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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Incoming Executive Director and COO take Oath of Office for OBWB



Pictured – OBWB Chair Blair Ireland, retiring Executive Director Dr. Anna Warwick Sears and incoming Executive Director Melissa Tesche after the Oath of Office ceremony.

Sylix Territory, Kelowna, B.C. – The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) is embarking on a new chapter with the appointment of Melissa Tesche as the incoming Executive Director and James Littley as the new Chief Operating Officer. Their oaths of office were taken at the April 1 board meeting, marking the start of a leadership transition as Dr. Anna Warwick Sears retires after 19 years of dedicated service.

The oath of office is a formal declaration or affirmation that a person makes, promising to uphold their duties and responsibilities faithfully and impartially.

"It was fifteen years ago, during my first involvement with the water board, that I truly understood the transformative impact of collaborative governance on community service. That realization guided my career, and I'm now deeply honoured to serve in this way. Sharing this opportunity with James, someone whose talent I recognized fifteen years ago, makes it even more exciting," shared Tesche while swearing in Littley.

Following her acclamation as the Liberal candidate for the Vernon-Lake Country-Monashee riding in the upcoming federal election, Dr. Sears will step back from her duties at OBWB.

"I am very grateful to be passing the torch, it is a very touching and moving moment for me," said Dr. Sears at the ceremony. "After nineteen incredible years, a chapter closes with a heart full of gratitude. Watching my successor step into this role fills me with immense pride and excitement for the future. Knowing the legacy I helped build is in such capable hands makes leaving not an ending, but a beautiful continuation."

Dr. Sears has been a dedicated and invaluable member of the OBWB. Her contributions have been instrumental in advancing water science and planning partnerships, securing vital funding and resources, and serving as a passionate spokesperson for responsible water management in the Okanagan Basin.

"Anna's commitment to the sustainable management of our precious water resources is unparalleled," stated Chair Blair Ireland. "Her deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities facing the Okanagan, combined with her extensive experience in government relations and water science, make her a strong voice for our region. We wish Anna all the best in her candidacy and future endeavors."

Tesche joins the OBWB April 22, and Littlely will lead the OBWB in the interim to ensure a smooth transition.

About the OBWB

The OBWB is a valley-wide partnership established in 1970 to address critical water issues in the Okanagan watershed. The Board of Directors, comprised of representatives from the three Okanagan Regional Districts, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, the Water Supply Association of BC and the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, works closely with OBWB staff to ensure the protection of the Okanagan basin. The Okanagan basin, a nearly 200-km long and 8,000 km² area that includes the six main lakes – Okanagan, Kalamalka, Wood, Skaha, Vaseux and Osoyoos – and surrounding mountains, faces many unique water challenges.

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