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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GRANT FUNDS FLOW TO PROJECTS TO CONSERVE OR IMPROVE OKANAGAN WATER

Kelowna, B.C. – The Okanagan Basin Water Board has approved \$300,000 in funding from its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) Grant Program to 19 projects in the valley.

“We had amazing applications – from schools, non-profit groups, and local governments – proposing a variety of innovative projects aimed at saving water and improving its quality across the valley,” noted James Littley, Office and Projects Manager.

In all, there were 29 applications submitted with a total ask of \$592,778. The OBWB reviewed each application and ranked them on a number of criteria, including basin-wide benefit, focus on action, collaboration, innovation and promotion of best practices.

“This program is a great way to support non-profits and local governments in our region doing on-the-ground, tangible work that improves water in our valley for people and everything else that depends on a stable, clean water supply,” said Littley.

In total, five grants worth \$57,300 were awarded in the North Okanagan. Projects include Okanagan College – Vernon campus’ Kalamalka demonstration garden showcasing smart rainwater capture and water conservation practices, and a drought signage pilot project by Regional District of North Okanagan to communicate water supply status to the public.

In the Central Okanagan, nine grants were awarded, totaling \$177,300. Projects include a creek restoration and riparian habitat conservation project by Ecole KLO Middle School, and a wetland inventory mapping project by Regional District of Central Okanagan, recognizing the decline of these critical areas and their importance in filtering runoff, recharging groundwater and storing stormwater.

In the South Okanagan, five grants were awarded for a total of \$65,400. Recipients include Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens for an innovative landscaping and rainwater retention project, using the OBWB and Okanagan WaterWise’s promoted principles of “Slow it. Spread it. Sink it.” and “Make Water Work” guidelines. The Rotary Club of Summerland was also provided a grant to assist with its Lakeside Trail project which will include bioswales to capture and filter polluted runoff and help raise awareness of water-related issues.

In addition, the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society was awarded funds to conduct a valley-wide outreach campaign to prevent zebra and quagga mussels from entering Okanagan waters, targeted at recreational water users.

“The water in this valley is all connected. This grant program is a way to bring residents of the Okanagan together to take on projects that improve water in their own backyards, but which also have valley-wide benefit. We have One Valley. One Water,” added Littlely.

A list of grant recipients for 2013 is attached.

For more information on the Okanagan Basin Water Board and its programs, please visit www.obwb.ca. Okanagan WaterWise, the OBWB’s public outreach program, can be found at www.okwaterwise.ca.

Since the program began awarding funds in 2006, some \$2.4 million has been provided to 159 projects throughout the Okanagan.

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WATER CONSERVATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT AWARDS – 2013

Organization	Project Title	Funding Received
Regional District North Okanagan		
RDNO	Kal Lake/Coldstream Creek Watershed Protection and Response	\$20,000
Okanagan & Similkameen Invasive Species Society	Invasive Mussel Prevention Program	\$10,000
Steel Springs Waterworks District	Installation of Flow Meter to Monitor Groundwater Use	\$4,885
Okanagan College - Vernon	Kalamalka Demonstration Garden	\$19,415
RDNO	Drought Awareness Signage	\$3,000
Total		\$57,300
Regional District Central Okanagan		
Ecole KLO Middle School	Fascieux Creek Restoration and Riparian Habitat Conservation	\$30,000
RDCO	Reclaimed Water Upgrade	\$25,000
District of Peachland	Improved Water Management Using WEAP	\$24,000
City of Kelowna	Water Smart Contractor Program	\$20,000
Mission Creek Restoration Initiative	Dike Setback – Flood Protection and Habitat Enhancement	\$20,000
OCCP	Biodiversity Conservation Strategy – Case Study and Outreach	\$20,000
RDCO	Wetland Inventory/Mapping collaboration and prioritization	\$15,000
Okanagan Xeriscape Association	Promoting Xeriscapes to Reduce Water Consumption	\$13,300
Okanagan & Similkameen Invasive Species Society	Invasive Mussel Prevention Program	\$10,000
Total		\$177,300
Regional District Okanagan Similkameen		
Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens	Innovative Landscaping	\$22,500
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Shuttleworth Creek Diversion Removal and Well Implementation	\$15,400
RDOS	Water Ambassador Program	\$12,500
Okanagan & Similkameen Invasive Species Society	Invasive Mussel Prevention Program	\$10,000
The Rotary Club of Summerland	Lakeside Trail	\$5,000
Total		\$65,400

Regional District North Okanagan

Available funds: \$57,300 Total Requested: \$77,370

Project Title: Kal Lake/Coldstream Creek Watershed Protection and Response Plan
Organization: Regional District of the North Okanagan
Project Goals: To initiate a collaborative watershed protection and response plan for Coldstream Creek and Kalamalka Lake. Coldstream Creek crosses a number of jurisdictions before entering Kalamalka Lake. Coldstream Creek and groundwater provide 80% of the inflow to Kalamalka Lake so the influence of land use both urban and rural has impact on water quality. The intent is to provide a forum to work cooperatively to reduce risks to water quality. Kalamalka Lake provides drinking water for 38,000 people in Greater Vernon.
Staff Notes: This watershed protection and response plan fits very well with existing OBWB objectives to enhance source water protection in a large area. Greater Vernon Water led the valley in developing a watershed assessment plan, and will be the first to do a comprehensive response plan.
Project Budget: \$50,000 **Recommended Funding:** \$20,000
 Available funds: \$57,300 Total Requested: \$77,370

Project Title: Invasive Mussel Prevention Program
Organization: Okanagan & Similkameen Invasive Species Society
Project Goals: The aim of this project is to enhance water quality in the Okanagan basin by preventing the spread of invasive mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) through an outreach campaign targeting recreational boaters and youth. The campaign will encourage reporting and behaviour change and will build on the results of a similar program carried out in summer 2012.
Staff Notes: This project will address a critical water issue with basin-wide significance. It complements current OBWB programs, and will use collaboration to achieve its goals.
Project Budget: \$19,260 **Recommended Funding:** \$10,000

Project Title: Installation of Flow Meter to Monitor Groundwater Use
Organization: Steele Springs Irrigation District
Project Goals: The aim of this project is to continually monitor water use of the springs so that over consumption or major leaks can be detected and dealt with quickly. It is our mandate to allow the maximum amount of water possible to flow to its natural destination, the Deep Creek.
Staff Notes: This small project will provide valuable data on the use of groundwater from an aquifer. We recommend that this grant be conditional on the District reporting their use through the BC Water Use Reporting Centre. This project can be used as a pilot and will conserve water in an agricultural community.
Project Budget: \$5,000 **Recommended Funding:** \$4,885

Project Title: Kalamalka Demonstration Garden
Organization: Okanagan College
Project Goals: To implement Phase 3 of Okanagan College's "Demonstration Garden" on the Vernon campus where a two acre site is being assembled to showcase best practices in water stewardship and conservation, small scale agriculture, and intensive horticulture. The project goal of this grant application is to construct several passive water harvesting techniques including: curb cuts and rain gardens, rain water collection system, and wicking beds – all of which are tools the public can implement in their own gardens. Interpretive signage will be designed to explain the water conservation of the various techniques.
Staff Notes: This project has demonstrated a collaborative approach to a real application of water conservation practices in a learning environment. We recommend that this grant be

Project Budget:	conditional on working with OBWB staff on promotional materials (e.g. signage). \$35,615	Recommended Funding:	\$19,415
Project Title:	Drought Awareness Signage		
Organization:	Regional District of the North Okanagan		
Project Goals:	To develop a graphic design tool to be used to communicate drought status. An image will be developed that will be used on signs, in print, and any electronic media to inform the community of the region's water supply status and current level of water use restrictions.		
Staff Notes:	This small project will have a large impact in the North Okanagan Region, and can be used as a pilot for the whole valley. It will allow direct, pertinent action in times of drought. We recommend that this grant be conditional on working with OBWB staff to ensure valley-wide branding.		
Project Budget:	\$5,000	Recommended Funding:	\$3,000

Regional District Central Okanagan

Available funds: \$177,300 Total Requested: \$392,820

Project Title:	Fascieux Creek Restoration and Riparian Habitat Conservation		
Organization:	Ecole KLO Middle School		
Project Goals:	An arm of Fascieux Creek, a spring fed fish bearing stream, crosses the grounds of Ecole KLO Middle School. By the 1980's the length of the creek on school grounds was enclosed in a concrete culvert and covered with concrete blocks. Since 2010, Western Painted Turtles, a BC protected species, have been nesting in the school's long-jump pit. The goal is to naturalize this section of the creek, improve water quality, restore wildlife habitat and engage and educate students and the community on this worthwhile conservation project.		
Staff Notes:	This project will bring together more than 7 partner organizations to restore an urban section of this important water source. The potential public engagement surrounding this project, and the ongoing education potential for the students is invaluable. This project is strongly recommended for full funding. We recommend that this grant be conditional on working with OBWB staff on promotional materials (e.g. signage).		
Project Budget:	\$220,650	Recommended Funding:	\$30,000
Project Title:	Reclaimed Water Upgrade		
Organization:	Regional District of the Central Okanagan		
Project Goals:	The goal of this project is to significantly reduce potable water usage at the Westside Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. The project expects to deliver a 75-80% reduction in potable water used at the Plant.		
Staff Notes:	This innovative project will have a measurable impact on water conservation, and will provide an example for other local utilities and water-intense industries to use less potable water. This project will benefit the three plant-using communities; West Kelowna, Peachland and Westbank First Nation.		
Project Budget:	\$35,240	Recommended Funding:	\$25,000
Project Title:	Improved water Management Using WEAP		
Organization:	District of Peachland		
Project Goals:	To assist the District of Peachland in managing its water supplies through the development of an operational and drought management plan, and the evaluation of climate change impacts using a sensitivity analysis.		
Staff Notes:	This project will complement existing OBWB programs and allow improved water management.		

This project began with a WCQI grant in the previous year and the District of Peachland has demonstrated a commitment to improving water management. Peachland is the first community to fully-integrate OBWB's climate scenarios into its long-term water planning, and its model development can be replicated elsewhere in the valley.

Project Budget: \$35,000 Recommended Funding: \$24,000

Project Title: **Water Smart Contractor Program**

Organization: **City of Kelowna**

Project Goals: The aim of this project is to develop a Water Smart Contractor Program to ensure that all landscapers and irrigation contractors working in the City of Kelowna Water Utility Service area utilize the City's landscape and irrigation standards. Landscape and irrigation contractors who follow the standards and fill out the irrigation permit form will be eligible for rebates on water efficient irrigation products. The overarching goal is to make sure that all new and upgraded irrigation systems are water efficient.

Staff Notes: This innovative and important program will help ensure that irrigation professionals in the largest urban area of the valley are educated in the best management practices developed by the City of Kelowna, specifically for our water-stressed region. The City's Landscape and Irrigation standards manual was partially funded through a WCQI grant, and this project will help turn those principles into action. We recommend that this grant be conditional on the City working with the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program to ensure mutual support of each other's objectives.

Project Budget: \$45,000 Recommended Funding: \$20,000

Project Title: **Mission Creek Dike Setback – Flood Protection and Habitat Enhancement**

Organization: **Mission Creek Restoration Initiative**

Project Goals: The aim of the project is to set a portion of the dike on Mission Creek back to re-connect the stream with the floodplain. This will enhance fish habitat, improve water quality, and increase flood protection. In 2012, the MCRI, with funds provided by the RDCO and the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, purchased a key property adjacent to Mission Creek (3850 Swamp Road). The MCRI is now proposing to proceed with the first phase of the dike setback project on this property; baseline data collection, detailed design and permitting.

Staff Notes: This innovative and instructive project will see the restoration of key water-filtering wetland along the biggest tributary to Okanagan Lake. It can be used as a pilot project for other restoration works in the valley. The MCRI has an excellent track record with granted projects.

Project Budget: \$95,000 Recommended Funding: \$20,000

Project Title: **Biodiversity Conservation Strategy: Case Study and Outreach**

Organization: **Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program**

Description: The goals for this particular project are: complete the final draft of the biodiversity strategy document for Central Okanagan (CO), complete a case-study for the CO using decision support tools and maps available from the BCS previous stages, complete connectivity guidance document for land managers, develop and deliver to stakeholders an outreach program about the BCS products and benefits, as well as the importance of maintaining the connectivity of ecosystems. This program will be delivered by educational partners in the CO.

Staff Notes: This project will help to enhance land-use managers' understanding of source water protection, through the conservation of land in the watershed. The OCCP is a partnership of 36 organizations, and has an excellent record of collaboration and success with previously granted projects.

Project Budget: \$93,450 Recommended Funding: \$20,000

Project Title: **Wetland Inventory/Mapping-Collaboration and Prioritization**

Organization: **Regional District of Central Okanagan**

Project Goals: Wetlands are rare in the Okanagan and many have been lost due to land use practices.

Wetlands function as a haven for wildlife and rare species but also provide ecological services such as filtering runoff/pollutants; recharging groundwater; storing flood/stormwaters; and providing water retention during drought. The aim of this work is to provide an information base for future planning to assist in the protection of priority wetland ecosystems.

Staff Notes: This project will help provide protection for wetlands which provide key water filtering, fishery, habitat and many other services to our waters. This project would encompass the RDCO, and would provide a pilot for other jurisdictions, having a valley-wide effect.

Project Budget: \$30,000 **Recommended Funding:** \$15,000

Project Title: **Promoting Xeriscapes to Reduce Water Consumption**

Organization: **Okanagan Xeriscape Association**

Project Goals: The aim of this project is to educate Okanagan valley residents about Xeriscape and to motivate them to use less water in their landscapes. Given that 24% of the valley water is used on residential landscapes, promoting xeriscapes that use 30-100% less water than traditional landscapes will yield significant water savings over time.

Staff Notes: This ongoing project builds on previous work from the OXA which has provided effective outreach for the message of water conservation in the Okanagan. This organization complements OBWB activities such as OKWaterWise, and they have been an effective partner in several water conservation projects. We recommend that this grant be conditional on OXA working with the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program to ensure mutual support of each other's objectives.

Project Budget: \$45,425 **Recommended Funding:** \$13,300

Project Title: **Invasive Mussel Prevention Program**

Organization: **Okanagan & Similkameen Invasive Species Society**

Project Goals: The aim of this project is to enhance water quality in the Okanagan Basin by preventing the spread of invasive mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) through an outreach campaign targeting recreational boaters and youth. The campaign will encourage reporting and behaviour change and will build on the results of a similar program carried out in summer 2012.

Staff Notes: This project will address a critical water issue for the entire Okanagan Basin. It complements current OBWB programs, and will use collaboration to achieve its goals.

Project Budget: \$19,260 **Recommended Funding:** \$10,000

Regional District Okanagan Similkameen

Available funds: \$65,400 Total Requested: \$122,588

Project Title: **Innovative Landscaping for Water Conservation: Using Semi-arid Plant Communities and Micro Water Reservoirs for the Okanagan Basin**

Organization: **Friends of the Summerland Ornamental Gardens**

Project Goals: The three aims of this project are: 1. To demonstrate an ecological model for water conservation landscaping using innovative passive on-ground and in-ground rainwater retention and storage technologies; 2. To enhance habitat, increase biodiversity and improve ecological health by installing plant communities of native species; and 3. To engage and educate on water conservation landscaping and irrigation efficiencies using "Slow it, spread it, sink it" principles and "Make Water Work" guidelines.

Staff Notes: This project builds on an extremely successful and collaborative public outreach campaign for water conservation at one of the Okanagan's premier non-profit attractions. We recommend this grant be conditional on SOG working with the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program to

ensure mutual support of each other's objectives.

Project Budget: \$120,925 Recommended Funding: \$22,500

Project Title: **Shuttleworth Creek Diversion Removal and Well Implementation**

Organization: **Okanagan Nation Alliance**

Project Goals: The Allendale water users' Community (WUC) uses a significant proportion of Shuttleworth Creek's monthly discharge and has an unscreened intake. The project involves moving this WUC from surface water supply to groundwater supply in order to provide an efficient and reliable source of water for the WUC and restore the creek's natural flow allowing fish migration and spawning, creek dynamics to function effectively, a reduction of fish entrainment within the irrigation system and promote water conservation and habitat improvement.

Staff Notes: This project will enhance stream health, water quantity and quality in a major tributary to the Okanagan River system. This project is a good pilot for other sub-basin systems.

Project Budget: \$825,894 Recommended Funding: \$15,400

Project Title: **Water Ambassador Program**

Organization: **Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen**

Project Goals: The main goal of the 2013 Water Ambassador Program is to continue the momentum created to decrease overall water consumption & peak day water usage within the communities of West Bench, Sage Mesa and Naramata and to expand into new communities such as Faulder & Twin Lakes. Additional goals include augmenting workshops with partners such as the Friends of Summerland Gardens and the Naramata Community Association and address emerging conservation and quality issues with water sources. The program has been very successful for the last several years and the RDOS would like to keep the momentum going and broaden the program's objectives.

Staff Notes: This multi-year project has enhanced public awareness of water conservation issues in the South Okanagan. The program strongly complements and extends the messaging of several OBWB programs including Make Water Work and OkWaterWise. We recommend that this grant be conditional on RDOS working with the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program to ensure mutual support of each other's objectives.

Project Budget: \$26,500 Recommended Funding: \$12,500

Project Title: Invasive Mussel Prevention Program

Organization: Okanagan & Similkameen Invasive Species Society

Project Goals: The aim of this project is to enhance water quality in the Okanagan basin by preventing the spread of invasive mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) through an outreach campaign targeting recreational boaters and youth. The campaign will encourage reporting and behaviour change and will build on the results of a similar program carried out in summer 2012.

Staff Notes: This project will address a critical water issue for the entire Okanagan Basin. It complements current OBWB programs, and will use collaboration to achieve its goals.

Project Budget: \$21,260 Recommended Funding: \$10,000

Project Title: **Lakeside Walking/Cycling Trail – Lower Town to Trout Creek**

Organization: **Rotary Club of Summerland**

Project Goals: To create the first link in a world class trail system which will attract thousands of visitors to the Valley. This 1 km link will provide safe passage for hikers/cyclists between Summerland and Trout Creek. It will also provide a parallel bioswale complete with suitable plants to protect adjacent lakeshore from detrimental/toxic runoff from Highway 97. Ultimately, the pathway system will allow hikers and cyclists to move safely from Kelowna to Osoyoos, and also



circumscribe Okanagan Lake.

Staff Notes: This worthwhile project focusses on collaborative efforts to enhance water protection, and raise awareness of water related issues in the most visible locations in the valley; mainstem lake foreshores. Due to funding limitations, a small grant is recommended to demonstrate support for this project. We recommend that this grant be conditional on the Rotary club working with the OBWB's Okanagan WaterWise program to ensure mutual support of each other's objectives.

Project Budget: \$52,000

Recommended Funding: \$5,000