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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STUDENTS PROVE TO BE WATERWISE

Kelowna, B.C. – Okanagan WaterWise and the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) are pleased to announce the winners of this year’s Okanagan WaterWise Challenge as part of Drinking Water Week festivities being celebrated across B.C., May 13 to 19.

This year, OkWaterWise invited Okanagan classrooms to submit a multimedia entry with the theme “Be WaterWise: Save water for what matters...” The winners are: Uta Van Ziffle’s kindergarten class from North Okanagan School District 22’s Cherryville Elementary School whose submission included photos and paintings; and Barb Cutjar’s Grade 6 class from South Okanagan School District 67’s KVR Middle School who submitted a music video.

“We were so excited to receive such fantastic entries,” noted Corinne Jackson, OBWB’s Communications Director and manager of the Okanagan WaterWise program. “We were looking for entries that provided ideas to save and protect water, and entries that were unique and inspiring. These two classes did exactly that!”

“The kids really enjoyed it and it was really a team project,” explained Cutjar. “The kids looked at the material and videos on the Okanagan WaterWise website (www.okwaterwise.ca) and then brainstormed ideas. They went home, did some videotaping and brought their pieces back in. We had one girl write a song, take it to her music teacher and they recorded it with the young girl singing and the teacher playing guitar. Then we had another student pull it all together.

“I was surprised with what they know – all the different ways we enjoy water,” added Cutjar, “And they understand that if we don’t take care of it, it won’t last.”

For Van Ziffle’s class, their project was a culmination of a lot of the information they have been learning throughout the school year.

“The kids seem very connected to the land here. We think about water and the environment all the time in our classroom,” said Van Ziffle. “We recycle, we have a garden and a rainbarrel to help water the plants. We’re raising salmon from eggs and will be releasing them. The kids understand that we need to keep the water clean for the salmon and everything else we use water for.”

“We looked at the WaterWise website and gathered ideas there. They loved the website and the videos. Once they started checking those out they didn’t want to stop!,” Van Ziffle added. “We really appreciate the opportunity to focus on the water of the Okanagan. It’s so vital around here.”

Added Jackson, “We look out our windows, we enjoy our parks and beaches, and all around us we see water. It’s hard to believe that we live in an area that faces water challenges. This contest, and Drinking

Water Week, are great opportunities for us to learn more and to take steps to be WaterWise and protect the waters that make this valley so special.”

To view the video from School District 67's KVR Middle School visit: www.youtube.com/user/OKBasinWaterBoard?feature=mhee.

Please find some of the images from School District 22's Cherryville Elementary School attached.

Both classes have won a pizza party for the classroom, plus pool passes to their local pool. Their entries will also be featured on the Okanagan WaterWise website, currently at www.okwaterwise.ca/challenge!

The Okanagan Basin Water Board is pleased to present the Okanagan WaterWise 2012 Challenge in partnership with the Regional District of North Okanagan's Vernon Aquatic Centre, the YMCA-YWCA of Kelowna's H2O Adventure and Fitness Centre, and the City of Penticton Community Centre Pool.

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