

# Water board receives funding

Vernon Morning Star – News

Published: February 06, 2010 12:00 PM

New funding will allow the Okanagan Basin Water Board to develop policy that will help address water needs in the region.

The OBWB will receive \$298,000 from Natural Resources Canada over three years, matched by \$331,850 in cash and in-kind contributions through the OBWB and various B.C. agencies.

“The Okanagan valley has among the highest drought risk in Canada, with some of the fastest population growth, and an economy that is heavily dependent on water for agriculture, tourism and retirement industries,” said Anna Warwick Sears, executive director.

“Despite the known risks, very little work has been done to ensure the reliability of supplies for the future – until now.”

Between 2007 and 2009, the federal government invested heavily in phase two of the Okanagan water supply and demand project, with more than \$1.1 million in cash contributions towards the \$2.5 million budget total.

The goal of phase two was to provide an up-to-date scientific assessment of current water availability in the Okanagan basin, and how it will be impacted by population growth and climate change in the near future. Phase 2 will be completed and launched in March 2010.

“After three years of intense study of water issues in the Okanagan, we are getting a handle on what climate change and population growth will bring,” said Warwick Sears.

“We’re thrilled with this funding. It will take us to the next step – finding solutions to address these issues.”

Phase three will use the phase two science to modernize water policy in the Okanagan, and communicate facts about water to the public and elected leaders. Phase three will also make the data and models available for valley-wide regional and local government planning.