

CAMPUS LIFE

Water conservation project first feature of College's Demonstration Garden

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Two new water pathways designed to showcase water conservation have become the first completed projects at Okanagan College's Kalamalka Demonstration Garden at the Vernon campus.



"The two vegetated swale pathways are one of several water conservation features that will be demonstrated in this new garden," said Jane Lister, Regional Dean of the North Okanagan. "The aim of this garden is to create an educational space that promotes sustainable practices and ecological ventures in the Okanagan Valley."

The professionally designed and built swales will filter water runoff, slow and spread the runoff for better absorption, and decrease erosion of the garden slope, Lister said.

The project was supported by a grant from the Okanagan Basin Water Board under its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program.

"The Water Board is pleased to be a partner in this project," said Anna Warwick Sears, executive director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board. "As the population of this valley continues to grow, it's going to be more important for all of us to adopt WaterWise principles."

Warwick Sears said many of the principles being adopted in the garden can be found on the OBWB's *Slow it. Spread it. Sink it!* guide, designed for Okanagan residents, available at www.okwaterwise.ca/pdf/HomeDrainageGuide_Okanagan.pdf.

“The garden will be a beautiful place for people throughout the Okanagan to come and visit, but just as importantly, it will offer visitors an opportunity to see water conservation and protection in action, demonstrating projects that anyone can do in their own yard,” Warwick Sears said.

Lister said programming at the garden will centre on education and skill building through practical application as well as provide inclusive vocational and social opportunities for people living with physical, developmental and mental health conditions.

Working closely with Kindale Developmental Association and a number of community and municipal partners, Lister said work is now being focused on building the initial infrastructure required including irrigation systems, fencing, out-buildings and soil remediation. With a solid site plan designed and the initial swale project completed, the next phase of the project is a demonstration food forest that will be planted in September.

The Kalamalka Demonstration Garden is an initiative of several community partners and in future will include a community farm, water conservation features, and permaculture agriculture practices.