

THE NEED FOR MONITORING

New film illustrates the importance of groundwater monitoring

Living Lakes Canada has released a new film that illustrates the importance of its groundwater monitoring program in the Canadian Columbia Basin.

by GROUND WATER CANADA STAFF

Shot in British Columbia's East Kootenay region, this short film provides an engaging rationale for the program, which partners with existing well owners to track groundwater levels and determine how they change seasonally and from year to year. Data is shared publicly for water users, water managers, researchers, decision makers and policy makers to protect and manage water impacted by climate change, overallocation, pollution, etc.

Based in Nelson, B.C., Living Lakes Canada works to enhance the protection, the restoration, the rehabilitation, and the health of watersheds in B.C. and across Canada. It facilitates collaboration in monitoring, restoration, and policy development initiatives for the long-term protection of Canada's lakes, rivers, wetlands and watersheds impacted by climate risks.

The film's release comes in time to coincide with World Water Day on March 22 – the theme of which is “Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible.”

The film is part of an ongoing series produced by LLC that showcases different aspects of community-based water monitoring. To watch the film, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDv8GVpIBho>.

“The goal of the Upper Columbia



Living Lakes Canada groundwater program manager Carol Luttmmer, left, inspects a well with summer intern Ashley Dubois.

Basin groundwater monitoring program is to increase knowledge about groundwater resources to effectively inform sustainable water management and meet the needs of people and nature,” program manager Carol Luttmmer says. “The foundation of this successful program are the well owners who volunteer their wells for monitoring. These include municipalities, First Nations, and private landowners.”

To date, the Living Lakes Canada Columbia Basin groundwater monitoring program has established 22 volunteer

observation wells. Data is made available on the Columbia Basin Water Hub (an open access database for water-related data in the Columbia Basin facilitated by LLC), and the province's BC Real-time Water data. Groundwater data collected from some of the aquifers being monitored showed a decrease in water levels when comparing July 2021 to July 2020.

“Our groundwater work has international relevance,” Living Lakes Canada executive director Kat Hartwig says. “At the recent COP26 in Glasgow, world leaders with the Water & Climate Coalition announced water and climate can no longer be dealt with separately. This project is part of a Basin-wide monitoring network we have spearheaded to support all levels of decision makers for holistic water management. We engage and train citizens to help with the collection of standardized, scientifically defensible water data.”

She added the groundwater monitoring program is an effort to help communities engage in a proactive way rather than being reactive.

Learn more about Living Lakes Canada's groundwater program at <https://livinglakescanada.ca/project/columbia-basin-groundwater-monitoring-program/>.