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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OKANAGAN WATER BOARD OPENS FLOODGATES WITH CALL FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

Kelowna, B.C. – The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) is now accepting applications to its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) grant program. New this year, the board recently approved a \$50,000 increase in funding, bringing the total amount available to \$350,000 for 2020.

“We’re very happy to enhance funding for this program,” said Sue McKortoff, OBWB Chair and Mayor of Osoyoos. “Anything we can do to support the quality and quantity of water in our valley will be key as our population continues to grow, and as we see the impacts of climate change in what is already a water-stressed region. Ensuring we are taking care of our water for the future is critical,” she added, noting that past WCQI-funded projects have shown great success in helping address these issues.

“From Armstrong in the north to Osoyoos in the south, this program has helped to enhance our quality of life, which depends on a clean, sufficient water supply, and healthy lakes,” McKortoff said.

This is the first increase in WCQI grant funding since the program began in 2006 and is intended to help cover inflation, recognizing that project costs have gone up. Successful applicants can receive between \$3,000 and \$30,000 if they meet the program criteria.

“This year our main focus is on encouraging collaborative projects that provide water benefits in large areas throughout the valley,” added James Littlely, Operations and Grants Manager. “Projects that are partnerships between different organizations and span multiple jurisdictions are more likely to receive funding.” Full scoring criteria can be found in the Program Guide on the OBWB website. Local governments, First Nations, irrigation districts and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for the grants for projects which occur within the Okanagan Basin.

Project areas that will be considered include: drought and flood preparedness, education, irrigation, groundwater studies, mapping, metering, source water protection, system improvement, water treatment studies, water management planning, water quality assessments, WaterWise landscaping, water flow monitoring, and restoration.

Since 2006, the WCQI program has provided more than \$4.4 million to more than 265 projects.

This year’s application deadline is **Feb. 28, 2020, 4 p.m.** The complete Program Guide, detailed information about program changes, and application forms can be found at www.obwb.ca/wcqi

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