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For Immediate Release

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Lake Windermere Ambassadors deserve a big ‘Thank you’

Participation in Ambassadors “a logical choice”- Kirby Brown

Invermere, B.C. — The Lake Windermere Project is getting set to enter a new era — by 2010, more local individuals and businesses will be playing a bigger role in the health of the lake.

“The Lake Windermere Project is having a great year,” said Heather Leschied, Wildsight’s LWP program manager. “We’re into our fifth and final season — but the 2010 project end date won’t spell the end of community-based water stewardship of the lake and its tributaries.”

Leschied said that, thanks to Lake Windermere Ambassadors, stewardship efforts will carry on.

Ambassadors are community members — individuals and businesses — who contribute to projects that support lake health. All community members and businesses can become Ambassadors by making a donation. Contact Heather Leschied at 250.341.6898 to find out how.

In addition, Lake Windermere Ambassadors have an advisory committee — made up of community members — to oversee how these funds are used to benefit the health of the lake.

“The Lake Windermere Ambassadors will direct future water quality monitoring and stewardship programs based on the findings of the Lake Windermere Project,” Leschied said.

“They’ll encourage the implementation of policies and guidelines that benefit the health of the lake, such as the *Lake Windermere Shoreline Management Guidelines for Fish and Wildlife*.”

Kirby Brown, president of Panorama Mountain Village, and a member of the advisory committee, said, “For me, participating in this committee is a logical choice. Economically, socially and physically, Lake Windermere dominates our landscape. How we treat this precious resource will dictate how we evolve as a community. We’re going to need to make some decisions as a community. As Ambassadors, our role is to help the community come to consensus about this resource and its limitations in a healthy and open way.”

About contributing to a healthy future for Lake Windermere, Brown said, “With so much involved, I think everyone needs to be a lake ambassador in their own way.”

Leschied said the first and foremost goal of the Lake Windermere Ambassadors is to see through the completion of the Lake Windermere Project, which is scheduled for May, 2010.

“We want to thank the Ambassadors,” Leschied said. “This year we’ve had successful workshops and events, we’ve seen the release of innovative shoreline development guidelines, and we’ve expanded our monitoring efforts — thanks in good part to their support.”

Thanks to Platinum Ambassadors: Gurmeet Brar; The District of Invermere; and Bob and Barb Shaunessy, K2 - SRL Ranch.

Thanks to Gold Ambassadors: Windermere Water and Sewer & Parr Utilities Ltd.

Thanks to Silver Ambassadors: Taoya Schaefer; Ron and Rosemary Clark; Max Helmer Construction Ltd.; Remax Invermere - Wende Brash; and EarthSoft Inc.

Thanks to Bronze Ambassadors: J.A. Laird Leadership Class 2008; John Ashby; Lower Lakeview Road Community Association; Cam and Eloise Berry; Brian and Sarah Passey; Kootenay River Runners; Mountain Creek Properties Ltd.; The Artym Gallery; Fitz Flooring Ltd.; Bank of Montreal - Invermere; Focus Corporation – Invermere; and The Valley Echo.

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BACKGROUND

The Lake Windermere Project was developed by Wildsight in 2005 to engage government and the public in the face of a growing demand for an ongoing, comprehensive water stewardship program. The project grew into a partnership between all levels of government, First Nations, and community organizations.

A selection of LWP accomplishments and activities:

- In-depth water quality monitoring of Lake Windermere and its tributaries since 2005.
- Annual Water Wonders Workshops.
- 2005 Lake-User Survey.
- Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping of Windermere Lake.
- *Shoreline Management Guidelines for Fish and Wildlife Habitats* – with the East Kootenay Integrated Lake Management Partnership.
- LWP educational article series (25 articles) – www.wildsight.ca/programs/windermere
- Annual shoreline cleanup, removing a total of 677 kg of garbage.
- Partnered with the Canadian Cancer Society and others to develop the Pesticide Free Columbia Basin Coalition. The District of Invermere adopted a cosmetic pesticide bylaw in 2009.
- Invited to present at the 12th Living Lakes Network conference in Italy in 2008. The network asked to use the LWP as a template for other community-based stewardship groups to follow.
- LWP contractors completed Streamkeepers Instructors program, can train Streamkeepers.
- LWP and Lake Windermere, England established an official ‘Sister Lake’ partnership.
- Lake Windermere Ambassadors Committee created to carry water stewardship forward as the LWP ends in 2010.
- ONGOING: Lake Management Plan underway.
- **ONGOING: Current transition period from LWP to handing it back to the community under direction of Lake Windermere Ambassadors.**
- ONGOING: Public education efforts and events.
- ONGOING: Analysis of water quality monitoring results by MOE staff, to update provincial water quality objectives last laid out in 1985.

About Wildsight

Wildsight works locally, regionally and globally to protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable communities in Canada's Columbia and southern Rocky Mountain region. This area is internationally recognized as a keystone to conservation in western North America. For more information, please visit www.Wildsight.ca.

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