

5.1.1 Panel Discussion – *Coordinated Water Conservation in the Okanagan*

Rick McKelvey: This group hasn't set any goals for what we consider acceptable valley-wide. How would we engineer real change? We need to consolidate our thinking.

Allison MacMillan: Do the municipalities get together?

Don Degen: There's an appetite for a **common approach** up and down the valley. Not necessarily policy but to set some requirements or vision of what those things could be collectively – A **Charter** by that community that says we endorse the things this group develops.

Tom Siddon: Can we develop a baseline, a starting point that says these communities have signed on to this Charter?

Ted van der Gulik: My Minister doesn't want to mandate low flush toilets province-wide.

Renee Clark: **Conservation means the utility's revenue drops.**

Peter Dill: Doug Bennett mentioned that in order to appreciate and join in something, you have to offer an incentive. Here's an incentive: low-flow toilets.

Carolyn Stewart: The low-flow toilet rebate program is excessively labor-intensive, at least 25% of applications are incomplete.

Don Degen: Add what you want the political level to agree to, a Charter that all politicians can endorse – that there will be communication about the guiding principles that this working committee puts forward.

Ken Cunningham: What can we do to facilitate **better coordination throughout the valley?** We must determine the barriers.

Carolyn Stewart: Yes, we must identify any barriers.

Tom Siddon: All three regional districts have signed onto this process so we can help you with this, without usurping your authority in your local area. We encourage you to enrich others with your perspective.

Drew Kaiser: What about **outdoor irrigation use?** What we heard from Doug Bennett was that outdoor use is **consumptive** and should be focused on first. Appropriate landscaping and enough soil is necessary, especially for **hillside development**. There is enough topsoil on the hillside to sustain the vegetation that grows there, but during development it gets stripped back to rock, and the topsoil must be replaced. We require a policy to **conserve that topsoil and reuse it.**

Toby Pike: Why do you want to conserve? What baseline do you want to start at? And how much supply do we have? We're all in one basin, whether we get it from the lake or uphill

storage. We need good supply information. There are many commonalities in the programs described by our 3 panelists.

Westside Conservation is totally coordinated, all the way to Stage 5. We must understand the VALUE of water and adopt strategies to value water – municipalities can make regulations for a minimal requirement for development – eg. Plantings, landscaping, irrigation systems, etc.

Peter Dill: Development removes natural vegetation. If we conserve, I want to ensure it doesn't get given away to a housing development.