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### QUESTION OF THE WEEK

**Do you agree with the federal government's passage of Bill C-19, that lead to the abolition of the federal gun registry and having the records destroyed?**

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## How you can conserve water

FROM A TRICKLE TO A ROAR: PART FOUR

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AUGUST 4, 2011

SALLY MACDONALD  
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We may have an abundance of water here in Cranbrook, but conserving water is still important, according to the city's corporate communications officer Chris Zettel.

"There is certainly a feeling in the community that we have an abundance of water. And we have a couple of very good watersheds that have a lot of water.

"But the time might eventually come where we are scrambling like a lot of other places, wondering where the fresh water is going to come from. Let's try to delay that and make sure we have as much water as we can for us, and our kids. We certainly don't want to leave them with a mess," said Zettel.

According to BC Stats, 66 per cent of B.C.'s water use is residential. So that means that at its lowest, each Cranbrook resident uses almost 470 litres of water a day.

That's slightly above the average, according to a 2004 report which found B.C. residents used 426 litres of water a day.

Inside the home, we use the most water for showers and baths (35 per cent), followed by toilets (30 per cent), laundry (20 per cent), kitchen and drinking (10 per cent) and cleaning (5 per cent).

Outside the home, 70 per cent of B.C. households water their lawn, significantly more than in Prince Edward Island (18 per cent). But of those who water their lawn in B.C., 35 per cent used timed sprinklers, far above the national average of 23 per cent.

The City of Cranbrook has taken steps to encourage water conservation. Public Works conducts checks of pipes within the city boundaries, looking for leaks, and when road works are done, the pipes beneath the road are checked.

In March 2010, the city signed the Columbia Basin Trust's WaterSmart initiative. It pledges to reduce the city's water consumption by 20 per cent by 2015.

The community's cooperation is essential to reach that goal, explained Chris Zettel.

"The program is not intended to be preaching, telling people that you need to do this and you need to do that. What we're trying to get people to do is step back and have a look where they think they can get the most out of the water they are using."

### Related Links:

- Why Cranbrook tries to conserve water
- How Cranbrook's water travels from creek to home
- How Cranbrook gets its water
- Kooacanusa water level nears its peak
- Don't throw away used oil
- A watery world
- Mark Creek rises two feet with rain
- Joseph Creek watch begins again
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To encourage residents to conserve water, the city introduced a \$50 rebate last year for homeowners replacing old toilets with new, low-flow toilets. Last year, 200 rebates were given out, and in 2011 so far 100 have been paid.

What's more, the city has an outdoor watering program controlling when residents can water their lawn.

So far, the city hasn't gone so far as to introduce water meters, but is "on the radar", said Zettel.

"Certainly the water meter discussion has come up. Right now, there are no plans for water meters but we're doing our homework."

There are plenty of things Cranbrook residents can do to watch their water use, many of them outside.

Zettel suggest planting gardens based on what parts of the yard get the least rain.

"If they have one spot in their yard that is quite dry, instead of trying to plant grass and water-hungry plants, why not try something that might be a little dryer?"

Grass takes root best if it doesn't get too much water, he added. Two to three centimetres of water a week is enough for the grass to get established; more than that and its roots aren't deep enough to withstand a heat wave.

In-ground sprinkler systems use less water if they are well-maintained, said Zettel.

"It's really key for people to take the time to go around in the spring and fall and check their systems to make sure everything is working great."

Look for broken sprinkler heads or spongy grass that could indicate broken pipes. Change the sprinkler schedule often to reflect the season, and isolate zones that require more water.

Inside the home, install low-flow toilets and showerheads.

"We really want people to look around and see what they can do to reduce their water use where they can. We just want people to be smart about it," said Zettel.

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