



KELOWNA CAPITAL NEWS



Kelowna resident Make Water Work champ

After a crazy year weather wise, the Okanagan Basin Water Board recognizes waterwise residents

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Kelowna's Laurie Weisgarber couldn't quite believe the news she was hearing.

But on Thursday she was phoned by the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) as the winner of a \$6,000 WaterWise yard upgrade, helping to conserve water.

"No way – you're kidding! I think I'm going to cry," was her initial reaction.

"When I heard about Make Water Work, I initially checked out the website to learn more and looked at the check list to make sure I was doing everything I could do. And then when I saw there was a prize I thought 'wouldn't that be nice to have some work done.' I don't normally enter contests," Weisgarber explained, adding she was very aware of the flooding followed by drought this summer and the need to do her part to conserve.

As part of the annual campaign, Okanagan residents are encouraged to visit the Make Water Work website (www.MakeWaterWork.ca), review a list of water-saving tips and pledge to conserve.

As summer draws to a close, the and its Okanagan WaterWise program begin to wrap up their valley-wide residential water conservation campaign Make Water Work.

"It was a crazy summer," said OBWB's communications director Corinne Jackson, who manages the Okanagan WaterWise program and its Make Water Work campaign. "We've normally started talking about water conservation in May, as people start turning on the taps, but of course in May this year we were dealing with historic flooding."

And while it may have seemed strange, added Jackson, Make Water Work encouraging conservation during the flooding because their water treatment facilities were overburdened.

Then right away, the fire season started.

"By the end of the summer, we have had streams drying out, there are concerns about having enough water for fish, the Okanagan broke lowest precipitation and highest temperature records, and B.C. has battled the worst fire season on record."

This year, when we saw the two extremes of climate change on display in our valley – both flooding and drought – the reasons for preparing our



landscapes to be more WaterWise and adopt Make Water Work principles could not have been clearer, Jackson said.

Weisgarber noted she has already done some work in her yard, including removal of several cedars.

"They were using huge amounts of water, they're messy, and attract wasps." Next, she looks forward to replacing some water-thirsty lawn with beautiful low-water plantings and making fixes to her old irrigation system.

Thanks to contest partners, Weisgarber will receive \$4,000 in service from KelownaGardens.com who will provide a landscape audit, plus landscape and irrigation improvements. Another \$2,000 in materials is being provided through Bylands Nursery, ProSource Irrigation and Eco Turf Farms. All prizing has been kindly donated.

"My family is very environmentally conscious," she added. "My mom comes from a family of farmers. My uncle still farms here in Kelowna and talks about the importance of water.

"I think we all have to do things to make sure the future is secure for generations to come. Plus, anything that I can do to save me time, with less yard maintenance, and money on my water bill, is great. This is very exciting! I can't wait to phone my mom!"

In addition to awarding a Grand Prize winner, the community with the most pledges per capita is named Make Water Work Community Champions. This year, the City of Armstrong emerged as the winner. This is Armstrong's second win, after taking the title in 2015. Past winners include the District of Peachland (2016) and Town of Oliver (2014).



