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For Immediate Release

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Lake Windermere Project puts unfounded rumour to rest

So-called “boat ban rumour” steals the spotlight from the LWP’s real mandate and work

Invermere, B.C. —A rumour that a “special interest group” suggested a “boat ban” on Lake Windermere even made it as far as Calgary before the Lake Windermere Project and Wildsight had the chance to try and stop it.

“As far as we know, it started when someone misunderstood what a recent Lake Management Plan survey question meant” said Heather Leschied, Wildsight’s Lake Windermere Project Program Manager. The survey was conducted by the Regional District of East Kootenay as part of the Lake Windermere Management Plan, which will be coming out in 2010. It contains questions concerning regulation vs. non-regulation.

“Somehow, this question was misinterpreted to indicate some sort of ‘push’ to ban boats on Lake Windermere. Even worse, the question became a rumor that a ‘special interest group’ was working for a ban.”

Leschied pointed out, for the record: “The rumour is unfounded. A boat ban on Lake Windermere has never been in Wildsight or the Lake Windermere Project’s mandates. Period.”

The Lake Windermere Project’s work for the overall health of the lake has been open and transparent since Wildsight started the project in 2005, and they have endeavoured to keep the public well apprised of their continued success and commitment.

Leschied said she was a little disappointed that the rumor has been overshadowing the Project’s recent great news, most notably, how the community’s Lake Ambassadors have committed to carry on the project’s work in coming years.

Real news about the LWP

“The Lake Windermere Project is having a really great year,” Leschied said. “We’re now into our final season, but it’s really the beginning of a legacy of stewardship for lake health.”

Leschied said that, thanks to Lake Windermere Ambassadors, stewardship efforts will carry on. Ambassadors are community members who contribute to projects that support lake health.

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

“The Ambassadors will direct future monitoring and stewardship programs based on the findings of the LWP,” Leschied said.

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.”

“The Ambassadors deserve a lot of praise,” Leschied said. “Thanks in good part to their exceptional support, the Project’s continued success is ensured.”

The Lake Windermere Project and Wildsight would like to thank the following:

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

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

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

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; Doug and Liz McPhee, The Monkey’s Uncle; and The Valley Echo.

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BACKGROUND and ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Lake Windermere Project was developed by Wildsight in 2005. The project grew into a partnership between all levels of government, First Nations, and community organizations. www.Wildsight.ca/Windermere/Background • www.Wildsight.ca

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