

## KELOWNA

### UBCO works to protect water supply

by Grant Scott - Story: 80232  
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UBC-Okanagan will be taking a leading role in determining ways to preserve and protect our water supply.

UBC resource economics Professor John Janmaat was appointed as the Leading Edge Endowment Fund (LEEF) BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Management.



Photo: Contributed

Prof. John Janmaat (2nd from left) is congratulated on his appointment as Leading Edge Endowment Fund (LEEF) BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability by BC Agriculture Minister Norm Letnick.

The fund was created by the provincial government in 2002 to encourage social and economic development in BC.

The chair is supported by a \$2.5-million endowment fund established through community partnership. LEEF contributed \$1.25 million from its BC Regional Innovation Chair program.

The rest came in the form of a \$500,000 contribution from the Okanagan Basin Water Board on behalf of the three Okanagan regional districts and the Real Estate Foundation of BC provided \$250,000.

UBC also contributed to the endowment fund, while the Columbia Basin Trust added \$150,000.

"The research chair position is valuable to both the university and community -- it provides a bridge between researchers at our campus and people beyond the campus, which is very important," says Janmaat.

"As chair, my goal is to facilitate research that helps address the challenges of sharing water here in the Okanagan, and to promote UBC's Okanagan campus, in partnership with others in our region, as a centre of expertise to help address water resource challenges around the globe."

Newly minted BC Minister of Agriculture and Kelowna-Lake Country MLA Norm Letnick announced the research chair appointment at UBC's Okanagan campus on Friday.

"As British Columbia's new agriculture minister I look forward to building on the strong partnerships established with all levels of government and stakeholders as we work together on the common goal of water sustainability in the region," says Letnick.

"Understanding more about water and ecosystem sustainability will help improve the management of water resources. This partnership illustrates the power of provincial and regional governments, and the region itself -- public and private partners -- all working together to pursue a common goal."

Some key future projects include mechanisms for water allocation and watershed governance, trans-boundary water issues in the Columbia basin, and managing interactions between land use, water resources, and ecosystem management, with special attention to the role of agriculture.

Janmaat's current research activities and partnerships span topics from understanding residential water use in Kelowna and issues of governance and sustainability in British Columbia, to understanding the current state of water quality in the Columbia basin and identifying the best small-scale water storage for rural Nepali villages.

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