

ENVIRONMENT

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Kelowna conference focuses on flows for fish

By Travis Lowe Global News

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"We need to be effective with our use of the resource."

Lee Hesketh is talking about water.

"Water is key," said Hesketh, a rancher with the B.C. Cattlemen's Association.

As a second generation rancher, Hesketh understands big agriculture's big thirst for water.

"Agriculture takes a big percentage the of water out of the system," he said.

But, like many progressive ranchers, he also knows that water is a finite resource.

"We have to manage it responsibly," Hesketh said.

Hesketh's responsible management presentation was part of an international conference underway in Kelowna entitled Water For All, Our Responsibility.

The conference's focus is on flows for fish.

"We're talking about water for fish, because if we don't have water for fish, then we got water for nothing," said Corrine Jackson of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Both B.C.'s trophy trout and iconic Pacific salmon need clean, cold water to survive. And so stakeholders and scientists alike are all trying to determine the minimum environmental flow needs for fish.

And in order to know moving forward how much water our communities can use.

"Sorting out exactly how exactly how we are going to manage that, so that we have healthy streams and an adequate water supply," said Bob Sandford from the United Nations Water Institute.

It's a delicate balance and one that climate disruption is forcing us to define sooner than later. Even in a valley that seems to be full of water.

"In the future, water is going to be more valuable now than we can even begin to imagine," Sandford said.

And when you add in the fact that all the water there will ever be exists right now, experts say it's crucial for us all to understand.

"In the future, water is the thing that will define the success of regions, economically and socially," Sandford said.

VIDEO LINK HERE: <https://globalnews.ca/news/4566048/kelowna-conference-focuses-on-flows-for-fish/>

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