

March 17, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OKANAGAN RESIDENTS INVITED TO CELEBRATE WATER WITH SPECIAL SCREENING OF “DAMNATION” & PANEL DISCUSSION

Kelowna, B.C. – The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB)’s Okanagan WaterWise program is presenting a special screening of the acclaimed film *DamNation*, followed by a panel discussion on Tuesday, March 21, 6:30-9 p.m.

The event is free, online, and is in celebration of UN World Water Day, formally celebrated one day later on March 22nd.

“We’re very happy to be able to be hosting our 8th such screening and panel event,” says OBWB Communications Director Corinne Jackson, who also manages the OkWaterWise public outreach program. “Consistent feedback from the community is that these events are both engaging and an excellent opportunity to catch up on emerging water issues in the Okanagan. We believe this film fits the bill.”

DamNation is a powerful documentary, with bold, beautiful imagery, exploring the change in attitude from pride in big dams as engineering wonders to the growing awareness that our own future is bound to the life and health of our waterways.

The themes in *DamNation* are especially moving and current as the OBWB and partners begin the work of modernizing the Okanagan Lake Regulation System (OLRS). This process, expected to take about seven years, will look at how the valley’s lake levels are managed to address climate change impacts (including flooding and drought), fish management, agriculture needs, and more. The film will serve to open up an important conversation.

Panelists include:

- **Sylix Traditional Ecological Knowledge Keeper calyx (Richard Armstrong)** on the importance of traditional Indigenous knowledge in helping inform the OLRS review, as well as the significance of upper watershed wetlands (e.g. for the mountain beaver and water health),
- **Black Mountain Irrigation District Administrator Bob Hrasko**, regarding dams and upland reservoirs in the Okanagan – what works and what doesn’t, or needs improvement,
- **Okanagan Nation Alliance fisheries department biologist Dawn Machin** on Okanagan River restoration work that has been done in the valley bottom, the benefits, the challenges, and what future work is planned, and
- **OBWB Executive Director Anna Warwick Sears** about the OLRS and opportunities to participate as the process moves forward.

“Following the panel, there will be time for questions and answers. This is an important part of the event, opening the conversation and encouraging residents to engage on the issues being discussed,” added Jackson.

This is a FREE event, but the number of Zoom connections is limited. Pre-registration through Eventbrite is required at https://damnation_wwd2023.eventbrite.ca/.

Find the trailer for *DamNation* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuCkuyhwcA4>.

Related materials:

- Learn more about plans to update the Okanagan Lake Regulation System at <https://www.OBWB.ca/lakelevelmanagement/>.
- For more information on dams and reservoirs in the Okanagan, please see a 2021 white paper prepared by the OBWB's Water Stewardship Council on "Issues, Concerns and Recommendations for Dam and Reservoir Management in the Okanagan Region," at <https://www.obwb.ca/okanagan-dams-and-reservoirs-past-present-and-future/>.
- Additional links of interest: OkWaterWise.ca and OkanaganFloodStory.ca.

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