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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **OKANAGAN WATER BOARD ANNUAL GRANT PROGRAM OPENS WITH FOCUS ON WATER SECURITY**

**Kelowna, B.C.** – The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) is now accepting applications to its Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) grant program.

With \$350,000 available, applicants that meet the program criteria can receive between \$3,000 and \$30,000 for projects which occur within the Okanagan Basin. Eligible applicants include Okanagan local governments and First Nations, irrigation districts and non-profit organizations.

The OBWB recognizes the importance of enabling projects that enhance water quality and conserve water quantity in the Okanagan, known as Canada’s most water-stressed region. This grant program is intended to build a collaborative approach to water management; help local organizations address water issues and enhance valley-wide sustainable water use; create innovative solutions; increase knowledge sharing; promote more uniform standards and best practices throughout the valley; and assist projects that might otherwise lack funds to move forward in a timely manner.

In addition, each year the board chooses a theme for extra consideration when reviewing applications. This year the theme is ‘water security,’ encouraging projects that reduce water pollution, protect or restore natural assets (e.g. wetlands) that provide water quality or quantity benefits, or reduce the occurrence of water advisories in drinking water systems.

“The United Nations says water security is about sustainable access to sufficient amounts of good quality water,” says James Littlely, Operations and Grants Manager. “It protects human health and provides for social and economic development. At the same time, it provides benefits to the environment and helps to protect against pollution and water-related disasters. Projects that enhance our water security are a benefit to everyone in the Okanagan.”

Full scoring criteria can be found in the Program Guide on the OBWB website.

This year’s application deadline is **Feb. 26, 2021, 4 p.m.** The complete Program Guide, detailed information, and application forms can be found at [www.obwb.ca/wcqi](http://www.obwb.ca/wcqi)

Since 2006, the WCQI program has provided more than \$4.75 million to 284 projects.

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