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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FUNDING FLOWS FROM OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

Kelowna, B.C. – For the fifth consecutive year, the Okanagan Basin Water Board was flooded with applications to its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants Program.

“The interest in this program is phenomenal. It just grows each year,” remarked a pleased Genevieve Dunbar, Grants Administrator for the OBWB. “There’s a real thirst for projects that address water protection today and into the future.”

With \$300,000 available, there were 37 submissions with requests totaling almost \$754,000. In the end, the Okanagan Basin Water Board awarded funds to 18 applicants.

Projects include: water source assessment and protection plans in Armstrong, Kelowna, and Okanagan Falls; a program that will encourage low-water landscaping in the Okanagan; publication of a large-lot xeriscape manual; aquifer-vulnerability mapping by Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen; a grey water recycling study by City of Kelowna; an irrigation strategy for Kelowna parks; watershed improvements in Joe Rich; bacterial source tracking in Kalamaka Lake; and an outreach and education program to support the valley-wide Goose Management effort.

“It’s so gratifying to be able to support fantastic – and important – projects in this valley that may otherwise have sat idle or taken longer to complete, “ added Dunbar, pointing to a project by the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program as an example.

The OCCP is a coalition of environmental organizations and local governments. Past funding from the OBWB allowed partners to videotape the shoreline along Okanagan Lake and gather data as part of its Foreshore Inventory Mapping Project. New funding will allow the group to compile the data and video, and develop a listing of valuable and vulnerable habitat areas along the lakeshore. Local governments will be able to use this information to direct foreshore development towards less sensitive areas, noted Dunbar.

“Since the grant program was introduced in 2005, we have seen improvements to water conservation in the Okanagan. There has also been an increase in water science, which allows for better decisions to be made. And, the grants have increased the number of best practices in place,” a proud Dunbar concluded. “I can’t wait to see the results from this year’s grant awards.”

Funding for the WCQI grants is split between the three Okanagan regional districts, based on their contributions to the program.

A complete list of grant recipients for 2010 is attached, along with their contact information.

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

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