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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OKANAGAN CELEBRATES CANADA WATER WEEK WITH FILM SCREENING, KIDS CONTEST, PANEL & PRIZES

Kelowna, B.C. – There's something for everyone as the Okanagan Basin Water Board and its outreach program Okanagan WaterWise prepares to celebrate UN World Water Day and Canada Water Week, March 17 to 23. There is a special film screening, the ever-popular – and free – public panel discussion, and a contest for kids with prizes including a boat cruise!

"It's going to be a great week," noted OBWB Chair Doug Findlater, explaining that the week-long festivities allow residents to come together, meet and have a good time, while learning more about water issues in our valley. "We have much to celebrate," added Findlater. "We have amazing champions in our region, working to protect and conserve our water. We also have challenges, and learning about these and gathering more champions will serve us well."

To kick things off, the OBWB's OkWaterWise has teamed up with REEL Change SustainAbility Film Fest to present **"Watermark"** – named "Best Canadian Film of 2013" by the Toronto Film Critics Association and based on the phenomenal photography of Edward Burtynsky. There will be one screening only, on Monday, March 17, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Famous Players Orchard Plaza 5 Cinemas in Kelowna.

This stunning and award-winning documentary, illustrates our complicated relationship with water – how it influences us, and how we have influenced it.

Tickets MUST be purchased in advance through EventBrite and will NOT be available at the door. Details at: www.OkWaterWise.ca.

Also kicking off on Monday is the launch of the 4th annual **Okanagan WaterWise Challenge**, explained Corinne Jackson, WaterWise program coordinator. School classes and individuals throughout the Okanagan, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, are invited to 'Map their Tap' and submit multi-media entries, telling us where their water comes from, and why it's important to conserve and keep it clean.

"We've found this to be a great way to engage kids in talking about water, and over the years have received some amazing submissions, including music videos, cartoon strips, posters and more," added Jackson.

Prizes include a 2-hour boat cruise on Okanagan Lake for a private class lesson on Okanagan water, presented by the Okanagan Science Centre, as well as pizza parties and pool passes. For contest details visit www.OkWaterWise.ca. Contest ends April 25.

And on Thursday, March 20, well-known Kelowna broadcaster **Phil Johnson** - host of AM1150's Early Edition - will be moderating the OBWB/Okanagan WaterWise's **Annual Public Forum**, this year entitled "*WAVES of Change - emPOWERing Okanagan Residents for a Sustainable Future*" based on the U.N. World Water Day theme of "water and energy." The panel will be held at the Laurel Packinghouse from 5 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Panelists include:

- **Anna Warwick Sears** – OBWB Executive Director, speaking on issues facing water in our valley;
- **Keith Veerman** – FortisBC's Manager of PowerSense Programs, on the connection/interdependence between water and energy, what the utility is doing to conserve and what they are doing to help customers conserve;
- **Kiel Wilkie** – District of Lake Country - Engineering Technician, on the district's multi award-winning micro-hydro power plant and other water/energy solutions it is developing;
- **Deren Sentesy** – Co-chair of Cascadia Green Building Council (Thompson Okanagan branch) and owner of En Circle Design Build, on the latest in energy/water conservation for homeowners (new build and retrofit); and
- **Brian Guy**, an Okanagan homeowner who recently built a water/energy efficient home from the ground up on lessons learned.

Greenstep Solutions and **FortisBC** will have information tables for residents and businesses interested in water and energy conservation. Take the water & energy savings challenge at the Fortis table for a chance to win a prize!

The panel event is free and light refreshments will be served, but **seating is limited and pre-registration is required**. Visit www.OkWaterWise.ca for more information.

The OBWB is also very pleased to be partnering with UBC Okanagan which is holding events to celebrate UN World Water Day (WWD), including a presentation March 19 by Dr. Jeannette Armstrong on "A Syilx Perspective on Water and Energy in the Columbia Basin," and on March 20 a special WWD ceremony at the university and a fun "Splashdown" water research event. More details at: <http://worldwaterday.ok.ubc.ca/>.

Special thanks to this year's partners in the Okanagan WaterWise Challenge, including Vernon Aquatic Centre, the YMCA of Kelowna's H2O Adventure and Fitness Centre, the City of Penticton Community Centre Pool, Okanagan Science Center, Cruise Okanagan, The Executive Boardroom, and Casabella Princess Cruises.

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