



[Central Okanagan](#) posted February 12, 2016 by [Kelsey Davis](#)

Federal Funding Helps to Support Okanagan Water Sustainability

New federal funding is being provided as a long term investment in the Okanagan's water sustainability.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board has secured a \$397,000 grant through the federal Gas Tax Fund in order to begin the second phase of a project that will look at the Okanagan's water sustainability.

The two-year study will look at the Environmental Flow Needs (EFNs), or the "water needs of fish and aquatic ecosystems in the Okanagan."



Photo Credit: KelownaNow

Okanagan Basin Water Board Executive Director Anna Warwick Sears

In an announcement made Friday, multiple levels of government came together to express their excitement for the new project, and gratitude for the funding.

"Water is a big deal in our community and we need to start looking at upgrading our systems to make them more robust and more redundant," said Kelowna- Lake Country Member of Parliament, Stephen Fuhr.

“Public money will be available for that at the federal level and my concern is that if we don’t act quickly on that, that funding will be tougher to get as we move through the next four years.”



Photo Credit: KelownaNow

Kelowna-Lake Country MP Stephen Fuhr

Details of the study will include approximately 10 stream-by-stream studies that will use flow monitoring equipment in streams to identify important fish habitat throughout the Okanagan Valley.

While the City of Kelowna continues to see Canada’s largest population growth, the region has been known for its water challenges. The study is meant to help provide a better understanding of what the water needs throughout the region are.

“This study will provide very important information for us as we move forward in the years ahead,” said Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Steve Thomson.

“Water is such a critical resource in our region. It supports our economy, it supports our environment, it supports our quality of life, and we need to ensure we have all the best information in place in order to manage it properly and make good, science based decisions as we go forward.”



Photo Credit: KelownaNow

Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Steve Thomson

The study is expected to last a minimum of two years. The data gathered will help to provide political representatives with the information needed to balance water use by residents and ecosystems.

Funding for the study was provided through a federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF). \$73.3 million was provided to 57 different capital and capacity projects throughout B.C. communities to support infrastructure and building projects across the province.

In order to receive funding, projects must apply and be approved by the Strategic Priorities Fund.