

news

WATER DAY FORUM

Water warning issued

Sawyer Klassen

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The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) wants to spread awareness about water management.

That was one of the main topics at exTREAMS: The Okanagan Water Story and You, Tuesday evening, a forum where residents of the Okanagan could ask questions and learn about the state of water here and how to properly manage it.

"The fact is, in the Okanagan we have less water available than anywhere in Canada, but we have one of the highest per capita uses in the country," said Corinne Jackson, OBWB communications director. "So the event was about encouraging people to do more and learn what they can do to preserve and protect the Okanagan."

In the Okanagan, 24 per cent of all water is used domestically outdoors during summer, which is the second highest use in the region, trailing only agriculture.

Margaret Catley-Carlson, the past chairwoman of a UN-affiliated Global Water Partnership and current vice-chairwoman of the Canadian Water Board was the keynote speaker at the forum.

"As the population of the world grows, (and) as the population of the Okanagan grows, the amount of water that was



Margaret Catley-Carlson

once sufficient for the purposes for which it was being used is no longer sufficient," she explained.

"If you want to maintain a standard of living, a standard of environmental health and follow the manifold number of interests that exist on using water, you've got to be a lot more careful about the ways you use water."

She said the way water was used when there were fewer people here will not work in the future when there are more people here and "the same amount of water as the dinosaurs."

"So we have to smarter, and it can be done, but it can't be done with the business-as-usual model."

Catley-Carlson noted there are two misconceptions when it comes to water. The first being the world is running out of it.

"It isn't, we've got the same amount of water as when the dinosaurs or Julius Caesar or whoever were walking the earth," she said.

"In the parts of the world where rivers are being obstructed, where rainfall is changing as a

result of climate change, the impact on people is they are running out of water. The global fact is that we're not running out of water in terms of rain coming to earth, going to rivers, going to oceans, evaporating and going back to the glaciers, that's still going on the same way it has, just with different temperatures.

She said while in many places water is getting more and more difficult to get at, it is not running out.

The second myth is the complete opposite of the world running out of water.

In Canada, there is a widespread myth of abundance when it comes to water.

Catley-Carlson said that myth leads to a mindset where we don't regulate and watch how much we use.

Jackson said despite seeing a large water source in Okanagan Lake, the reality is we only have the top 1.5 metres to play with.

She added water is used for everything from crop irrigation to agriculture, by homeowners and for fire fighting. In short, there is only so much water available for residents of the Okanagan to use.

Both Catley-Carlson and Jackson agreed on one thing, the overlying message of the forum—the global issue of water isn't how much is available, but how it is managed.



Kelowna's annual spring street sweeping clean-up is underway. Crews are out all over town cleaning roads and sidewalks of debris deposited over the winter. Similar clean-ups are on-going in other Central Okanagan municipalities as well.

KATHY MICHAELS/CAPITAL NEWS

WEST KELOWNA

Clock ticking for city hall opponents

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West Kelowna has started the alternative approval process for the city's proposed civic centre.

From March 23 through May 3, West Kelowna residents will have the opportunity to voice their opposition to the borrowing of up to \$10.5 million for the construction of a new city hall, which would be part of the larger West

Kelowna Civic Centre project.

While the city hall would be built and owned by the city, the rest of the civic centre would be privately developed.

It is slated for land on Elliot Road just north of the downtown Westbank area.

The alternate approval process puts the onus on opponents to show there is sufficient opposition to a proposed project to force council to reconsider the planned borrowing,

hold a referendum on it or scrap the idea entirely.

At least 10 per cent of eligible voters, or 2,603 people, must fill out an official AAP form opposing the borrowing to force council to reconsider its approach. And they have until 4 p.m. on May 3 to do so.

The forms are available at the existing West Kelowna municipal hall, located at 2760 Cameron Road.

More information on the project will be

available at an open house on Wednesday, April 6 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Westbank Lions Hall.

West Kelowna council members will be at the open house, where a presentation will be given before a question and answer period.

The proposed new city hall would be built at 3641 Elliot Rd., and would have 32,215-square-feet of space spread over three stores.

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