

Water board reaps funding rewards

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Funding has been approved for a trio of Okanagan Basin Water Board projects to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive water data collection program and valley-wide wetlands strategy.

"Good water management begins with good water measurement. The first step in preparing for floods or droughts is to know how much water is flowing in the streams. It's important information for residents and water managers, for farmers, and for those concerned with fish," said Anna Warwick Sears OBWB executive director.

"This information has immediate value, and when we can track flows over time, we are better at predicting what the future will bring."

Recognizing the importance of this type of data collection, Environment Canada has awarded \$30,000 to the OBWB to re-establish two strategic stream-flow hydrometric monitoring stations.

"Right now, about half of the stream flow stations are being run by independent managers," Warwick Sears said.

"In this time of tight budgets, we have to share data to get the most value out of our combined efforts."

Another \$95,000 has been allocated by the Union of B.C. Municipalities' Gas Tax Innovations Fund to develop a single database where stream-flow measurements from across the valley can be collected and accessed.

Environment Canada also approved \$35,000 to create phase one of an Okanagan wetlands strategy. The strategy includes compiling existing wetlands information, and establishing a steering committee to guide development of a valley-wide protection plan.

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