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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WATER BOARD OPENS INTAKE FOR WATER CONSERVATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS

Kelowna, B.C. – The Okanagan Basin Water Board is now accepting applications to its 2014 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) Grant Program.

The program, in its ninth year, has \$300,000 available for projects that conserve water or improve its quality. Eligible recipients include Okanagan non-profit community groups, local governments, and improvement districts. Successful applicants can receive up to \$30,000 for their project.

“Over the last 40 years, the Okanagan has become a leader at addressing water issues, but we still see areas for improvement.” Says Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director of the Water Board. “Our annual inflow of water to Okanagan Lake is hugely variable, Both flood and drought conditions can come with a host of quality problems, which is why supporting community-based projects is important for managing the quality and quantity of our water.”

Projects funded last year included a reclaimed water upgrade at the Westside Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. By using filtered, reclaimed water in some of their mechanical systems, the plant reduced its potable water usage by 67%. In one of the projects in the North Okanagan, Okanagan College expanded their demonstration garden, installing curb-cuts, rain gardens, wicking beds and a xeriscape garden. This project showcases best practices in water stewardship and conservation, small-scale agriculture and intensive horticulture. For one of the projects in the South Okanagan, the Okanagan Nation Alliance removed a creek diversion and unscreened water intake system from Shuttleworth Creek, and replaced it with a new groundwater source. This will ensure better flows for fish within the creek, and better water quality downstream.

A Silvopasture project in the Regional District of Central Okanagan, funded by the program in 2011, received a Premier’s Innovation and Excellence Award in 2013. The project brought together ten partners from all levels of government, and industry and private groups. The very successful project focused on protecting water quality, while providing rangeland for cattle and timber for forestry.

This year’s application deadline is 4 p.m. Friday, February 21, 2014. Information on the application process, including obtaining a board or council resolution of support, as well as the application, can be found at www.obwb.ca/wcqi. In the past eight years, the WCQI Grant Program has granted over \$2.6 million to 160 projects throughout the Okanagan.

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