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# Columbia Basin Water Smart

## IN THIS ISSUE

[What is "Water Smart"?](#)

[19 Communities Sign Water Smart Charter](#)

[First 10 Communities Underway](#)

[Water Smart Tool Kit](#)

[Water Smart Network updates and opportunities](#)

[Did you know?](#)

## FORWARD TO A COLLEAGUE



Know someone who might be interested in this email?

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## CLASSIFIEDS

Are you seeking water conservation information or success stories?

Do you have expertise that might assist other Water Smart communities?

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Water Smart Newsletter. The Water Smart Newsletter is intended to provide communities in the Basin with concise information on:

- o Water conservation best practices and case studies;
- o Water Smart events and learning opportunities; and
- o Relevant resources and publications on water conservation.

This newsletter is circulated to all local governments in the Basin, and we ask that you please share it widely with members of your staff, councils, and boards. We hope that the Water Smart Newsletter will become an important source of current water conservation information that is directly relevant to all Basin communities. As CBT builds the Water Smart Tool Kits and works with more Basin communities, the depth of information available online and through this newsletter will continue to grow.

Your suggestions and questions are encouraged and we look forward to hearing from you!

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## What is "Water Smart"?

The Columbia Basin Water Smart Initiative (Water Smart) is a regional water conservation initiative that provides support to participating Regional Districts and Municipalities to assess and address their local water conservation needs, and to plan for the most locally effective actions to reduce community wide water consumption. The Water Smart Initiative aims to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in gross community water consumption among participating communities by 2015.

[Learn more about Columbia Basin Water Smart.](#)

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Do you know of an individual who is a leader in water conservation?

**Contact us** and we'll post your questions, information and ideas in the next edition of the *Water Smart Newsletter*.

## 19 Communities Sign Water Smart Charter

On March 24, 2010, elected officials and staff from the 19 communities participating in Water Smart attended the Water Smart Regional workshop and signed the Water Smart Charter. By signing the Charter the communities are demonstrating their commitment to working with CBT and participating local governments to reduce water consumption and achieve regional water conservation goals. Presentations at the workshop were given by leaders in water conservation including [Susanne Porter-Bopp](#), [Hans Schreier](#), [Don Dobson](#) and [Neal Klassen](#).



[BACK TO TOP](#)

## First 10 Communities Underway

### Lessons Learned and Next Steps

To read more about what's new with Water Smart including lessons learned to date, the unique water conservation challenges and opportunities facing the Basin and next steps for Water Smart, [click here](#).

[BACK TO TOP](#)

## Water Smart Tool Kit

The Water Smart Tool Kit is currently under construction. When complete in fall 2010 it will be available on CBT's website. In the meantime, some notable resources have recently been made available:



- o **NEW! "Made in the Basin"** public communications tools for local governments.
- o **Worth Every Penny:** A Primer on Conservation Oriented Water Pricing.
- o **The Topsoil Technical and Policy Primer Set**

[Read more about these and other tools here.](#)

[BACK TO TOP](#)

## Water Smart Network updates and opportunities

### Learning opportunities: You told us what you need

CBT surveyed the Water Smart communities, to determine which topics would be most useful for formal learning opportunities for your community. Based on responses from the 19 Water Smart communities, upcoming education sessions (likely via webinar) will be

held on the topics of conservation oriented water pricing, as well as senior government granting opportunities and grant writing tips.

### **Leak Detection: A Regional Approach to the RFP**

Due to the distribution of many mid-and small-sized communities across the Basin, there is likely a cost benefit to issuing a multi-community [RFP for leak detection services](#). CBT has been working with interested Water Smart communities to develop this [RFP](#). A collaborative leak detection [RFP](#) is an innovative approach that allows communities to work together and secure a more competitive bid than if each community's [RFP](#) were tendered separately. Thanks to Iain Bell of the Town of Creston for initiating this innovative approach.

[Contact us](#) if your community would like more information on this RFP.

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[BACK TO TOP](#)

## Did you know?

### ***That water conservation is an effective climate change adaptation strategy that builds community and infrastructure resilience?***

Climate change will impact future water resources including water supply, timing and quality. Projected climate conditions suggest that there is a need to improve existing demand management practices. These will help to limit or offset the need to enhance storage facilities, and expand domestic water systems to provide new or more secure supply for domestic and commercial consumption and for fire protection.

Projections in all climate change scenarios show relatively less precipitation on an annual basis, as well as changes to timing and volume of spring freshets. More rainfall (as opposed to snow) can be expected, with less snow due primarily to warmer temperatures, especially at lower elevations.

Reducing domestic, municipal, and commercial water consumption is an important strategy for securing future water supplies, especially during warmer, drier months.

For information on CBT's Communities Adapting to Climate Change Initiative (CACCI) contact [Michelle Laurie](#), Coordinator by calling 1.800.505.8998.

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[BACK TO TOP](#)

*Columbia Basin Trust supports efforts by the people of the Basin to create a legacy of social, economic and environmental well-being and to achieve greater self-sufficiency for present and future generations.*

For more information on the Columbia Basin Water Smart Initiative, please contact:  
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## What's New With Water Smart

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

### Lessons Learned to Date

The Water Smart Team has wrapped up meetings with the first 10 water smart communities; the Beaver Valley Water Board, Castlegar, Cranbrook, Fernie, Fruitvale, Montrose, Regional District of Central Kootenay (Erikson), Regional District of East Kootenay (Edgewater), Sparwood, Trail and Valemount. These meetings helped identify some of the most critical community water conservation needs and opportunities, including:

- The Basin has a unique culture of water consumption and conservation. This unique culture means there is a need for a customized approach to water conservation in the Basin. While there is a lot to learn from other regional water conservation programs, Water Smart cannot simply import these approaches and expect success.
- Communities within the Basin have differing knowledge and needs with regards to water conservation. Some communities are aware of water conservation issues and water use habits of their residents, while others have less knowledge of how much water is being used and the importance of water conservation initiatives in their community.
- Communities have different reasons for participating in water conservation programs. For some, the primary reason is water supply, while for others it is the need to defer infrastructure upgrades. Others will pursue water conservation to protect the environment and ensure sustainable water supplies for future generations.

There are tangible benefits to the collaborative, multi-community approach that the Water Smart Initiative is using. Many local governments in the Basin face resource challenges that can make it difficult to keep current of best practices, regulations and innovations. Sharing information amongst communities in CBT's facilitated Water Smart Initiative is an opportunity for learning, cost savings and innovation for any community size.

### Common Water Conservation Challenges

Through the meetings held to date with communities, several water conservation challenges facing the majority of Basin communities have been identified. Over the course of this initiative, the Water Smart Team will support communities to address these common challenges.

These typically include some or all of the following:

- Very high peak water consumption (outdoor summer use) that surpasses Canadian and BC averages;
- Significantly high percentages of non-revenue water losses (also called system loss, line loss, unaccounted for water), often due to aging infrastructure;
- A lack of water metering; and
- A need to improve municipal irrigation practices.

### Unique challenges and opportunities in Water Smart Communities

In addition to some common "lessons learned", there are some unique challenges and opportunities that are shared by two or more communities:

- Unusual winter water use peaks - Certain communities in the Basin exhibit unusually high winter water consumption peaks due to the prominence of outdoor recreation.
- Growth - A number of the Water Smart communities will have little or no population growth in the foreseeable future. These communities cannot rely on development cost charges, development upgrades, and new property taxation to address infrastructure deficits.
- Water metering preparation - A number of Basin communities are preparing for water metering. There is a clear opportunity for these communities to share knowledge and learning as they begin to educate their constituents, staff and elected officials about the most effective approaches and the challenges of water metering.

### Next Steps

Over the summer Water Smart Action Plans will be delivered to the first 10 Water Smart communities and each community will work with the Water Smart Team to refine the plans. Final meetings with the first 10 communities will take place in September/October 2010 to present the final action plans.

During this time meetings will also begin with the next set of communities to get started on those action plans. The next nine communities are Creston, Elkford, Golden, Kaslo, Montrose, Nakusp, Radium Hot Springs, Salmo and Slocan.

Fall will be a busy time for the Water Smart Team, but this overlapping approach will ensure that all communities are able to get to work on achieving their water conservation targets as soon as possible.



## The Water Smart Toolkit

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

The Water Smart Tool Kit is currently under construction and will be available in September on CBT's website. To date, communities have received advertising templates that can be used in print ads, online, and in newsletters in their community.

### Key Messages to Educate Residents

Building on research gathered during the first 10 community meetings, a series of key messages were developed and then made into advertisements for local governments in the Columbia Basin to educate residents about being water smart.

Contact [Meredith](#) if your community is interested in using these ads.

### *Worth Every Penny: A Primer on Conservation-Oriented Water Pricing.* (May 2010)

Published by the University of Victoria's POLIS Water Sustainability Project, *Worth Every Penny* is a primer on how to reform water pricing. The report is aimed at water managers and municipal leaders across Canada and makes the economic case for water conservation and sustainable water service infrastructure in Canada as a way to increase water security for communities.

***The Topsoil Technical and Policy Primer Set.*** The Topsoil Primer Set synthesizes the pioneering experiences of the City of Courtenay, the City of Surrey and the District of North Vancouver. Says Raymond Fung, Chair of the Green Infrastructure Partnership, "Topsoil is the interface between rainwater management and drought management. Soil depth creates a sponge.... which can limit runoff during wet-weather periods; and reduce water need during dry-weather periods."

