

Okanagan Sustainability Office News

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UBC supports World Water Day with community events



Keynote by Jeannette Armstrong, CRC in Okanagan Indigenous Philosophy

UBC's Okanagan campus has planned three days of events and activities in support of World Water Day, March 22. World Water Day is a global event intended to raise awareness about a lack of clean drinking water around the world. It also highlights the misuses and importance of water, and serves as a reminder for people to take action.



Keynote speaker Jeannette Armstrong, assistant professor of Indigenous Studies in the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, Canada Research Chair in Okanagan Indigenous Philosophy at UBC's Okanagan campus.

"The United Nations theme for WWD this year is 'water and energy,' an especially appropriate theme for British Columbia given the government's plan to pass new water legislation at the same time as it is renegotiating the Columbia River Treaty with the United States and promoting the expansion of a water-hungry oil and gas industry," says John Wagner, associate professor of anthropology, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences. This year's World Water Day keynote speaker is Jeannette Armstrong, who will give a free public presentation: *A Syilx perspective on Water and Energy in the Columbia Basin*. Armstrong argues in favor of a cooperative and ethical

approach to water management -- one that would protect Canadian and regional water sovereignty by incorporating Indigenous rights and values in legislation such as the proposed BC Water Sustainability Act.

Armstrong is Syilx Okanagan, a fluent speaker of Nsyilxcen, and a traditional knowledge keeper of the Okanagan Nation. The assistant professor of Indigenous studies with the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences currently holds a Canada Research Chair in Okanagan Indigenous Knowledge and Philosophy at UBC's Okanagan campus. The talk is on March 19, 7 p.m., at Rotary Centre for the Arts, downtown Kelowna.

On Monday, March 19, there is a showing of the award-winning documentary *Watermark*, 7 to 9 p.m., at Famous Players Orchard Plaza 5 Cinemas in Kelowna. *Watermark* – named Best Canadian Film of 2013 by the Toronto Film Critics Association – brings together diverse stories from around the globe about our relationship with water. The film screening is sponsored by the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), partnering with UBC Okanagan to organize world water day events, and by Okanagan Waterwise and the Fresh Outlook Foundation.

Come to the central courtyard at UBC's Okanagan campus on March 20, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., for the World Water Day opening ceremonies, featuring music by My Kind of Karma, as well as free food, information booths, activities and performances.

World Water Day celebrations conclude Thursday, March 20, with the free public forum *WAVES of Change – emPOWERing Okanagan Residents for a Sustainable Future* at the Laurel Packinghouse, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Kelowna broadcaster Phil Johnson moderates a panel discussion on the theme of water and energy. Panelists will share their stories about the water they love and the work they are doing to protect it. The event, presented by the OBWB and Okanagan Waterwise, is free but seating is limited. Registration is required.

Preceding the public forum is Splashdown -- a short, fun and informative event featuring three-minute presentations by student and faculty researchers at UBC's Okanagan campus. Splashdown takes place 3 to 4:30 p.m. at the Laurel Packinghouse.

For more information on World Water Day events, or to register for a presentation, visit <http://worldwaterday.ok.ubc.ca>