

For Immediate Release

April 8, 2009
Kelowna, BC

MEDIA RELEASE:

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD AWARDS \$300,000 IN GRANTS

The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) has awarded Water Conservation and Quality Improvement grants to 22 municipalities and community groups throughout the Okanagan Valley. The OBWB received 32 applications this year totaling approximately \$650,000, more than double the \$300,000 available for the program.

The grant recipients this year will be conducting a variety of water quality and conservation projects. Funding for source protection planning initiatives, considered a high priority by the OBWB, was awarded to the District of Lake Country and Peachland. Black Mountain Irrigation District received project funding for cattle exclusion fencing and off channel watering; a direct outcome of their Source Protection Plan completed in 2008. Other water quality highlights include research into cyanobacterial blooms on Skaha Lake by the Kaleden Irrigation District and further restoration to Joe Rich Creek by the Central Okanagan Regional District.

Genevieve Dunbar, Grants Administrator for the OBWB, is excited to see these projects move forward, "Through the funding of these projects, the Okanagan Basin Water Board is emphasizing its priorities of source protection, long term water planning, quality improvements and innovative conservation measures."

In addition, the OBWB has continued to fund projects that contribute data to a basin wide network, such as completion of Foreshore Inventory Mapping for the North Okanagan on Kalamalka and Wood lakes; and Foreshore Inventory and Mapping of the southern portion of Okanagan Lake, which will build on data collected in previous years to complete the dataset for the entire shoreline.

Several innovative water conservation initiatives will also be implemented in 2009 through the grant program, including basin wide Xeriscape education and resource information, and outdoor water conservation in parks for the Westbank Irrigation District through metering and irrigation timer installations. The City of Penticton will be completing water audits for the commercial and industrial sector; the first project of its kind in the Okanagan Valley and one that can likely be repeated in other municipalities in future years.

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If you are interested in learning more about the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program, please contact Genevieve Dunbar for more information at genevieve.dunbar@obwb.ca or (250) 469-6270.

A complete list of WCQI Grant recipients is attached to this email. If you are interested in learning more about a particular project, recipient contact information is provided in the document.

For more information on the Okanagan Basin Water Board, please visit www.obwb.ca.

Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants

April 8, 2009

The intent of the WCQI grant program is to assist local governments in addressing issues that enhance valley-wide sustainable use of water. Through this program, the Water Board seeks to foster innovative and collaborative projects that might otherwise lack funds to be implemented in a timely manner. Projects were selected for recommendation based on a range of factors – including how well the project meets the goals of the program, the amount of funding available, and whether the project supports other regional initiatives, such as the Sustainable Water Strategy and the Okanagan Basin Water Supply and Demand Study, and basin wide priorities of the Board (e.g., source protection). The total of all eligible proposals for 2009 was more than \$650,000.

North Okanagan Regional District

Allocation: \$58,500

Total of proposals submitted: \$202,240

- **Water Utility Monitoring System**
Eagle Rock Waterworks District
- **Water Utility Monitoring System**
Grandview Waterworks District
- **Water Utility Monitoring System**
Larkin Waterworks District
- **Water Utility Monitoring System**
Otter Lake Waterworks District

These four waterworks districts have applied for the same project, but some systems asked for additional funding to replace meters and other infrastructure (hence the funding request differences). The goal of the applicants is to have the four districts using the same technology with the same resources so they can be more efficient together. In reviewing the applications, OBWB staff asked which application components were most important; the recommended grant level will allow the purchase of radio read meter reading technology so that all meters could be read by one device with the same computer and software package.

Funding: \$12,000 (shared amongst all four districts)

Staff note:

- These four waterworks districts will purchase and install more efficient and consistent meter reading technology that will enable district staff to read meters with greater ease.
- New meter reading equipment will consist of a radio read technology, replacing the current manual and electrical read systems currently in place.
- Leak detection will become more efficient and missed meter reading (due to weather or other limitations) will be eliminated.
- This project will support Streamlined Water Use Reporting for the Okanagan.

For more information, contact: Nora Ternier, Secretary, Waterworks Districts (250) 546-8140

- **Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping (SHIM)**
District of Coldstream
Funding: \$21,500

Staff note:

- The District of Coldstream will utilize the SHIM methodology to accurately map and inventory Craster, Brewer and Coldstream Creeks within the municipal boundaries of the District.
- Coldstream Creek has significantly impaired water quality, and is a major tributary to Kalamalka Lake.

- Information and data gathered will be use in future planning efforts (residential, industrial and agricultural).
- Information will also be useful to Greater Vernon Water as part of the Kalamalka Lake Watershed Assessment that is being undertaken in 2009.
- This project will contribute data to previous efforts and enhance SHIM information for the Okanagan Basin.
- This is the District of Coldstream's first application to the WQCI program.

For more information, contact: Craig Broderick, Planner (250) 550-1519

- **Kalamalka and Wood Lake Foreshore Inventory Mapping**
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP)
Funding: \$25,000

Staff note:

- The OCCP plans to complete Foreshore Inventory Mapping for 42 km shoreline of Kalamalka Lake and 17 km shoreline of Wood Lake which will involve GPS data gathering on all shoreline attributes and detailed video footage (synchronized to GPS).
- The maps, video footage, reports and other data generated from this project can assist 3 local governments with Riparian Area Regulation assessments and other development permitting matters and can contribute information to Official Community Plans.
- This project enhances basin-wide foreshore information and increases the value of information gathered on other foreshore areas.
- This project includes large scale collaboration by multiple local and provincial government, non-profit groups and UBC-Okanagan

For more information, contact: Magnus Bein, OCCP Coordinator (250) 503-3074 or Buffy Baumbrough at bbaumbrough@vernon.ca

Central Okanagan Regional District

Allocation: \$175,500 Total of proposals submitted: \$301,000
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- **Bringing Xeriscape Knowledge and Action to the Okanagan**
Okanagan Xeriscape Association (OXA)
Funding: \$30,000

Staff note:

- The Okanagan Xeriscape Association proposes to complete three components to enhancing Xeriscape and low water landscape options in the Okanagan: providing thorough and central source of Xeriscape information, working with local nurseries to create viable market for xeric plants, and promote benefits of xeric landscaping through a public demonstration garden.
- The Okanagan Xeriscape Association aims to increase the amount of information about xeric landscaping and assist in changing attitudes that tend to favour high water use plants.
- This project has substantial in-kind support from the City of Kelowna; including an agreement to provide land (at the new H2O Adventure and Fitness Centre) and other resources for a xeriscape demonstration garden.

For more information, contact: Gwen Steele at (250) 762-6018

- **Joe Rich Creek Restoration – Phase II**
Regional District Central Okanagan
Funding: \$19,250

Staff note:

- The Regional District Central Okanagan will build on the previously completed stream restoration to further work in Joe Rich Creek along the Weddell and Frederick properties.
- Some works will be in new locations along the channel, while some will be improvement of works and re-stabilization of banks in previously restored locations.
- The previous phase of this project was extremely successful and a model collaborative project
- Phase II proposes to incorporate an outreach and education component to the program in addition to continuing monitoring efforts.

For more information, contact: Keri McMahon, Environmental Planner at (250)469-6213

- **Assessment of Okanagan and Kalamalka Lake Intakes**

District of Lake Country

Funding: \$20,000

Staff note:

- The District of Lake Country will complete Modules 1, 2, 7 and 8 of the Source to Tap Assessment for both Okanagan and Kalamalka Lake intakes operated by the District, and will incorporate additional data collection to strengthen the contaminant source survey (Module 2) and the risk characterization (Module 7) components of the Assessment.
- Additional data collection includes water quality sampling and water current modeling for Kalamalka Lake, which has not been collected in any other source assessment to date.
- This study will complement and extend the Lake Intake study funded by the WQCI last year.
- The Interior Health Authority requires Source to Tap Assessments on drinking water sources and the OBWB has identified source water protection as a priority in the Okanagan.

For more information, contact: Sean Lefebvre, Operations Manager at (250) 766-6677

- **Mission Creek Channel Width Assessment for the Mission Creek Restoration Project**

Mission Creek Working Group (City of Kelowna)

Funding: \$10,000

Staff note:

- The Mission Creek Working Group, a partnership among MoE, City of Kelowna, ONA, Westbank First Nation, RDCO, Friends of Mission Creek, DFO and Central Okanagan Land Trust, will be modeling the dyke set back required to re-establish channel meanders as part of the Mission Creek Restoration Project.
- This model aims to maximize river meanders while minimizing the amount of private land purchase required, making the Mission Creek Restoration successful.
- Once this model is complete, land purchase negotiations and all engineering work related to creating new dykes at a specified location will need to be completed.
- This is one component of a very large, multi year restoration project that will see water quality benefits to Mission Creek upon completion.

For more information, contact: Todd Cashin, City of Kelowna at (250) 469-8470

- **Community Outreach and Communication Program for the Mission Creek Restoration Project**

Mission Creek Working Group (City of Kelowna)

Funding: \$10,000

Staff note:

- This project will support an Outreach Coordinator to develop an outreach/communication plan to inform the general public and residents along Mission Creek of the Mission Creek Restoration Project.
- The Mission Creek Working Group will garner support for the Mission Creek Restoration Project through this outreach work and hopes to facilitate the purchase of property necessary for the project.

- This is one component of a very large, multi year restoration project that will see water quality benefits to Mission Creek upon completion.

For more information, contact: Todd Cashin, City of Kelowna at (250) 469-8470

- **Peachland and Trepanier Creek Watershed Protection Plan**

District of Peachland

Funding: \$22,500

Staff note:

- The District of Peachland will complete Source to Tap Assessments and Protection Plans of both the Peachland (Deep Creek) and Trepanier Creek watersheds.
- The OBWB has identified source protection planning initiatives as a high priority in the Okanagan.
- The Interior Health Authority requires Source to Tap Assessments on drinking water sources as a condition of the permit to operate; Peachland and Trepanier Creek Watersheds are both drinking water sources.

For more information, contact: Doug Allin, Director of Operations at (250) 767-2108

- **Watershed Assessment & Protection Plan – Vernon & Oyama Creeks**

District of Lake Country

Funding: \$22,500

Staff note:

- The District of Lake Country will complete Source to Tap Assessments and Protection Plans of both the Vernon and Oyama Creek watersheds.
- Modules 1, 2, 7 and 8 of the Source to Tap Assessment will be completed with a planned GIS-based spatial analysis to accompany the Assessment.
- The Interior Health Authority requires Source to Tap Assessments on drinking water sources and the OBWB has identified source water protection as a priority in the Okanagan.

For more information, contact: Sean Lefebvre, Operations Manager at (250) 766-6677

- **Watershed Health Tracking System for the District of Lake Country**

Oceola Fish and Game Club

Funding: \$10,000

Staff note:

- The Oceola Fish and Game Club will develop a Watershed Health Tracking system to quantify and rank stream and riparian health within the watersheds of the District of Lake Country. Performance indicators will be developed so that individual streams can be easily categorized.
- Factors affecting the health of these areas include percentage of area as forested cover, agricultural land or impervious surfaces and can develop targets based on known capacity for stream baseflows and riparian potential.
- The information in a Watershed Health Tracking System could be utilized by local government staff in planning and development matters and potentially contribute to water quality improvements.

For more information, contact: Lorne Davies at (250) 860-7401

- **Westbank Parks Irrigation Review and Metering Study**

Westbank Irrigation District (WID)

Funding: \$20,000

Staff note:

- This project will review irrigation design for 24 municipal parks in WID to ensure efficiency, after which water meters, backflow preventers and timers will be installed for each park.

- Outdoor irrigation is the largest domestic water use and is commonly indicated as a sector that can be more efficient; WID believes this project will increase water use efficiency in public parks.

For more information, contact: Brian Jamieson, General Manager at (250) 768-5154

- **Mission Creek Cattle Exclusion Fencing and Off Stream Watering**

Black Mountain Irrigation District (BMID)

Funding: \$11,250

Staff note:

- In order to further source protection initiatives in the Mission Creek watershed, Black Mountain Irrigation District will install fencing and off channel watering sites for cattle in high priority areas.
- The need to complete these works was identified in the Source to Tap Assessment, undertaken by BMID in 2008.
- The recommended funding level will support studies to identify locations for fencing and off-channel watering sites, and seed funds for purchasing fencing materials.
- This project will be a collaborative effort between BMID, the Ministry of Forests and Range and the range tenure holders in the area.

For more information, contact: Bob Hrasko, Administrator at (250) 765-5169

Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen

Allocation: \$66,000

Total of proposals submitted: \$147,812

- **South Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory Mapping**

Regional District Okanagan Similkameen

Funding: \$24,000

Staff note:

- The Regional District Okanagan Similkameen will complete Foreshore Inventory Mapping on the entirety of Okanagan Lake by mapping the southern portions of the lake, as the central and northern portions have already been completed in previous years.
- Foreshore Inventory Mapping can protect and improve water quality by cataloguing of habitat features and sources of impairment and identifying those that need protection or restoration.
- This is a joint application between RDOS and RDCO, demonstrating the significant multi-jurisdictional commitment to see these efforts completed on a basin wide scale.
- This mapping effort will add value to the Foreshore Inventories collected in other parts of the basin.

For more information, contact: Jillian Tamblyn, Environmental Coordinator at (250) 490-4213

- **Assessing Impact of Cyanobacterial Blooms on Skaha Lake**

Kaleden Irrigation District

Funding: \$5,000

Staff note:

- Due to concern about cyanobacterial levels in Skaha Lake through winter 2008/09, this project will monitor cyanobacteria at various depths to assess exposure and rates of incidence at the Kaleden Irrigation District intake.
- Cyanobacteria produce toxins, though not enough to cause an acute episode in Skaha Lake there is a risk of chronic, low dose exposure which can have human health effects.

- Once the characteristics of the blooms are understood, water quality protection plans can be developed for Skaha Lake and outcomes of this study will satisfy components of Modules 1 & 2 of the Source to Tap Assessment.
- Better knowledge of cyanobacterial incidence at lake intakes will provide useful information for all water utilities with lake intakes.

For more information, contact: Kevin Huey, Manager at (250) 497-5407

- **Biomonitoring of Near Shore Nutrient Enrichment Using Benthic Algae**

Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society

Funding: \$9,250

Staff note:

- This project will assess species composition and abundance of algae species of near shore areas over a variety of nutrient and habitat conditions to establish an algal bioassessment protocol for Okanagan Lakes.
- Once the protocol is established, simple testing for algae species can provide much information on the relative 'health' of near shore areas of lakes – which are most prone to land use impacts, and also considered most important to recreation, tourism and economic development.
- Approximately 40 sample locations will be chosen throughout the Okanagan, on the mainstem lakes (Osoyoos, Skaha, Okanagan, Kalamalka and Wood).

For more information, contact: Mark McKenney, President at (250) 495-4592

- **Okanagan River and Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Assurance during Phase I**

Okanagan Region Wildlife Heritage Fund Society (ORWHFS)

Funding: \$12,750

Staff note:

- The Okanagan River Restoration Initiative (ORRI) will reconstruct a section of Okanagan River channel in order to re-meander the river for fish, habitat and other environmental benefits.
- Phase I of the project will construct 2 meanders and reconnect 2 oxbows to the Okanagan River, in addition to increasing the river length by 150 meters and re-naturalizing 0.5 km of this watercourse.
- The ORWHFS will be monitoring water quality and sediment impacts through the course of construction to ensure that water quality does not degrade and sediment input objectives are met throughout the length of the project
- The ORRI Project is in collaboration with many partners from all sectors.

For more information, contact: Camille Rivard-Sirois at (250) 490-9779 ext: 303

- **District of Summerland SHIM Project for Prairie Creek**

District of Summerland

Funding: \$5,500

Staff note:

- The District of Summerland will map 6.5 km of high priority sections of Prairie Creek, in order to better assist planning staff with guidance on environmental management decisions and be incorporated into the Official Community Plan, Development Permit Areas, and Zoning and Subdivision Bylaws.
- This completes SHIM efforts for watercourses in Summerland. Projects that contribute data to large regional projects are given high priority for this grant program. SHIM has been completed extensively throughout the Okanagan Basin.

For more information, contact: Gordon Morley, Development Services at (250) 494-1373

- **Commercial Water Audits Pilot Program**

City of Penticton

Funding: \$9,500

Staff note:

- The City of Penticton aims to reduce water consumption by 5% over the course of a program for Industrial/Commercial/Institutional (ICI) users that will target facility owners or the employees and customers of these facilities.
- By completing water audits that analyze where water efficiencies and retrofits can be made for facility owners for a selected number and variety of ICI establishments and targeting customers and end users to conserve water through social based marketing on a different set of ICI establishments, comparisons can be made about which ICI water conservation programs are more effective and cost efficient for municipalities and water suppliers to implement in their communities.
- This is an innovative conservation project and the first to address the ICI sector in the Okanagan; the OBWB supports innovative projects that can be a model for other organizations.
- The City of Penticton's water conservation program has been a model for successful programs throughout the basin.

For more information, contact: Carolyn Stewart, Water Conservation Coordinator at (250) 490-2562