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Water projects tap into funding

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Water conservation projects in the South Okanagan received financial backing from the Okanagan Basin Water Board this week.

In the South Okanagan, projects received a total of \$65,000 of the \$300,000 available in funding. Three of the more costly projects (\$15,000) for the region include the City of Penticton's environmental audit pilot project that will look at commercial, industrial and institutional customers to find ways to reduce water consumption, the RDOS aquifer vulnerability mapping and Okanagan Falls Irrigation District will complete a drinking water source protection plan.

This is the fifth consecutive year the Okanagan Basin Water Board handed out grants from its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement grants program.

"The interest in this program is phenomenal. It just grows each year," said Genevieve Dunbar, grants administrator for the OBWB. "There's a real thirst for projects that address water protection today and into the future."

Other projects in the area include creating a watershed report card template in Osoyoos, the Okanagan Nation Alliance water quality assurance initiative and the West Bench Irrigation District large lot xeriscape manual.

"Since the grant program was introduced in 2005, we have seen improvements to water conservation in the Okanagan. There has also been an increase in water science, which allows for better decisions to be made. And, the grants have increased the number of best practices in place," said Dunbar. "I can't wait to see the results from this year's grant awards."

Funding for the WCQI grants is split between the three Okanagan regional districts, based on their contributions to the program.

For more information on the Okanagan Basin Water Board and its programs, visit www.obwb.ca.

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