

## Our lake, water are too precious to leave only to the experts

By staff1

Here in this arid corner of Canada, many residents take pride in claiming that Osoyoos is Canada's only desert.

Leaving aside the scientific arguments about this boast, there is no question that we live in a unique environment marked by very little rainfall and high rates of evaporation in the summer heat.

Water then is our most precious resource.

Osoyoos is blessed to have a wonderful lake that draws visitors from far and wide for the recreation it offers.

Without our lake, the tourism industry would be a shadow of itself, agriculture would be very limited and the water shortage would impact our lives in so many other ways.

We cannot take our lake for granted. Nor can we assume that our water supply is unlimited.

This week Osoyoos is hosting the third Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, which runs from Wednesday to Friday.

A separate, but complementary workshop on the Columbia River Treaty takes place Wednesday at the Sonora Community Centre.

On Thursday and Friday, a number of presentations and discussions on a wide range of topics relating to water and our lake will be held in the same location as part of the Water Science Forum.

We hope that many Osoyoos, Oliver and Oroville residents will take advantage of the reduced fee to attend some of these sessions.

Attendees will hear stimulating discussions on such topics as climate change, drought management, the salmon fishery, controlling milfoil, the threat posed by such aquatic invasive species as zebra and quagga mussels, water quality, water rights and many others.

Coincidentally, this week town council received a report about the implications of introducing residential water meters, a water management tool currently used by the majority of Canadians, but one that will no doubt prompt heated discussions.

In this community where water is so precious, it would be a shame to leave the discussion of challenges and solutions only to the experts.

We hope that many Osoyoos residents will take the opportunity to learn about and participate in these important discussions.

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