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Water research taps into NORD funding

By [Richard Rolke - Vernon Morning Star](#)

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Some North Okanagan taxpayers will be funding research into water sources.

North Okanagan Regional District directors from Greater Vernon, Armstrong and Spallumcheen have agreed to provide \$19,300 annually over five years for a regional innovation chair in water resources and ecosystem management at the University of B.C.

"This is an opportunity for an independent resource to the regional district," said John Trainor, Armstrong director.

Full support also came from Vernon director Patrick Nicol, saying that issues surrounding water quality and supply are critical.

"This is about the long-term, the future," he said.

Through contributions from NORD and the valley's other two regional districts, the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be able to provide \$500,000 towards the Kelowna-based position.

Anna Warwick Sears, OBWB executive director, insists there is a need for water-related research.

"There is a lot of understanding of what the problems are in the Okanagan but the question is how to address them," she said.

Armstrong, Spallumcheen, Vernon, Coldstream, BX-Swan Lake and BX-Silver Star are the only NORD jurisdictions funding the program because they are in the Okanagan drainage basin.

The other communities in NORD are part of the Shuswap drainage system.

The provincial government has provided \$1.25 million to the research chair at UBC in Kelowna, and funding is also coming from other sources such as the Real Estate Foundation of B.C.

Among the issues the research will tackle are climate change and population growth. Work could also revolve around water allocation, the role of agriculture and governance of water.

“Regional governments are mandated to find solutions to these problems and that’s where we think we can help,” said Doug Oworm, deputy vice-chancellor and principal of UBC’s Okanagan campus.

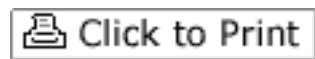
“We want to do research that is regionally relevant but nationally and internationally important.”

John Janmaat, an economist, has been nominated as the chair of the program.

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