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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OKANAGAN RESIDENTS TAKE “MAKE WATER WORK” PLEDGE – WIN \$1000 TO WATERWISE THEIR YARD

Kelowna, B.C. – The results are in and four lucky Okanagan residents will each receive up to \$1,000 in WaterWise yard improvements! The winners were part of the MAKE WATER WORK Pledge Contest put on by Okanagan WaterWise.

“We’re thrilled with the results,” said a pleased Corinne Jackson, the Okanagan Basin Water Board’s Communications Director and manager of its outreach initiative Okanagan WaterWise. “The purpose of the contest was to let people know more about Okanagan water – how much water we use, how much we really have, and give simple tips to make water work more efficiently. *(Please see attached “Backgrounder” for more.)*”

“The fact is we have less freshwater available to us here in the Okanagan than anywhere in Canada, yet we use two times more than the average Canadian – 675 litres per person, per day compared to 329! While 7% of our water is used by residents indoors, a whopping 24% is used outdoors – mostly on lawns and gardens in the summer,” added Jackson. “People are getting the message and now we’re going to help four lucky winners do even more and WaterWise their yard!”

The winners are Shawn Landriault of Summerland, Penticton’s Pat Maxwell, Norman Gerow from Oliver and Sandy Gregson of Osoyoos. All four will receive an outdoor water assessment – of either their in-ground irrigation or of their landscape, worth up to \$500. In addition, they will each receive \$500 in product and service to WaterWise their yard – either fixes to their irrigation or low-water landscaping, for a total prize worth up to \$1,000 each.

“That’s fabulous,” said Maxwell on receiving the news. “We’re always looking to do things to make our yard WaterWise. We tried our best to xeriscape the front but I can’t really afford to do much so I’m obviously delighted!”

“Woo hoo! You gotta love that,” responded a happy Gerow. “I think I have a leak in my underground sprinkler system - you can see it on my water bill!”

To ensure the best water-saving results possible, Okanagan WaterWise teamed up with WaterKind Consulting to do the irrigation audits and Emerald Irrigation and Landscape Construction for the installation – both are Irrigation Industry Association of BC certified.

“This was very important to us,” noted Jackson. “An IAABC certified installer helps ensure irrigation work is done right – helping save money for the customer while maximizing water efficiency.”

Jackson said they also teamed up with Waterwise Landscape Design for the landscape audits – a company that specializes in low-water landscapes – perfect for the dry Okanagan, as well as Andrew Sheret Ltd. – known for its commitment to promoting water-efficiency. Grasslands Nursery and Sagebrush Nursery also came on board with the contest, both of which carry a wide-variety of native and drought-tolerant plants and xeriscape materials.

The Make Water Work Pledge contest was part of the Tap-by-Tap campaign in the South Okanagan, in which residents were invited to pick up a free water conservation kit. The campaign was a partnership between City Green Solutions, FortisBC, Environment Canada and Okanagan WaterWise. Jackson said she looks forward to continuing to work with City Green to bring a similar initiative to the Central and North Okanagan as well.

To learn more on how to MAKE WATER WORK visit: www.makewaterwork.ca. For more on Okanagan WaterWise, visit: www.okwaterwise.ca.

All four of the winners took a pledge to Make Water Work! To learn more and for simple tips to Make Water Work, please see the "Backgrounder" attached below.

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BACKGROUND – “MAKE WATER WORK” PLEDGE

The following is a list of simple tips to MAKE WATER WORK, and was the basis of the pledge contest.

Take the MAKE WATER WORK pledge...

1. Water should be put to work during the coolest part of the day to prevent evaporation. A good rule of thumb is 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Check with your local water utility for watering restrictions. **I pledge to only water my lawn between dusk and dawn.**
2. Most lawns need just 2.5 cm (one inch) of water per week – about the depth of a tuna can. Watering deeply and less often promotes deep, healthy root growth. If you're watering deeply but not seeing results the problem may be inadequate topsoil. Try top dressing with half an inch of compost, then over-seeding for a thick vigorous lawn. **I pledge to only water my lawn one inch a week.**
3. Water works more efficiently when grass is left 5 to 8 cm (2-3 inches) tall. This slows evaporation from the soil. **I pledge to leave my grass 2-3 inches tall.**
4. Water works best when grass clippings are left as mulch on your lawn. They help feed the lawn and retain moisture, requiring less water and reducing evaporation. **I pledge to leave grass clippings as mulch.**
5. Water works best with organic products like compost which minimize over-fertilizing and help prevent stormwater pollution. Aerating the lawn in early spring or fall also improves water penetration. **I pledge to aerate my lawn and top dress with compost.**
6. Water works most effectively when paired with plants suitable to our dry climate: drought-tolerant turf, and native and low-water variety plants. **I pledge to change out some of my lawn with drought-tolerant turf and/or native and low-water variety plants.**