

## WaterWise results are in City of Armstrong wins title in Make Water Work campaign

Miriam Halpenny - Sep 17, 2020 8:00 pm



Photo: Contributed

The results are in from the Okanagan Basin Water Board's WaterWise program's 'Make Water Work' campaign that launched in May.

The campaign encouraged the friendly competition between communities as they pledged to conserve water outside during the summer months.

The City of Armstrong took the 'Make Water Work Community Champion' title for another year, following wins in 2018, 2017 and 2015. The Township of Spallumcheen took second place.

"We had real buy-in from staff and council," says Armstrong Mayor Chris Pieper.

"We went to our various clubs – Lions, curling, etc., and sent members emails and went hard. Half the people we were harassing were from Spallumcheen, so it increased both of our numbers," he laughed.

And Spallumcheen Mayor Christine Fraser says town staff and council also sent out emails and flyers with Make Water Work information however Coun. Gerry Popoff was to thank for the success.

"Coun. Popoff is like the godfather of our community and anytime someone called him he told them to go to MakeWaterWork.ca, learn about water conservation and take the pledge – and they did," says Fraser.

"We definitely see people turning to more drought-tolerant landscapes, especially in new subdivisions. It helps to have garden centres like Blue Mountain Nursery and Shepherd's Home Hardware carry appropriate plant material, including the Make Water Work Plant Collection. And, I think people talk about it a lot more than they used to. There seems to be a greater recognition of water's importance."

Overall, 677 people made the pledge to conserve water. This is a 28 per cent increase compared to last year.

"It's been a strange year," says Water Board communications director Corinne Jackson.

"Due to COVID-19, we had no public launch of the campaign. Normally we would have our local government and utility partners on hand. In the past, we've had school children, garden centres and other business partners, and the public attend. Instead, we invited Okanagan mayors to submit videos from their own yards, explaining what they were doing to conserve, and then we released a video compilation. And it turned out great."

With no usual in-person outreach this summer, the campaign relied solely on social media and other forms of advertisements.

Water conservation remains to be an issue in the Okanagan. Despite a wet July, portions of South Okanagan's Vaseux Creek and Shuttleworth Creek went dry.