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SAVE WATER THIS SUMMER

Average Okanagan household water use more than double the national average

Brayden Ursel · May 18, 2023 / 3:23 pm

Save water this summer

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The Okanagan Basin Water Board and local leaders kicked off its Make Water Water Work challenge to encourage water conservation this summer.

"The Okanagan actually has one of the highest rates of water use in Canada and yet we have one of the lowest rates of availability in the Okanagan," said Corinne Jackson of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

"So, there's less water per person available, but we use almost more than anyone in Canada. It's a real problem."

On average, Okanagan residents use more than twice the Canadian average.

Being that the Okanagan is a semi-desert, watering our lawn, which is usually made of imported grass, is one of the biggest water uses for residents in the area.

"We ask people to pledge to only water their lawn between dusk and dawn, obviously during the coolest parts of the day. Water plants not pavement, never mow low and let it grow, choose plants suitable to our dry climate," continued Jackson.

"Tune up your irrigation, so that's really important so that you don't have leaks and that sort of thing. And then if you do have a lawn, make sure to aerate it and top dress it with compost and that will also help hold the water."

Chief Byron Louis of the Okanagan Indian Band believes it's time to stop importing grass and to start using what naturally grows in the Okanagan.

"Why not start promoting the use of native species?" he asked. "I think that's probably our best alternative if we want to landscape and you can do it quite nicely."

"And I think landscapers — the onus should be put on them to actually start using native species a lot more than they actually do. Stop importing others and start using what's available."

Cities across the Okanagan region are encouraged to take the pledge to save water this summer, and you can learn more about how you can contribute through the Okanagan WaterWise website.