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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **WATER BOARD ANNOUNCES FUNDS FOR PROJECTS THAT WILL CONSERVE OR IMPROVE OKANAGAN WATER**

**Kelowna, B.C.** – The Okanagan Basin Water Board approved funding to 19 projects in the Okanagan this week, through its annual Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant (WCQI) Program, aimed at improving and conserving water in the Okanagan valley.

“We’re very pleased with the response we had this year,” said Melissa Tesche, Office and Grant Administrator for the OBWB, noting that there were 35 applications with a total request of \$703,331. There was \$300,000 available in the grant program.

Funding for the WCQI grants is split between the three Okanagan regional districts, based on their contributions to the program. As such, with \$58,500 available for the North Okanagan, five groups were awarded funds. Eight projects were funded with the \$175,800 available in the Central Okanagan, and six projects were funded in the South Okanagan with a total of \$65,700.

“There were a lot of stand-out proposals,” said Tesche, adding that the grant program is based on the idea of “One valley. One water.” It focuses on projects that show valley-wide benefit, promote collaboration, and share best practices, she explained.

An example of a project approved for the North Okanagan is a grant to the Okanagan Science Centre for a new interactive water exhibit and three new programs focusing on water use. The three programs include an outdoor water use camp for youth, lake tours and low impact gardening programs for all ages.

In the Central Okanagan, City of Kelowna received funding for a Water Conservation Manual for Municipal Parks and Green Spaces. The manual will review the work of the city in reducing the amount of water used in city parks and green spaces, including its research into the use of compost tea as fertilizer and drought tolerant grasses. The manual will provide guidance to other Okanagan communities looking to waterwise their green spaces.

And in the south, the Town of Osoyoos was awarded funds to map and inventory the shoreline of Osoyoos Lake and develop an aquatic habitat listing that will be included as part of an Okanagan-wide mapping network. Such research helps communities make sound land-use decisions, ensuring areas that are environmentally at risk are identified and can be protected.

Since 2006, the WCQI grant program has awarded nearly \$2 million for 115 projects that help conserve and improve water for all residents of the Okanagan Basin.

A complete list of grant recipients for 2011 is attached, along with contact information for the project leaders.

For more information on the Okanagan Basin Water Board and its programs, please visit [www.obwb.ca](http://www.obwb.ca).

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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