



**AM1150 Newscentre**

**The power of the internet harnessed to help track Okanagan water usage**

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The Okanagan Basin Water Board is launching a web tool that will keep tabs on how much water is being used.

That information is critical to help prepare for and manage water shortages and increased demand.

The demand is expected to increase due to climate change and population growth.

Executive Director Anna Warwick Sears says you can't manage what you can't measure.

"If you have no idea how much water people are actually using, how can you plan? You have to have a much better sense about what the actual water extraction is occurring out of the creeks and aquifers."

The Streamlined Water Use reporting Tool will be used by the over 100 water utilities up and down the valley.

Warwick Sears says they'll be able to determine things like... why at some times of the year is there not enough water in a particular stream for fish.

"Who's actually taking the water out and how much they're actually using. The Ministry of the Environment is actually supposed to be tracking that but I think there's not as much oversight as there could be."

According to Warwick Sears, the water providers will enter their data into the webtool providing an ongoing record of how much water is being used.

"Really it's a problem where you have a whole lot of different users extracting water from a source and there's no way of keeping track of how much they're using. It's equivalent to putting a water metre on your house but really it's looking at how much is coming out of the stream."

Funding for the \$249,100 price tag was split three ways.

Close to \$153,000 came from the federal government's Building Canada Fund, another \$18,000 from Environment Canada with the balance from the Okanagan Basin Water Board itself.

Howard Alexander - Kelowna

