

March 17, 2010

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **PUBLIC INVITED TO HEAR EXPERTS WADE INTO OKANAGAN WATER QUALITY ISSUES**

**Kelowna, B.C.** – In recognition of March 22 - UN World Water Day, the Okanagan Basin Water Board and University of British Columbia – Okanagan is hosting a public forum on Monday, March 22.

“Water is important to everyone. We all use it – we all need it. In the Okanagan, we depend on it to provide safe drinking water, to be clean for swimming in, and to provide a beautiful and unique backdrop for other recreational opportunities. For all these reasons, maintaining high water quality standards are important,” says Nelson Jatel, OBWB Water Stewardship Director and the panel’s moderator. The topic of this year’s panel and public discussion is “Communicating water quality challenges and opportunities for improvement.”

The panel discussion will focus on what can impact water quality and how to ensure its protection – as well as the protection of everyone who depends on it, says Jatel. “For example, one way to help ensure good water quality is to tread lightly when we enjoy back country activities in the Okanagan,” he adds, pointing to treadlightly.org as one helpful resource that provides tips for sustainable outdoor recreation.

“We’ve had a great turnout in the past at our World Water Day panels, with some great discussion,” adds Jatel, noting that these events are an opportunity to hear about what’s happening in our own backyard, but even abroad.

The event will begin with an important corporate announcement regarding support for water research.

Panelists include:

**Rob Birtles** – Drinking Water Officer for Interior Health;

**Gwen Bridge** – Natural Resources Manager with Okanagan Nation Alliance;

**Bob Hrasko** – a director for Water Supply Association of B.C.;

**Vic Jensen** – Senior Environmental Impact Biologist with Ministry of Environment

**Robert Sandford** – Canadian Chair of the United Nations International Decade “Water for Life,” a national partnership to advance long-term water quality and availability issues in response to climate change in this country and abroad;

**Dr. Anna Warwick Sears** – Executive Director of the OBWB; and

**Wayne Wilson** – Executive Director of Kelowna Museum.

WHERE: Manteo Resort, 3762 Lakeshore Rd, Kelowna

WHEN: Monday, March 22, 2010, 10:30 am – 12 noon

Seating is limited and will be first come, first serve. Coffee will be provided.

The panel is one of several events planned by UBC-O and the OBWB as part of World Water Week, being celebrated in Kelowna, March 22 – 26, 2010. For more information, visit [www.obwb.ca](http://www.obwb.ca).

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