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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD MAKES A SPLASH DURING WORLD WATER WEEK**

**Kelowna, B.C.** – The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) is celebrating World Water Week, March 20 to 25, and invites residents of the Okanagan – young and old to join in!

“We’re really trying to reach out within the Okanagan community, to help people understand what our local issues and challenges with water are, and what we can do to protect it for future generations,” explained Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director for the OBWB. “World Water Week is a great vehicle to raise awareness and celebrate water.”

The week kicks off with the launch of the **Okanagan WaterWise Challenge** – an online scavenger hunt for kids 5 to 15, encouraging young people to learn more about Okanagan water. As a reward for their participation, contestants have the opportunity to win a pool and pizza party for themselves and nine of their friends. Okanagan WaterWise is the outreach and education initiative of the OBWB aimed at informing residents of this valley about local water issues and the need to protect and conserve this valuable resource.

On March 20, young people are encouraged to log on to the Okanagan WaterWise website ([www.okwaterwise.ca](http://www.okwaterwise.ca)) and take the challenge. The contest ends May 3. Pool party packages will be awarded in the North Okanagan, Central Okanagan and South Okanagan. Winners will be announced on May 5, as part of Drinking Water Week (May 1-7).

The OBWB is also co-hosting a free **public forum** with UBC-Okanagan on March 22 – officially UN World Water Day. The forum will be held from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Bohemian Café, 524 Bernard Ave., Kelowna. Refreshments will be served and the event is open to the public.

The event will begin with a panel discussion on “Water in an urbanizing world: Water, food, land and people in the Okanagan.” Panelists include: *Oliver Brandes* – a sought-after speaker with the POLIS Water Sustainability Project (University of Victoria), *Anna Warwick Sears* – OBWB Executive Director, *Toby Pike* with the Water Supply Association of B.C. and Southeast Kelowna Irrigation District manager, *Domenic Rampone* - Owner/operator of Rampone Farms and City of Kelowna’s Agricultural Advisory Committee, *John Janmaat* - BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Management candidate, and *John Wagner*, UBC-Okanagan Associate Professor of Anthropology (with a specialized focus on water).

Finally, the OBWB is working on a **radio series** with AM1150’s The Early Edition, featuring a speaker on water for each day during World Water Week. Topics will include new approaches to water protection by

ranchers in the Okanagan, Kelowna's new landscape and irrigation standards, updates on pharmaceutical residues entering Okanagan waters, and more.

"We're really excited about World Water Week this year," added Warwick Sears. "We hope that as people learn more about water in the Okanagan, and recognize that we are all connected in this valley by one water source, that everyone will be inspired to protect it."

For more information on UBC-O World Water Day events, please visit <http://blogs.ubc.ca/worldwaterday/>.

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Corinne Jackson, OBWB – Communications and Research Coordinator  
Office: 250-469-6271  
Mobile: 250-718-7249  
E-mail: Corinne.Jackson@obwb.ca