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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“RAIN TO RESOURCE” WORKSHOP AIMS TO HELP PREPARE COMMUNITIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Kelowna, BC – Extreme weather patterns, including more frequent flooding, is one of the projected outcomes of climate change. Managing stormwater effectively will be a critical adaptation tool.

“We’ve seen the incredible damage that extreme storm events and flooding can cause,” said Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, pointing to the devastation on B.C.’s west coast this past weekend. “We’ve seen people displaced, roads washed out, and damage to infrastructure. Here in the Okanagan, severe storms like these are expected with climate change. A lot of work has been done in recent years to develop effective practices and tools to address heavy rainfall, but the Okanagan – and many B.C. communities – have not kept up.”

The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) and the BC Water & Waste Association (BCWWA) are hoping this will change. The two agencies are organizing a workshop, “From Rain to Resource: Managing Stormwater in a Changing Climate,” October 28 and 29, 2010, at the Best Western Inn in Kelowna. The event is geared to those whose work touches on stormwater management, including planners, engineers, and landscape architects, but also those who develop and adopt stormwater policy, such as senior municipal staff and elected officials.

“We have spent a lot of time in the province, talking about and preparing for increased droughts as a result of climate change. But we also have to prepare for bigger storms,” noted Warwick Sears. This includes discussion about appropriate hillside development, the importance of wetlands in preventing flooding, and ensuring effective infrastructure.

“Stormwater management is both a quantity and quality issue,” added Daisy Foster, CEO of the BCWWA. “We are concerned with the amount of run-off, but also pollutants in stormwater that enter the receiving waters, and the negative impacts they can create.”

The “Rain to Resource” workshop will look at innovative developments in rainwater management and how barriers to change have been overcome in communities in B.C. and beyond. A tradeshow will also be held and highlight companies who are at the forefront in developing innovative rainwater management technologies.

Day 1 of the workshop will feature technical presentations that focus on best practices and tools for rainwater management, illustrated through case studies. Day 2 will open with MLA John Slater, Parliamentary Secretary for Water Supply and Allocation, speaking on how we can integrate rainwater management practices and tools to adapt to climate change, and the policies that support

them. Day 2 will also feature keynote speaker, Brock Dolman, Director of the California-based WATER Institute.

Dolman has been featured on many radio programs and in award-winning films, including *The 11th Hour* by Leonardo DiCaprio.

Early registration rates are available until October 1.

For more information and to register, please visit bcwwa.org/seminars/RtoR.htm.

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