**Is West Bench still on a Boil Water Notice?**
Yes. The West Bench water system is still on a Boil Water Notice and will be until the system upgrades are completed in 2013.

**What is happening at the West Bench water system pumphouse?**
Recent monitoring of the water entering the West Bench pump house has showed a substantial increase in turbidity levels. An initial investigation determined that the source of the turbidity is likely from deterioration in the intake line that runs along the dike on the Okanagan River Channel from Okanagan Lake to the pump house. When the pumps are activated to draw water into the pump house from the Lake, groundwater and soil particles are now also being drawn into the intake line from the suspected break.

**What is turbidity?**
Turbidity is a water quality term that refers to the relative clarity of water. Turbidity occurs when fine suspended particles of clay, silt, organic and inorganic matter and other microscopic organisms are picked up by water.

**Why is turbidity an important water quality indicator?**
Bacteria, viruses, and parasites know as pathogens can attach themselves to the suspended particles in turbid water. These particles can then interfere with disinfection by shielding pathogens from the disinfectant (chlorine).

**What is the guideline for turbidity in the water?**
The guideline for turbidity in surface water supplies has been established as follows: Good (<1 NTU), Fair (1-5 NTU), and Poor (>5 NTU). A ‘Fair’ rating requires a Water Quality Advisory while a ‘Poor’ rating requires a Boil Water Notice. Turbidity levels entering the pump house have been reported as high as 10 NTU recently.

**Is the turbidity from the lake?**
Testing completed at an access point halfway along this intake pipe shows normal conditions for the lake water therefore we suspect that the break is located after the access point but before the pumphouse. Also, neither Penticton nor Sage Mesa water systems have seen a recent increase in turbidity levels which indicates the turbidity is not coming from the lake.

**What will be done about the suspected break?**
The RDOS is investigating temporary measures with the current operators of the system to reduce the turbidity caused by the suspected break. With the impending system supply upgrades in the Spring of 2013, we are attempting to prevent a costly repair on a pipeline that will be abandoned.
What if the temporary measures do not work?
If the turbidity in the West Bench intake increases significantly or we have a complete failure of the intake the RDOS will utilize contingency plans that are currently being put into place. If the contingency plans are not successful, the break will need to be repaired, however we believe this can be avoided.

Why is the RDOS sending us this information?
The RDOS is providing this information to the system users so you understand where the turbidity is coming from if it is experienced during use. We also feel that reminding residents about the importance of following the Boil Water Notice was needed.

How do I boil my water intended for drinking?
Residents are advised to use an alternate source (bottled water) or to boil water for all drinking purposes including making juice and ice, food preparation and cooking purposes including washing of fruits and vegetables, and all oral hygiene such as teeth brushing. Water should be brought to full boil and allowed to boil for at least 1 minute to reduce the risk of infection from bacteria, parasites and other organisms that may be found in the water. Water should then be refrigerated in a clean, covered container.

What is my responsibility as a business owner/operator?
The RDOS would also like to remind all business owners/operators (bed and breakfasts) and public facility operators that it is the responsibility of said establishments to notify their customers of the Boil Water Notice.

What else can I do?
Please step up your water conservation practices until next spring. The reduced demand for water will help to extend the life of the intake system until next year when it will no longer be needed to supply water. Some easy practices to use in your daily life include turning off the water while brushing teeth, running only full loads of dishes or laundry, and reducing shower time. There are many other easy suggestions for water conservation available on the RDOS website www.rdos.bc.ca or contact your Water Ambassador at (250) 490-4110.

Where can I get additional information?
For further information, please contact the Public Works Department at (250) 490-4135 or (250) 490-4106.

Thank you for your cooperation.