

# Okanagan water board sees water shortage

Submitted | Posted: Friday, October 23, 2015 5:32 pm

Re: "Kelowna isn't facing a water shortage," Oct. 6.

Kelowna's mayor and council are to be commended for moving the city to odd/even watering days.

Although, as your columnist Ron Seymour has pointed out, Kelowna isn't facing an immediate water shortage, it's wise to not fall into a myth of abundance with our supply.

We live in a semi-arid, drought-prone valley, and we share Okanagan Lake with communities from Armstrong to the U.S. border, as well as the fish downstream.

As our communities grow, we'll need to increase the efficiency of our water use overall to reduce risks of shortages for agriculture and other businesses. The sports fishing economy alone is a multi-million dollar industry in the Okanagan, so why be lulled into a culture of unbridled consumption that can lead to resentments and conflict among user groups?

This summer (a Level 4 drought), we saw the lake drawn down at a very rapid rate from both withdrawals and evaporation, as we experienced an unusually hot and dry June and July with high irrigation needs for farms and gardens.

Having odd/even watering days is a small start to increase awareness about how much water we use. That way, when we experience a drought year, we aren't taken by surprise.

It also reduces confusion by synchronizing with the watering rules of the other Kelowna water utilities. Odd/even watering days also reduce the amount of water that must be delivered to meet summertime peak demand, keeping infrastructure and pumping costs down and taxes lower.

If you weigh the public benefits of lower conflicts, less waste, less costs, and greater public understanding against the benefits of irrigating your own personal lawn any day of the week, the choice seems simple.

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