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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WIN \$5000 TO WATERWISE YOUR YARD – MAKE WATER WORK CONTEST ENDS FRIDAY

Kelowna, B.C. – Residents of the Okanagan have until midnight, Friday, August 23rd to enter the MAKE WATER WORK contest for a chance to win \$5000 in WaterWise yard improvements.

The contest is a valley-wide effort by the Okanagan Basin Water Board, its Okanagan WaterWise program, and local government and water utility partners throughout the valley to encourage outdoor water conservation in the summer, when most water is used. By visiting www.MakeWaterWork.ca, residents can find tips to make water work more effectively in their yards, take the pledge to “Make Water Work” and be entered to win. The prize this year has been donated by KelownaGardens.com, based in Lake Country and certified by the Irrigation Industry Association of BC, helping ensure the greatest water savings possible.

“We’re very happy with the numbers coming in so far,” noted Corinne Jackson, Communications Director with the OBWB and responsible for the OkWaterWise program. “We’ve had more than 600 entries this year, so far, compared to a total of 237 last year.”

Instead of shaming residents to use less, the unique campaign encourages people to make their water work more effectively for them. The campaign includes tips like: “Don’t mow. Let it grow. Water stays longer when grass is longer.” “Put water where it’s needed. Water plants, not pavement.” and “Put water on the nightshift. Water between dusk and dawn.”

The idea for the Make Water Work campaign, added Jackson, was in recognition by the OBWB and its partners that more needs to be done to address outdoor water use. The Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study – the most advanced water resource assessment ever conducted in Canada and done by the OBWB in partnership with several provincial and federal ministries, Okanagan Nation Alliance, universities and others – resulted in a number of interesting findings around water use in our region. For example, on average, Okanagan residents use 675 litres of water per person, per day. If we look at water use in the summer, that average is 1,000 litres. At the same time, the Okanagan is known to have less freshwater available per person than anywhere in Canada. “Some residents use more than the 675, others use less,” added Jackson, noting this is an average for the year across the Okanagan.

Another interesting finding was that 24% of all water in the Okanagan – the second largest use of water – was by residents watering outdoors, mostly lawns. The highest user was agriculture, at 55%, but this is considered working water – helping feed our communities and economy, and much has been done by the agricultural community to save water.



At the same time, BC Stats estimates the Central Okanagan's population will increase about 45 per cent by 2036 to more than 260,000 people. The North and South Okanagan are expected to have similar increases. With the change in population and the impact climate change could have on our water supply, it makes sense to make changes now and start to conserve.

"When we consider that 24% of all our water – treated to drinking quality standards – is being poured on our lawns, sometimes pavement, and during the hottest part of the day when it just evaporates, it becomes clear that it wouldn't take much for us to start saving water," added Jackson.

"The Make Water Work campaign invites residents to take simple steps to make their water go further," she said. "We're not saying rip out your lawns, just make water work more effectively. If you want to do more, then certainly consider over-seeding your lawn with drought-tolerant seed, or xeriscaping with low-water plantings."

Find tips to get the most from your water at www.MakeWaterWork.ca. Take the pledge to MAKE WATER WORK and enter to win \$5000 in WaterWise yard upgrades.

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