



Okanagan mayors and council members pledge their commitment to sustainable water usage at Glenmore Elementary on Thursday May 11. (David Venn).

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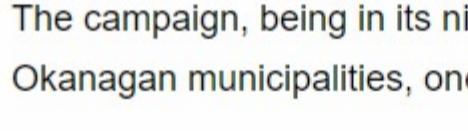
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Okanagan mayors urge citizens to conserve water

Annual "Make Water Work" campaign teaches valley residents sustainable gardening

DAVID VENN / May 17, 2019 6:00 a.m. / NEWS



Mayors from nearly every Okanagan municipality pledged their commitment to sustainable water use and urged residents to do the same this week.

The mayors joined students from École Glenmore Elementary at the kick-off event Thursday for Make Water Work, an annual campaign from the Okanagan Basin Water Board to encourage water conservation.

Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran made his pledge is to be more responsible when watering his garden and lawn.

"We are becoming more and more urban," said Basran. "That means it's more important than ever that we make sure that the plants and our lawn get watered and not the pavement."

The campaign, being in its ninth year, is an annual competition between Okanagan municipalities, one which Kelowna has never won.

"My challenge is for the residents of Kelowna to take this seriously because it is a big deal," said Basran.

The mayor urges the public to make sure "we are preserving water and making sure there is an abundant supply for not only tomorrow, but for many years to come."

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The theme of this year's campaign is to practice water sustainability in gardens, adopting the floral ideas provided by the "Make Water Work in your yard" plant collection.

The collection is comprised of plants whose biological attributes allow them to survive in drought conditions.

The Glenmore students created their own school garden using the Make Water Work plant options as their guide.

"The Hardy Ice Plant can get as high as three inches and spreads to about 20 (inches) and needs full sun and one drop (of water)," said Grade 5 student Maddie Boback.

Fellow student Cayla Kennedy explained how "the Cushion Spurge's height is 14 inches, it spreads up to 18 inches and in the full sun takes two water drops and in part sun, one water drop."

Classmate Charley Dowhaniuk cited the Rose Glow Barberry "slowly reaches four feet wide and five feet high, is best in full sun and part shade and grows in any soil and needs to be watered regularly weekly, or more often in extreme heat."

These are just three plants on the thorough and extensive list that can be found on the [makewaterwork.ca](#) website.

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"We learned about why you want to use waterized plants to use less water," said Connor Brasnett, a Grade 5 student in charge of building the wooden structure of the gardens. "It was really cool and fun because we didn't have to do school work."

The school garden project had the support of many stakeholders to help the students along the way.

"I've been working with my colleague, Lisa Marques, to teach our students about how we can use water more wisely in the Okanagan," said Katie Wihak, a Grade 5 French immersion teacher.

"(The students) were definitely really excited to work together, to use their hands and to see something come to fruition."

"We've been able to do this because of our administrators and the parents who came and helped as well as reaching out to the community and having their support," she said. "So it's really a group effort."

Although the event is over, that isn't stopping Glenmore from continuing on the track they've begun.

"Our goal is to turn this space into an outdoor learning centre," explained Wihak. "Eventually we want to build a pergola so there will be some shade for the students and we can work and play outside."

The OBWB says nearly a quarter of all water used in the Okanagan is doused on household lawns and gardens.

The valley is already at a disadvantage by having less water per person than anywhere else in Canada, despite having one of the highest usage rates per person.

<https://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/okanagan-mayors-urge-citizens-to-conserve-water-glenmore-students-learn-about-the-value-of-sustainability/>

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