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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **OKANAGAN WATER BOARD ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR PROJECTS TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT VALLEY WATER**

**Kelowna, B.C.** – The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) has approved \$300,000 in funding to 18 projects that will help conserve and improve the quality of water in the valley. Directors approved the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) Grants at their regular board meeting on Tuesday, April 5. In all, there were 27 applications with a total ask of \$495,523.

“This year we had more applications with collaborative partnerships than ever before. Multiple organizations, across jurisdictions, partnered and came to the table with funding and in-kind contributions to match the grants they were seeking.” noted James Littlely, OBWB’s Operations and Grants Manager, providing highlights from each region.

In the North Okanagan, the Deep Creek Improvement District received funding to do Sensitive Habitat Inventory and Mapping (SHIM). Deep Creek passes through Armstrong, Spallumcheen and Okanagan Indian Band (OIB) before flowing into the north arm of Okanagan Lake. The area is known to have been impacted by agriculture, urban and rural land development. The mapping will be conducted in partnership with the OIB and is intended to help guide habitat restoration decisions.

According to Littlely, “This will be a great addition to several other SHIM projects that have been supported by the OBWB and conducted throughout the Okanagan, helping us better understand what is happening in these areas and the work needed to protect and restore them.”

In the Central Okanagan, funded projects include support to the Ocoela Fish and Game Club – part of the BC Wildlife Federation, to develop a mobile app which will allow users to document and report damage in our watersheds. This information will allow for follow-up enforcement, restoration and protection efforts and is being developed in partnership with UBC Okanagan. Also funded, a project that will take some of the scientific water research by OBWB and others, and turn it into a hands-on public exhibit, connecting people with the water of the valley and the need to take care of it. “The Social Life of Water in the Okanagan Valley: Past, Present and Future” is a project of UBCO’s Centre for Culture and Technology, Kelowna Museum Society, Okanagan Nation Alliance and others.

“So often we concentrate on data and science. We want to share research results in an engaging way that helps people – of all ages - understand the complex relationship between people and water in the valley – how one affects the other and vice versa,” Littlely explained. “This project, informed by experts, will be presented in a friendly way that goes far beyond reports and graphs.”

A comprehensive review of last summer’s drought identified the need for up-to-date drought plans in our valley. As such, this was one of the strategic priorities for grant funding this year. Among the projects funded this year in the South Okanagan are three drought plans – by the City of Penticton, the Town of Oliver and the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen. “This combination of new drought plans in the South Okanagan will fill a significant gap in our collective ability to manage drought in the valley. As each utility and area manages local drought, there will be more water left in reservoirs for human use, and

more water flowing in the streams for fish and other species. This is where individual projects can have a big collective impact,” noted Littlely.

Since the Water Board began awarding WCQI grants in 2006, it has awarded \$3.5 million to 215 projects throughout the Okanagan. Projects must meet a number of criteria, including the ability to demonstrate water savings or improvements to water quality, show collaboration, and provide valley-wide benefit.

For a full listing of funded projects please see the attached.

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# WATER CONSERVATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT AWARDS – 2016

Organization	Project Title	OBWB Funding
Deep Creek Improvement District	Deep Creek Sensitive Habitat Index Mapping (SHIM)	\$26,000
Society for the Protection of Kalamalka Lake	Coldstream Creek Water Quality and Land Use Assessment Project – Phase 2	\$15,820
City of Vernon	Stream Health Study of Vernon and BX Creeks Related to Stormwater Runoff	\$15,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$56,820</b>
City of Kelowna	Wetland Habitat Restoration for American Avocets	\$30,000
District of Peachland	Community Xeriscape and Water Conservation Pilot Project	\$25,749
RDCO	Regional Floodplain Management Project	\$25,000
RDCO	Updated Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory Mapping	\$20,000
BMID	Pearson Creek Hydrometric Station Re-establishment	\$19,000
MCRI	MCRI Demonstration Project Monitoring	\$15,000
OCCP	Boating Impact Assessment of Water Source Protection	\$15,000
UBCO	The Social Life of Water in the Okanagan Valley, Past, Present and Future	\$13,411
Oceola Fish and Game Club	Conservation App	\$10,000
RDCO	Westshore Estates Leak Detection	\$7,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$180,660</b>
RDOS	Drought and Flood Risk Management and Mitigation Plan	\$20,000
City of Penticton	Drought Management Plan	\$12,500
Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens	Demonstration of Xeriscape Practices in the Okanagan	\$10,010
ONA	Shuttleworth Creek Diversion Removal and Well Implementation	\$10,010
Town of Oliver	Drought Management Plan	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$62,520</b>

## Regional District North Okanagan

Available funds: \$56,820 Total Requested: \$114,000 Recommended Funding: \$56,820

Project Title: **Deep Creek Sensitive Habitat Index Mapping (SHIM)**  
 Organization: **Deep Creek Improvement District**  
 Project Goals: The aim of this initiative is to collect baseline environmental and sensitive habitat information that will contribute to our overall understanding of Deep Creek and help guide management decisions and priorities with respect to habitat restoration and enhancement. The study will also provide a means of highlighting areas with channel stability, water quality, sedimentation, and flooding concerns. This study will assist in understanding the environmental values of Deep Creek and provide a basis for the development of a watershed management strategy that addresses the multijurisdictional and often complex land management issues.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.a., that the Okanagan has sufficient, accessible

water science and data to plan for changing conditions in climate, economy, and population growth. It will add to a base of data that exists for much of the Okanagan, with multiple uses for water quality and quantity protection.

Project Budget: \$52,000 Recommended Funding: \$26,000

Project Title: **Coldstream Creek Water Quality and Land Use Assessment Project – Phase 2**  
Organization: **Society for the Protection of Kalamalka Lake**  
Project Goals: The purpose of the study is to understand how land use along Coldstream Creek in the valley bottom is impacting the creek’s water quality and ultimately the quality of the community of Vernon’s drinking water. The objectives of the project are to provide regulators with information to support vulnerability mapping, map low, medium and highly impacted areas along the creek, to educate the public on land use impacts and provide work experience for volunteers.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 3.c., a knowledgeable public with widespread commitment to science-based planning, water conservation and reducing pollution. This will enhance the understanding of land use – water quality interactions, and provide a concrete set of maps and information to support land use decisions by local government. It will also provide information that may be used to inform land management in other areas.

Project Budget: \$68,050 Recommended Funding: \$15,820

Project Title: **Stream Health Study of Vernon and BX Creeks Related to Stormwater Runoff**  
Organization: **City of Vernon**  
Project Goals: The main goals of this study are to provide baseline water quality, sediment quality, and aquatic biology data in a scientifically defensible manner to allow the City to track improvements in stream health over time in two key streams that flow to Okanagan Lake as stormwater investments are being made; to develop a better understanding of the water quality in Lower Vernon Creek, a tributary to Okanagan Lake with a history of pollution problems; and to develop a better understanding of water quality during storms after prolonged drought conditions to help with drought management.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 2.a., understanding risks to source waters and how to manage them. It will help inform infrastructure planning moving forward.

Project Budget: \$103,900 Recommended Funding: \$15,000

**Regional District Central Okanagan**

Available funds: \$180,660 Total Requested: \$254,211 Recommended funding: \$180,660

Project Title: **Wetland Habitat Restoration for American Avocets**  
Organization: **City of Kelowna**  
Project Goals: Restore and protect wetland water habitat and breeding grounds for the American Avocet in the area of the Glenmore Landfill. This grant would be applied to the first phase of the project which involves the review of existing plans, proposed options and the development of a conceptual plan to move forward. Future phases would include but not be limited to implementation, monitoring and public education.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 3.a., that local governments have capacity to prepare and respond to population growth and climate change. The planning for restoration of wetlands complements the current OBWB Wetland Strategy project. The applicant will be required to consult with the OBWB Wetland Coordinator as a condition of funding to ensure that they have access to the information resources available through our program.

Project Budget: \$60,000 Recommended funding: \$30,000

Project Title: **Community Xeriscape and Water Conservation Pilot Project**

Organization: **District of Peachland**

Project Goals: The overall intent of this pilot project is to showcase the aesthetic appeal and measure the water conservation that can be achieved through a xeriscape resident landscape, to meet the future water needs of the District, and Okanagan. This project will be a valuable demonstration on xeriscape landscaping and drought management strategies.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.d., water efficiency in all sectors. The plan builds on previous efforts in public engagement, focussing on high-traffic areas for the demonstration of water conservation landscapes. The applicant will be required to coordinate with the OBWB Communications Director on messaging and outreach strategy as a condition of funding.

Project Budget: \$37,500 Recommended Funding: \$25,749

Project Title: **Regional Floodplain Management Project**

Organization: **Regional District of Central Okanagan**

Project Goals: The Floodplain Management Project is to provide a consistent, regional approach to addressing flood hazards to reduce the flood risk in the RDCO. Floodplain management will assist in protecting water resources from contamination and maintain or enhance water quality. The project will look to improve the understanding of the state of the RDCO water supply as it relates to flooding.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.a., that the Okanagan has sufficient, accessible water science and data to plan for changing conditions in climate, economy, and population growth. The project addresses both infrastructure planning, and water quality concerns, while protecting public and private property. It will also inform future floodplain management projects by other communities in the Okanagan.

Project Budget: \$150,000 Recommended Funding: \$25,000

Project Title: **Updated Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory Mapping**

Organization: **Regional District of Central Okanagan**

Project Goals: The aim of this project is to update foreshore inventory maps (FIM) for the northern part of Okanagan Lake to enable better decision making on future use and development on Okanagan Lake. In addition, the project will map water intakes and water protection zones to ensure water quality issues are incorporated in foreshore and riparian area planning.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 2.a., understanding risks to source waters and how to manage them. Foreshore Inventory Mapping allows a comparison over time of specific changes made along the foreshore, and how those changes affect water and other environmental values. The information generated is important to water managers, and also to statutory decision makers.

Project Budget: \$55,000 Recommended Funding: \$20,000

Project Title: **Pearson Creek Hydrometric Station Reestablishment**

Organization: **Black Mountain Irrigation District**

**Project Goals:** It is proposed to reinstate the original Water Survey of Canada (stn #08NM172) near the mouth of Pearson Creek, a sub-basin of Mission Creek. This includes the installation of a water level recorder, data logger and refurbishing the original concrete weir to determine the volume of water that flows down the channel. The value of this project is to build upon the already existing flow data at this location, which is the only large unregulated creek in the Mission Creek watershed. The information collected from this station can be used to inform the Mission Creek Water Use Plan and water availability/flow at other locations throughout the valley.

**Staff Notes:** This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.a., that the Okanagan has sufficient, accessible water science and data to plan for changing conditions in climate, economy, and population growth. Hydrometric stations assist water managers to understand and regulate the timing and volume of water through a system. This information will be added to the historical record, and the utility will be required to add the data collected to the BC Water Use Reporting Centre Hydrometric Tool as a condition of funding.

**Project Budget:** \$26,000 **Recommended Funding:** \$19,000

**Project Title:** **Mission Creek Restoration Initiative Demonstration Project Monitoring**

**Organization:** **Mission Creek Restoration Initiative**

**Project Goals:** The aim of this project is to restore habitat for a range of fish and wildlife species as a first step toward generating ecosystem, recreational, social and economic benefits for Mission Creek and local communities.

**Staff Notes:** This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 3.c., a knowledgeable public with widespread commitment to science-based planning, water conservation and reducing pollution. This multi-phase project is a leading demonstration of restoration with valley-wide benefit. It can assist with flood and drought mitigation, water quality and storage capacity, and development of best-practices. It is closely aligned with our own Mission Creek Groundwater Project, and these efforts will be complementary.

**Project Budget:** \$ 64,500 **Recommended Funding:** \$15,000

**Project Title:** **Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program**

**Organization:** **A Boating Impact Assessment of Water Source Protection for Wood and Kalamalka Lake**

**Project Goals:** The aim of this project is to investigate the long-term potential threats to lake water source protection for the municipal and domestic intakes on Wood Lake and Kalamalka Lake from boating activity. This project is driven by an increasing demand to develop lands on or near the lakes, and a demand for recreational boating and its infrastructure.

**Staff Notes:** This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 2.a., understanding risks to source waters and how to manage them. This multi-regional boating assessment will lead to an increased understanding of recreationally-caused impacts to source waters, especially around drinking water infrastructure.

**Project Budget:** \$33,000 **Recommended Funding:** \$15,000

**Project Title:** **The Social Life of Water in the Okanagan Valley: Past, Present, Future**

**Organization:** **UBCO Centre for Culture and Technology**

**Project Goals:** The aim of this project is to develop and organize a multimedia exhibition and public lecture series called *The Social Life of Water in the Okanagan: Past, Present and Future*. This project will be a collaborative undertaking between researchers and artists at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan Campus) (UBCO), the Kelowna Museums Society (KMS) and the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA).

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 3.c., a knowledgeable public with widespread commitment to science-based planning, water conservation and reducing pollution. This collaborative project will increase public knowledge about water issues in the Okanagan using a unique social perspective, informed by artists, and incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

Project Budget: \$92,431 Recommended Funding: \$13,411

Project Title: **Conservation App**  
Organization: **Oceola Fish and Game Club**  
Project Goals: To raise social awareness surrounding the value of BC's natural resources, including water, through a mobile based app and website to document and report issues related to illegal use/abuse. The app and website will allow users to photograph potential environmental damage, poaching, polluting, etc; the photographs are time-stamped, and georeferenced. Photos will be stored on UBC-O's secure server and relayed to enforcement agencies.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 3.c., a knowledgeable public with widespread commitment to science-based planning, water conservation and reducing pollution. The Conservation App will assist in the protection of, and enforcement around source waters, including reporting on activities that are contrary to source protection and best practices on drinking water reservoirs. The app is supported by the BC Wildlife Federation, and is an innovative approach to increase social awareness about watershed protection and values. Funding will be made conditional on securing external matching funds.

Project Budget: \$79,340 Recommended Funding: \$10,000

Project Title: **Westshore Estates Leak Detection**  
Organization: **Regional District of Central Okanagan**  
Project Goals: The goal of this project is to employ a Leak Detection professional contractor with specialized leak detection equipment and trained staff to identify and document the location of all leaks. We would receive detailed data within a report, identifying the coordinates of the various leaks within our system. Once we have these locations identified, we would then move forward to investigate and eliminate these leaks, re-establishing efficient water delivery to our Westshore customers. Following repair of the all the identified leaks, the RDCO targets that approximately 90% of the pumped water would be metered (i.e., 10% unaccounted).

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.d., water efficiency in all sectors. This project builds on a similar 2012 project that nearly halved the pumping costs of another RDCO water district, significantly reducing the volume of water lost to leakage. A similar project in West Kelowna has also led to a significant, direct reduction in water use.

Project Budget: \$15,000 Recommended Funding: \$7,500

**Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen**

Available funds: \$62,520 Total Requested: \$127,312 Recommended funding: \$62,520

Project Title: **Drought and Flood Risk Management and Mitigation**  
Organization: **Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen**  
Project Goals: The overall project will gather information, structure working groups, develop a draft plan(s) and then finalize the plan(s) to be adopted throughout the South Okanagan and Similkameen. The management and mitigation plan will detail the steps that the Regional District needs to follow in order to mitigate the risks caused by drought and flood.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.a., that the Okanagan has sufficient, accessible water science and data to plan for changing conditions in climate, economy, and population growth. Last year's drought brought to light the need for increased flood and drought planning in many areas of the valley. This project, combined with those recommended for funding in Penticton and Oliver will fill a significant gap in the valley-wide planning for flood and drought mitigation and protection. We will work with the RDOS to ensure that their planning is closely aligned with other efforts in the valley.

Project Budget: \$ 40,000 Recommended Funding: \$20,000

Project Title: **Drought Management Plan**

Organization: **City of Penticton**

Project Goals: The City of Penticton will work with a consultant to gather historical data from within the organization and develop strategic plan along with a communication protocol to inform our customers how we are doing with storage, what the immediate future looks like, what we need to do to maintain water supply and how we intend to achieve those goals in regards to a drought declaration. The consultant will develop decision-making guidelines for each water source, for moving between drought stages.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.a., that the Okanagan has sufficient, accessible water science and data to plan for changing conditions in climate, economy, and population growth. Last year's drought brought to light the need for increased flood and drought planning in many areas of the valley. This project, combined with those recommended for funding in RDOS and Oliver will fill a significant gap in the valley-wide planning for drought mitigation and protection. We will work with the City of Penticton to ensure that their planning is closely aligned with other efforts in the valley.

Project Budget: \$25,000 Recommended Funding: \$12,500

Project Title: **Demonstration of Xeriscape Practices in the Okanagan**

Organization: **Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens**

Project Goals: This project has two components. One is to demonstrate resilient landscapes that can withstand and thrive in drought conditions. This will be achieved by renovating and enhancing sections of the 23 year old Xeriscape Demonstration Gardens (2 acres) the first and largest in Canada. The second part is the environmental education component. Ten seminars/workshops and fifteen garden demonstration tours will be conducted covering topics such as: soil health for water reduction, xeriscape design and installation, xeriscape hands-on maintenance workshops, hands on in-line drip irrigation installation, rain gardens and storm water management, the selection and correct planting of native and drought tolerant plants.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 3.c., a knowledgeable public with widespread commitment to science-based planning, water conservation and reducing pollution. The Friends of Summerland Ornamental Gardens have taken a multi-prong approach to educating the public in the Okanagan about techniques to conserve water in outdoor residential use. A leader in the valley, the ornamental gardens host thousands of visitors each year, and collaborate with other public education groups such as the Okanagan Xeriscape Assoc. to show what can be done using outdoor conservation best management practices.

Project Budget: \$44,800 Recommended Funding: \$10,010

Project Title: **Shuttleworth Creek Diversion Removal and Well Implementation**



Organization: **Okanagan Nation Alliance**

Project Goals: The Allendale Water Users' (AWUC) uses a significant proportion of Shuttleworth Creek's stream flow annually from April to October and has an unscreened intake. The project involves moving the AWUC from surface water supply to groundwater supply in order to provide an efficient and reliable source of water for the AWUC and to restore the creek's natural flow regime allowing fish migration and spawning, creek dynamics to function effectively, a reduction of fish entrainment within the irrigation system and to promote water conservation and habitat improvement.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.d., water efficiency in all sectors. This action-focussed project will have a direct impact on water use in a major sub-basin in the valley. This multi-phase project benefits source water, water conservation, and water for environmental values in Shuttleworth Creek.

Project Budget: \$954,479

Recommended Funding: \$10,010

Project Title: **Town of Oliver**

Organization: **Drought Management Plan**

Project Goals: To give the Town of Oliver a decision making framework and the ability to proactively respond to drought seasons appropriately, and provide input into a region-wide drought response plan, if one is developed.

Staff Notes: This project addresses Strategic Plan goal 1.a., that the Okanagan has sufficient, accessible water science and data to plan for changing conditions in climate, economy, and population growth. Last year's drought brought to light the need for increased flood and drought planning in many areas of the valley. This project, combined with those recommended for funding in Penticton and RDOS will fill a significant gap in the valley-wide planning for drought mitigation and protection. We will work with the Town of Oliver to ensure that their planning is closely aligned with other efforts in the valley.

Project Budget: \$15,000

Recommended Funding: \$10,000