

Local Politicians Challenge Residents to Use Less Water



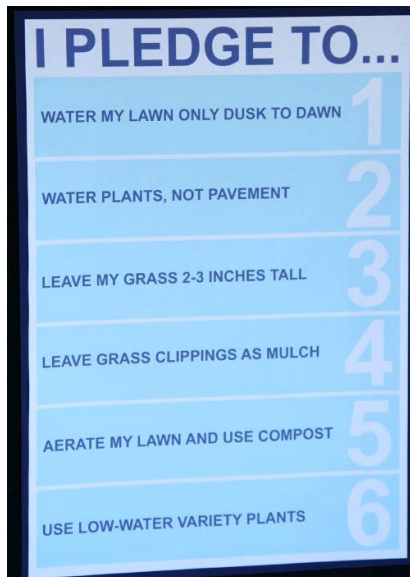
OBWB Chair and West Kelowna Mayor Doug Findlater, Armstrong Coun. Shirley Fowler, Vernon Coun. Catherine Lord, Lake Country Mayor James Baker, Peachland Mayor Keith Fielding, Kelowna Coun. Luke Stack and Penticton Coun. Wes Hopkin (Photos by KelownaNow)

An impressive gathering of Okanagan politicians came together in Kelowna on Wednesday to beseech residents of their respective cities and towns to “Make Water Work”.

The group included mayors from Lake Country, Peachland and West Kelowna as well as Councillors from Armstrong all the way to Penticton (and everywhere in between).

The Okanagan is known for its considerable water consumption, 675 L on average each day used per resident, more than double the national average of 329 L. This figure climbs to a staggering 1000 L per day in the summer and is represented by the fact that 24 per cent of all Okanagan water is used outside – mostly on lawns and gardens. All of this adds up to a bleak picture in the Okanagan where there is less water available per person than anywhere else in Canada.

That's precisely why the august gathering of policy makers converged on Wednesday, challenging valley residents to take the pledge to Make Water Work. Each politician spoke about their own pledge for the program which focuses on outdoor water conservation during our hot summers when the most water is used.



“Since 1998, we have reduced our water consumption by 20 per cent per capita in our city. So we're very proud of the steps we have made,” said Kelowna City Councillor Luke Stack. “I'm challenging Kelowna citizens to take one of the challenges on the website MakeWaterWork.ca.”



West Kelowna Mayor Doug Findlater who also serves as the Chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, noted that the need for water is more than drinking water and residential use but also agricultural and ecological. Water is what keeps the agricultural industry in the valley running and is necessary for the safe spawning of salmon and other fish that rely on clean water in our creeks and lakes.

“Some residents use less water, especially if they're on a meter, but we still are using more than what is sustainable. It's for this reason we launched Make Water Work – to show that there are simple ways to save water and make it work more effectively and efficiently,” said Findlater. “I would invite you to work together with all of us - residents, local government leaders, businesses – and the key in all this is to go to the website MakeWaterWork.ca,”

Make Water Work provides residents with tips to get the most from their water, such as watering between dusk and dawn to prevent evaporation, and putting it where it's needed – on plants, not pavement. Residents who sign up for the pledge will be entered to win \$5000 in WaterWise yard upgrades.