



Sylix youth take part in traditional water ceremony. Photo: Okanagan Nation Alliance

## World Water Day: Special challenge issued to youth to be climate conscious

Friday, March 22, the Okanagan Basin Water Board is issuing a special challenge

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In celebration of Canada Water Week this week and Friday's UN World Water Day, the Okanagan Basin Water Board's program has re-launched its seventh youth challenge, inviting young people to be climate heroes.

"We are all witnessing and living the effects of climate change, right here in our own valley," said OBWB communications director Corinne Jackson, who also manages the Okanagan WaterWise outreach and education program. "Young people are increasingly aware of the extreme weather events we are experiencing, from historic flooding that threaten homes and close beaches, to repeated droughts that require conservation to ensure enough water for food production and returning salmon. They've also experienced record-breaking temperatures, and wildfires affecting the air they breathe, the water they drink, and more."

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"But it's not good enough to be aware. We want to encourage and empower young people to take action. The fact is we have solutions and it's time to put those solutions into action for a secure water future," she said.

The theme for this year's challenge was inspired by the documentary *Beyond Climate*, recently screened by at UBC Okanagan. Directed by Ian Mauro, narrated by David Suzuki, and featuring several Okanagan residents, the film is a timely, touching and hopeful look at how climate change is affecting us here in the valley and around B.C., and how we can turn this around, according to an OBWB news release.

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This year's Okanagan WaterWise Challenge invites local classrooms, as well as individuals, five to 18, to be a climate hero by participating in various activities that can improve our water and our planet. A special page has been set up at [OkWaterWise.ca](#). By clicking on the "Challenge" button, teachers, parents and youth will find contest details, including activities to learn more about the issues we are facing, and challenges to tackle these issues head-on.

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Challenges include joining the popular #trashtag effort to clean wetlands, creeks and beaches. Wetlands are important for many reasons including flood protection and as carbon sinks. Other potential activities include planting indigenous trees to absorb carbon and give off oxygen, the release said.

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Participants will be entered to win water prizes including, for class entries, a two-hour boat charter on Okanagan Lake for an on-the-water classroom experience to learn more about the water of our valley. Entries are due April 30. Full details are at [OkWaterWise.ca](#).

[edit@kelownacapnews.com](mailto:edit@kelownacapnews.com)

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