wells to be drilled in the coming months, Jatel said the plan is to drill five more monitoring wells around the valley in the next year.

There’s also discussion about a pilot project in the Okanagan to license the use of groundwater, particularly in sensitive areas, he said.

jsteeves@kelownacapnews.com

© Copyright Black Press. All rights reserved.

