

Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum Returns

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Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, Oct. 7-9, at the Sonora Centre in Osoyoos.

This is the third such forum, with previous events held in 2007 and 2011.

OBWB Executive Director Anna Warwick Sears says – “This is a really important gathering,” relating to the entire Okanagan watershed from Armstrong to the

Columbia River, since the waters are all connected. “We rarely have a chance to talk with our counterparts in the U.S. and this is an opportunity to meet with senior decision makers, and also hear from First Nations and grassroots – residents, farmers and business people – from both sides of the border.

“It’s about building relationships, and having a shared understanding of problems so when a crisis hits you can work through them effectively,” said Sears. “With climate change and population growth, the management of water is going to be critical. We will sink or swim based on the strength of our relationships.”

Osoyoos Mayor Sue McKortoff agrees, pointing to the lake that defines her community and straddles the Canada-U.S. border. “We must look after our lake. It is the lifeblood of our community and we have to be vigilant in protecting it.”

Reviewing the topics at the forum, including toxic blue-green algae blooms which have been an issue in Osoyoos Lake in the past, McKortoff noted that she will be attending to hear from those who are leading research on these topics

will certainly help as a decision maker, both at her council table and as an OBWB Board Director.



“The drought this year has had everyone sit up and take notice about not using water indiscriminately,” she said. Also, the recent presentation on invasive zebra and quagga

mussels at the OBWB's Annual Meeting was a wake-up call, added McKortoff. "We all have to start looking at water differently."

"We have all the hot-button issues facing our shared waters pulled together into one event," noted Sears, "Drought, climate change, effects of forest fires on water, blue-green algae, invasive mussels and milfoil, water for fish, and more. They are science-related issues but the event and the information is definitely geared to a public audience," she added. Indeed, Moy also hopes for strong participation by residents on both sides of the border. A registration discount is being offered as incentive to residents of Oliver, Osoyoos and Oroville.