

May 2026

Sustainability Newsletter

As spring transitions toward early summer in the Okanagan Valley, May brings warmer temperatures, vibrant greenery, and increased outdoor activity across the Kelowna campus of Okanagan College. The landscape is now fully alive, trees are leafed out, flowers are in bloom, and wildlife is highly active throughout the region.



May is also a month of growth and momentum. Sustainability efforts that began in Earth Month continue to build, with a stronger focus on long-term habits, community engagement, and preparing for the high-impact summer season. Across British Columbia, attention is turning toward climate adaptation, water conservation, and sustainable transportation.

At Okanagan College, the transition into summer is also marked by upcoming initiatives like Go By Bike Week (May 30 – June 5), encouraging students and staff to choose active, low-carbon transportation options and build lasting sustainable commuting habits.

For students, faculty, and staff, May is an opportunity to deepen sustainable practices, building on awareness from April and turning it into consistent, everyday action that supports a healthier campus and community.

Practical Actions for May

- 1. Reduce energy use as temperatures begin to rise.**
- 2. Choose sustainable transportation options.**
- 3. Minimize waste during peak outdoor season.**
- 4. Support local and seasonal food choices.**
- 5. Be wildfire-aware and practice prevention.**

1. Reduce energy use as temperatures begin to rise

With warmer weather arriving in Kelowna, energy use, especially cooling begins to increase. Managing energy consumption early in the season helps reduce environmental impact and supports campus sustainability goals.



What we can do

- Turn off lights and electronics when not in use.
- Use natural ventilation instead of air conditioning when possible.
- Close blinds during the hottest part of the day to keep space cool.
- Report energy inefficiencies in campus buildings.

Local Tip

Students and staff can explore energy-saving tools.

1. [FORTIS BC Energy-saving tips and technologies.](#)
2. [BC Hydro Energy-saving tips and technologies.](#)

2. Choose Sustainable Transportation

May's mild weather makes it an ideal time to shift toward low-impact transportation options. Reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles can significantly cut emissions.



What we can do

- Walk or bike to campus when possible.
- Use public transit or carpool with classmates.
- Plan errands efficiently to reduce unnecessary trips.
- Take advantage of OC Commute bike racks and transit access near campus.

Local Tip

Use the GoOC

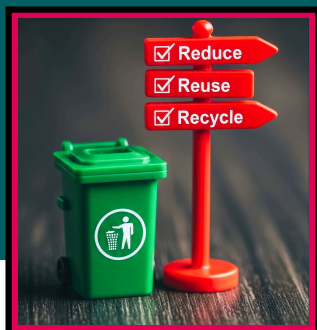
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3. Reduce Waste During Peak Outdoor Season



As outdoor activities increase, so does the potential for waste generation. Being mindful of consumption helps protect local parks, trails, and shared spaces.

What we can do

- Pack reusable items for picnics and study sessions outdoors.
- Avoid single-use plastics and excess packaging.
- Sort waste properly using campus recycling and compost systems.
- Participate in or organize small clean-up efforts.

Local Tip

Popular outdoor areas near Kelowna can accumulate waste during spring. Packing reusable items helps protect these shared spaces. Refer [RDCO](#)

4. Support Local Food Systems

May offers greater access to fresh, locally grown food in the Okanagan. Choosing seasonal options supports regional agriculture and reduces environmental impact.



What we can do

- Shop at local farmers' markets and food vendors.
- Incorporate more seasonal fruits and vegetables into meals.
- Reduce food waste by storing and using food efficiently.
- Explore plant-based meal options throughout the week

Local Tip

Watch for the reopening of the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market, a great way to support regional producers and access fresh, seasonal foods.

5. Practice Wildfire Awareness and Prevention

As temperatures rise and conditions become drier, wildfire risk begins to increase across British Columbia, including the Okanagan region. Early awareness is key to prevention.



What we can do

- Follow local fire regulations and restrictions.
- Properly dispose of cigarette butts and flammable materials.
- Avoid open flames in undesignated areas.
- Stay informed about wildfire conditions and alerts.

Local Tip

Nearby natural areas such as Mission Creek Regional Park provide excellent opportunities for recreation. Refer [RDCO](#)

Participate in Campus Sustainability Initiatives

Sustainability is a shared responsibility, and continued engagement helps build lasting impact across the Okanagan College community.



What we can do

- Participate in Go By Bike Week (May 30 – June 5) by cycling to campus or around the city.
- Join sustainability-focused student groups.
- Volunteer for campus or community environmental programs.
- Share ideas for improving sustainability practices.
- Stay informed through campus communications.

Local Tip

Please refer [SustainOC](#) & [RDCO](#)

1. Increased Focus on Climate Adaptation Planning

Communities across British Columbia are strengthening climate adaptation strategies to address rising temperatures, wildfire risks, and extreme weather. These efforts aim to build resilience in infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities.

[Click here for more details](#)

2. Growth in Local Food and Agriculture Programs

The Okanagan region is seeing continued growth in local agriculture and food security initiatives, supporting farmers, reducing supply chain emissions, and improving access to fresh food.

[Click here for more details](#)

3. Expansion of Sustainable Transportation Initiatives

The Kelowna continues to invest in sustainable transportation infrastructure, including improved transit systems and expanded cycling networks to reduce emissions and congestion.

[Click here for more details](#)

For more up-to-date news, upcoming events, and sustainability initiatives, please visit:

<https://www.okanagancollege.ca/sustainability>



Share your thoughts to enhance our sustainability efforts at:



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