

## Water Security & Climate Resilience in the Okanagan

### Summary:

November in the Okanagan brings cooler temperatures, early sunsets, and a shift toward winter preparation. It's also a timely period for reflecting on **water conservation and climate resilience**, especially as drought conditions and increased pressure on watersheds become recurring challenges.

This month, we highlight new opportunities for community involvement in water security projects, along with ways to prepare for winter sustainably and mindfully. Whether we are on campus, at home, or enjoying time outdoors, our seasonal habits directly affect our region's long-term resilience.

### Practical actions:

1. Reduce water usage indoors as winter demand increases.
2. Insulate hot-water pipes to conserve energy.
3. Prepare homes for winter leaks and temperature drops.
4. Learn about regional water-security initiatives.
5. Practice mindful energy use during extended evening hours.

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### 1. Learn About the Okanagan Basin's Water-Security Initiatives

#### Why it matters:

- Water shortages are among the most pressing climate-related risks in the region. In November, the **Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB)** announced its annual \$350,000 grant program supporting innovative water-security projects throughout the valley, reinforcing how urgent and necessary conservation efforts have become.

#### What we can do:

- Stay informed, participate in local water-security projects, or consider joining/launching student-led initiatives related to watershed health, leak-detection technologies, or water-wise landscaping.

### **Local Tip:**

- Students and non-profits can partner with municipalities to apply for OBWB funding, making it possible to pilot sustainability ideas directly connected to community needs.
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## **2. Make Indoor Water Use More Efficient for Winter**

### **Why it matters:**

- Household water use rises during the colder months. Small inefficiencies like older showerheads or slow leaks can lead to significant waste over winter.

### **What we can do:**

- Shorten shower times, install low-flow aerators, check sinks and toilets for leaks, and insulate exposed hot-water pipes in basements or utility rooms.

### **Local Tip:**

- Kelowna's hard water can cause mineral build-up in faucets. Cleaning aerators monthly helps maintain good pressure while using less water.
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## **3. Improve Winter Home Efficiency & Comfort**

### **Why it matters:**

- Efficient heating during winter reduces both environmental impacts and costs. Weatherproofing now prevents expensive heat loss during December to January.

### **What we can do:**

- Install door sweeps, apply window film, use programmable thermostats, and lower heat slightly at night while adding warm layers.

### **Local Tip:**

- Many Okanagan homes, especially rentals, lose heat through poorly insulated basement suites. Encourage landlords to upgrade insulation where possible.
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#### **4. Practice Low-Impact Transportation During Colder Months**

##### **Why it matters:**

- While biking decreases in winter, transit and carpool options remain excellent for reducing emissions.

##### **What we can do:**

- Use BC Transit's winter routes, share trips when possible, and consider telecommuting for work/study days where appropriate. Take Advantage of OC's Ride Shark platform for carpooling and a sustainable commute.