

# Water quality and quantity tackled with project grants

By [Judie Steeves - Kelowna Capital News](#)

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From monitoring creeks to planning how water is to be used, from improving its quality to reducing consumption, this year's Okanagan Basin Water Board grants are aimed at making a difference to water in the valley this year and in the future.

Although it would have cost more than \$700,000 to fund all the applications, only \$300,000 was available in the program, so the board had to be selective, choosing 19 projects around the valley.

In the Central Okanagan, grants were approved for three Kelowna projects, one each for West Kelowna and Peachland and one regional district project, as well as the Okanagan Wetlands Regeneration Alliance with the Okanagan Greens Society doing an inventory and map of wetland areas in and around Lake Country.

The latter \$20,000 project includes remediation of wetlands and a public outreach program for public education on their role in maintaining water quality.

Water conservation is the aim of a grant for \$20,000 for the Okanagan Xeriscape Association to promote water-smart landscaping with an updated website for education and reference at [okanaganxeriscape.org](http://okanaganxeriscape.org); a demonstration rain garden, a project encouraging strata complexes to convert to xeriscaping and a pilot rebate program for homeowners to move to xeriscaping.

Peachland received \$27,500 to update a hydrometric network monitoring station to allow better management of flows required for fish, while West Kelowna received \$22,500 to create a master water systems plan, incorporating the needs of the five recently-merged water utilities and provide improved water conservation and source protection.

The regional district received \$20,800 for a silvopasture pilot project, integrating livestock and forest production with conservation practices and water stewardship. It will focus on risks identified in the source water assessment plan for Oyama and Vernon Creeks.

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The City of Kelowna will create a riparian management plan for Mill Creek with \$25,000, including identifying areas in need of protection and restoration, and ways to minimize stormwater runoff. As well, it will identify areas for land acquisition for compensation for damage.

A \$20,000 grant for the city will allow SHIM mapping of streams, wetlands and springs while another \$20,000 grant will result in a water conservation manual for municipal parks and green spaces. Assessments will be completed of projects in the past six years to reduce water used in city parks and green spaces. The resulting report will benefit all Okanagan municipalities.

Melissa Tesche, grant administrator for the OBWB said there were a lot of stand-out proposals, but said they look for projects which promote the idea of One Valley, One Water.

Since the grant program was started in 2006, nearly \$2 million has allowed 115 projects to be completed that help conserve and improve water for all residents in the Okanagan basin, said Tesche.