

Kelowna

Lake, drought in focus

Jon Manchester - Mar 21, 2016 / 10:10 am



Photo: Deborah Pfeiffer

A renowned expert on water will team up with UBC Okanagan, Tuesday, on World Water Day.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board's Okanagan WaterWise program and the Okanagan Institute for Biodiversity, Resilience, and Ecosystem Services at UBCO will host Margaret Catley-Carlson, past chair of the UN-affiliated Global Water Partnership and vice-chair of the Canadian Water Network Board.

Catley-Carlson will speak at a free panel discussion and mixer at the Laurel Packinghouse.

The event, exSTREAMS, looks at the Okanagan's droughts and floods both from a historical perspective, as well as how these extreme weather events are changing in frequency and intensity, and what communities are doing to address them.

"We often hear 'Think globally. Act locally.' UN World Water Day is when people, across this blue planet, are reminded to think about water and all the ways it sustains our lives," noted OBWB executive director Anna Warwick Sears. "Last year, we saw the effects of drought. In recent years, we've also experienced high water. This annual event is our way of inviting people in, to learn more about water issues that affect the Okanagan."

BRAES director Lael Parrott said: "The Okanagan is known for its beautiful big lakes, but this has contributed to a myth of abundance. The truth is, we live in a place where water is not abundant and what we do on the landscape is changing the availability of water."

Following the keynote address, a panel discussion will include:

- Sarah Alexis, Okanagan Nation Alliance – Natural Resources project co-ordinator and Richard Bussanich, ONA fisheries biologist.
- Anna Warwick Sears, Okanagan Basin Water Board – on last summer's extreme Level 4 drought in the Okanagan and what's being done to make communities more resilient.
- Don Dobson, of the OBWB's Water Stewardship Council – sharing on his nearly 45 years as a professional engineer in flood protection efforts.

- Margaret Catley-Carlson – providing an international and national perspective on water issues.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the event starts at 6 p.m.

The event is free, but pre-registration is required at <http://exstreams.eventbrite.ca/>.