

ENVIRONMENT

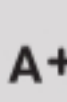
Okanagan officials urge water conservation amid drought conditions

By **Taya Fast** • Global News
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Local officials met in Lake Country today to discuss how to be water-smart ahead of wildfire season. As our Taya Fast reports, being water smart is more important now than ever as the Okanagan is still dealing with ongoing drought conditions. – May 30, 2024 **WATCH HERE:** <https://globalnews.ca/news/10535748/okanagan-officials-water-conservation-drought-conditions/>





Despite cooler temperatures and a bit of rain this week, the Okanagan is still recovering from last year’s extreme drought.

Local mayors, fire chiefs and industry partners gathered at Lakestone Villas in Lake Country on Thursday to urge residents to practice water conservation ahead of wildfire season.


“For years we have known that there are concerns when it comes to water supply in the Okanagan,” said Corinne Jackson, with the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

“The fact that we have less water available per person than anywhere in Canada and yet our population continues to grow.”




The location of Thursday’s press conference was no accident. Officials say it was chosen because Lakestone serves as an example of a community that is water and fire smart.

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Last year when a wildfire came dangerously close to the neighbourhood, the homes in Lakestone Villas were not damaged.

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“As you look around, you can see in the trees all around of us, in the front of us, behind us and to the side of us... the fire burnt all around this area, but it didn’t burn here,” said Lake Country’s Mayor Blair Ireland.

Around the homes in Lakestone Villas, the limbs on the trees have been moved up around six feet creating a 30-metre buffer.

The homes themselves were also built with fire safety in mind.


“All the houses are either some sort of concrete siding, doubled-glazed windows, non-combustible rooftop,” said Lake Country’s Fire Chief Darren Lee.

“And the plantings around the house, there is nothing within that first couple metres or so around the house and they are all concrete decks.”




This comes as the Okanagan Basin Water Board’s Okanagan WaterWise program prepares to launch their annual water campaign called ‘Make Water Work.’

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On Thursday, mayors, city partners and fire chiefs pledged to commit to making water work better this summer.

“As we experience hotter, and dryer summers and as our population increases, the importance of being water wise and fire smart is becoming very, very important,” said Jackson.

“We are really proud to continue our commitment to Okanagan residents to be water-wise in Canada’s most water-stressed region.”

Make Water Work is a valley-wide conservation effort aimed at helping residents reduce their water use in the Summer.

Residents can pledge to ‘make water work smarter’ online. The community with the most pledges becomes the Make Water Work champion community.

