

ENVIRONMENT

February 12, 2016 12:23 pm

Updated: February 12, 2016 6:02 pm

How much water do fish in the Okanagan need?



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KELOWNA - The taxes you pay when gassing up your vehicle will help better understand the Okanagan's wildlife water needs.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board is getting a federal Gas Tax Fund grant of \$397,000 for a two-year study into the water needs of fish and aquatic ecosystems in the valley.

Flow monitoring equipment will be put into about ten streams that are important fish habitat.

The study comes after the water board identified growing concerns about the number of water licenses on Okanagan streams.

“So we started working with the province on how to make the best licensing decisions,” says board executive director Anna Warwick Sears. “But then we both realized there’s a critical information gap. We need to know the needs of fish before allocating more licenses. It’s like an advanced warning system, letting us know when and where restrictions and regulations are needed.”

The Environmental Flow Needs study is a partnership between the OBWB, the Okanagan Nation Alliance Fisheries Department and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

“The federal funding announced (Friday) will help the OBWB, which serves the three Okanagan regional districts, to plan ahead and prioritize the water needs of fish and aquatic ecosystems, helping ensure the sustainability of the Okanagan,” says Kelowna-Lake Country MP Stephen Fuhr in a news release.

VIDEO LINK: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2515056/how-much-water-do-fish-in-the-okanagan-need/>

