

March 18, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OKANAGAN INVITED TO SHARE THEIR LOVE OF WATER DURING CANADA WATER WEEK

Kelowna, B.C. – March 18 to 24 is Canada Water Week. The theme this year is “Love your water body!” As such, the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) and its outreach program Okanagan WaterWise have organized some fun events that encourage people – young and old – to share their stories about water in the Okanagan.

“Canada Water Week, and U.N. World Water Day on March 22, is an opportunity to celebrate water and reflect on its importance: to our communities, to our economy, to the environment, and to life itself,” noted Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director for the OBWB.

The first event kicks off with the launch of the 3rd annual ***Okanagan WaterWise Challenge***, explained Corinne Jackson, WaterWise program coordinator. “School classes and individuals throughout the Okanagan, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, are invited to submit multi-media entries, telling us how they love their water body. We want them to share a special experience around Okanagan water and the importance of conserving and protecting it. Once again, we have amazing prizes,” said Jackson, listing off a pizza party and passes to some of the Okanagan’s coolest pools for 2 winning classes and 2 individual entry winners. And, a special option this year for winning classes – a 2-hour boat charter on Okanagan Lake for a private class lesson on Okanagan water. For contest details visit www.okwaterwise.ca. Contest ends May 3.

And on Friday, March 22, award-winning broadcaster **Chris Walker** – Host of CBC Radio’s Daybreak Kelowna will be moderating the OBWB/Okanagan WaterWise’s popular (and free) ***Annual Public Forum: “Love your water body!”*** at Summerhill Pyramid Winery.

The event runs 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. and will begin with Walker inviting panelists to share their stories about the water they love and the work they are doing to protect it, raising awareness for their efforts and inviting community members to join them. The panel will be followed by discussion, and then light refreshments.

Panelists include:

Anna Warwick Sears - OBWB Executive Director, speaking for the Okanagan watershed as a whole,

Maria Besso - Society for the Protection of Kalamalka Lake, speaking for Kal Lake,

Rick Simpson - Ocoela Fish and Game Club, for Wood Lake,

Leon Louis - syilx knowledge holder, for Okanagan Lake,

Stu Wells - Mayor of Osoyoos, for Osoyoos Lake, and

Justin Hall – Nisqually River Foundation Executive Director, speaking on the UN 2013 World Water Day theme of Cooperation.

This event is free and light refreshments will be served, but seating is limited and registration is required. Register at: <http://www.eventbrite.ca/event/5761001310>.

Please note, panelists will be bringing a picture of themselves, playing or working in their special water place, and guests are asked to do the same. The photos will be part of a display and participants will be able to take their pictures home with them at the end of the event.

Special thanks to this year's partners in the Okanagan WaterWise Challenge, including Vernon Aquatic Centre, the YMCA of Kelowna's H2O Adventure and Fitness Centre, the City of Penticton Community Centre Pool, Cruise Okanagan, The Executive Boardroom, Casabella Princess Cruises, Berry and Smith Trucking and School District's 22, 23, 53, 67 and 83.

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