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Source Water Assessment and Protection Plan wrapping up

Oliver, BC, September 14, 2015 — According to Oliver’s water assessment report, the quality of groundwater is very good and meets Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines. At the Committee of the Whole meeting of the Council of the Town of Oliver held on September 14, 2015, 2015 in the council chambers, Council was presented the groundwater supply source water assessment summary report. In some wells, the quality has improved in recent years which is an indication of improved environmental and land use practices.

The project proposes a protection area by starting with identification of well capture zones, which is an area around a well that contributes to groundwater flow to the well under an assumed pumping rate for a specified duration. Along with the protection zones, a larger aquifer protection area was adopted, extending from the north of town to just south of the Miller Road and Blacksage wells.

The Town of Oliver provides domestic drinking water and agricultural water to customers within the municipality and surrounding rural areas within the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen. In recent years, the Town has completed twinning of its water system such that drinking water is provided by groundwater wells and the majority of agricultural water is provided by surface water from the Okanagan River canal system and supplemented with groundwater from the Black Sage wells.

As a condition of its water operating permit with Interior Health, the Town recently established a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to oversee completion of a Source Water Assessment, a key step for developing a framework for a groundwater protection plan.

The Source Water Assessment marks an end point for planning and a starting point for implementation of source water protection measures, and potentially, additional aquifer characterization. The Town anticipates continuing with a committee –based approach to implementing recommendations from the Source Water Assessment. The need to protect groundwater will also be communicated to the public using the Town’s website, targeted informational fact-sheets, and other means to be identified by the committee. The Town expects to partner with RDOS and the Province of BC on seeking funding to enable further aquifer characterization efforts in the Oliver area.

- 30 -

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