

Mayors urge conservation

Wayne Moore - May 11, 2016 / 7:01 pm



Photo: Carmen Weld - Castanet File Photo
Make Water Work Plant Collection

Mayors and councillors from cities up and down the Valley gathered in Kelowna with a common message: conserve water.

On the heels of last year's drought and with the possibility of another bad summer ahead, the mayors have challenged each other and their respective residents, in what is the most water-stressed region of the country.

While the Okanagan received a healthy snowpack this winter, an early spring has caused much of that to melt away quickly, noted Doug Findlater, Okanagan Basin Water Board chairperson.

"At the same time, fire season has come early in Western Canada and we've have had enough experience with devastating fires in the Okanagan to know we can't waste our water," said Findlater.

"If we don't get our spring rains, we could end up in the same situation we were in last year, where the province orders utilities and residents to cut back on water use in an effort to meet socio-economic and environmental needs."

Each community also pledged to take the 'Make Water Work' challenge, asking their residents to make the pledge to conserve water.

Last year, Armstrong gathered the most pledges.

“The challenge was well-received by our residents who saw that they had a role in helping conserve water, especially during last summer’s drought,” said Armstrong Mayor Chris Pieper.

“I think the awareness generated through the Make Water Work program has really helped bring attention to the value of water in our valley and right here at home, in Armstrong. We intend to defend our title this year and issue a challenge to Peachland to meet the standard we’ve set.”

The water board also announced expansion of its Make Water Work plant collection, a project developed by Okanagan WaterWise, the Okanagan Xeriscape Association and Bylands Nursery to encourage low water landscapes.

The collection now includes 54 plants, including grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees.

Those who take the challenge will be entered to win a WaterWise yard upgrade worth \$6,000.

[Click here](#) to take the Make Water Work challenge.