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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VALLEY-WIDE “MAKE WATER WORK” CONTEST NETS A WINNER

Kelowna, B.C. – This summer, more than 800 Okanagan residents pledged to “Make Water Work” – committing to water conservation, and entering a contest for \$5000 in WaterWise yard upgrades. Lynda and Don Grant of Peachland got the call yesterday announcing they had won.

“I’m just thrilled,” said Lynda Grant, noting that their home irrigation system is 22 years old and in need of fixing. “Conserving water is becoming more and more important and I know we could be doing more.”

Grant says the irrigation upgrade is top priority, but after that, she wants to put some of the winnings into some drought-resistant plants. “I love being outside in my yard so any help I can get will be great.”

Make Water Work is an initiative of the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), its Okanagan WaterWise program and local government and utility partners in the valley, explained Corinne Jackson, OBWB Communications Director. This is the second year for the valley-wide campaign, aimed at tackling high residential water use on lawns and gardens.

In looking for a contest sponsor, Jackson said one of the most important things was to team up with a business that was Irrigation Industry Association of B.C.-certified, ensuring the work was done right and created the best water-savings possible. This year, the campaign partnered with KelownaGardens.com, based in Lake Country.

“It’s been great,” noted Ken Salvail of KelownaGardens.com. “Working in the landscaping business, and as a resident of the dry Okanagan, you can’t help but be aware of the need for water conservation. Participating in the Make Water Work contest was an opportunity for us to help increase awareness and do our part to conserve water.”

OBWB Chair and Osoyoos Mayor Stu Wells took the pledge, noting it’s a fun way to engage residents of this valley in talking about water. “If people followed the simple tips, like ‘Water between dusk and dawn.’ ‘Water plants, not pavement.’ and ‘Don’t mow. Let it Grow.’ we could save a lot of water,” he said. Given the Okanagan’s tendency to fluctuate between wet and dry years, and the expected stress on our water supply with population growth and climate change, it makes sense to adopt WaterWise behaviours now, he added.

“One of these years we’re going to have a drought and it’s going to hit home then,” he noted, adding “changing our behaviours now is what will make our region resilient.”

As for next year, Wells threw out a challenge to his fellow mayors. “I challenge you to join me and take the pledge. As we often say at the Water Board we’re all part of ‘One Valley. One Water.’ This is all about protecting the water of this valley... We can discuss the penalties of non-participation later,” he joked.

While this year’s contest is over, residents are still encouraged to Make Water Work and conserve, ensuring enough for food crops and the salmon that will be returning to our streams in October. Find tips to get the most from your water at www.MakeWaterWork.ca.

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