

MEDIA RELEASE

Box 1020, 107 Tunnel Mountain Drive
Banff, Alberta, Canada, T1L 1H5
mountainculture@banffcentre.ca
www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture

January 22, 2003 - for immediate release

Summit Will Address Mountain Water Issues

The Banff Centre will turn a spotlight on the worldwide importance of mountain watersheds at a conference to be held this fall. **Banff Mountain Summit 2003: Mountains as Water Towers** is expected to draw scientists, researchers, writers, government officials and environmental agency representatives from across North America and around the world to The Banff Centre from November 23–26.

One-half of the world's people drink water that originates in mountain areas. As downstream demand increases, the potential for conflict over the ownership and use of that water increases. As global climate changes and airborne pollution increases, the quantity and quality of water available downstream becomes compromised. Scientists such as Dr. David Schindler of the University of Alberta predict that the prairies could face serious water shortages as Rocky Mountain glaciers — which feed the headwaters of Western Canadian rivers — melt over the next half century.

Banff Mountain Summit 2003: Mountains as Water Towers will focus on topics such as mountain water ecosystems, water ownership, effects of climate change, and mountain watershed management. Speakers will include Maude Barlow, chair of the Council of Canadians and passionate defender of water rights; Margaret Catley-Carlson, chair of the Global Water Partnership; Marq de Villiers, whose book *Water* won the Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction in 1999; and Dr. David Schindler, Killam Memorial Professor of Ecology at the University of Alberta. The event will include daytime conference sessions and evening events aimed at the general public.

Banff Mountain Summit 2003: Mountains as Water Towers is part of the United Nations International Year of Fresh Water and Canada's Wonder of Water celebrations. The Summit is sponsored by Parks Canada, National Geographic, the International Research Development Centre, and the Government of Canada and is offered in cooperation with Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin and Alberta Ecotrust.

Media Contact:

Debra Hornsby, Marketing and Communications Manager, Mountain Culture, The Banff Centre
Box 1020, Banff, Alberta T1L 1H5, Canada
phone: 403-762-6446 fax: 403-762-6277, email: debra_hornsby@banffcentre.ca
www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture

The Banff Centre is Canada's centre for creative excellence in the arts, leadership development, mountain culture, and conferences. Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre promotes understanding and appreciation of the world's mountain places by creating opportunities for people to share – and find inspiration in – mountain experiences, ideas and visions.