

Convening for Action on Vancouver Island
Leadership in Water Sustainability



CAVI releases program details for 2009 Vancouver Island Learning Lunch Seminar Series

Comox Valley Regional District hosts
“Getting Ahead of the Wave to achieve Settlement in Balance with Ecology”



The New Business As Usual: Visualize What We Want Vancouver Island to Look Like in 50 years

The Mission is to Create a Legacy

- 1. Influence choices by individuals and organizations*
- 2. Use the term “sustainability” as a lens for considering approaches that influence choices*

2009 Vancouver Island Learning Lunch Seminar Series

Comox Valley is the Provincial Pilot for a Regional Team Approach

Water Bucket Web Story #2 posted July 2009

Convening for Action on Vancouver Island

The Province's **Living Water Smart, BC's Water Plan** and **Green Communities Project** provide a framework for **convening for action** on Vancouver Island. The following challenge statement provides context:

"How we will simultaneously work together as staff within a municipality and as a region AND externally with the stewardship sector, developers and other private sector players, to ensure we implement sustainable approaches to development"

The Comox Valley Regional District is the host local government for the **2009 Vancouver Island Learning Lunch Seminar Series**. The Comox Valley is the provincial pilot for a 'regional team approach' that is founded on broad and inclusive partnerships and collaboration that reach for the common goal of sustainability.

A Collaborative Effort:

The 2009 Series is a collaboration of four local governments in the Comox Valley, the Comox Valley Land Trust, CAVI – Convening for Action on Vancouver Island, the Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia, the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia, the Green Infrastructure Partnership and two provincial Ministries.



Getting Ahead of the Wave

Local governments in the Comox Valley are convening for action around this paradigm: *Water is the finite resource; however, management of development is the control.*

"The Series theme, **Getting Ahead of the Wave**, defines what needs to be accomplished by the 2009 Series in building on the foundation provided by the **2009 Learning Lunch Seminar Series**," states **Kevin Lagan, Director of Operational Services** for the City



of Courtenay, the host for the 2008 Comox Valley Series. "As we look ahead to where we want to be in 2010, we envision that the 2009 Series will provide us with the springboard to achieve **integration** of current Comox Valley regional initiatives in subsequent phases of collaboration. To build momentum for what we need to accomplish in 2010, the unifying theme as we evolve the regional team approach can be succinctly expressed as: *what all the plans will achieve.*"

"The Comox Valley is a desirable place in which to live. The resulting development activity and population growth is putting extreme pressure on our regional water resources, both in terms of protecting water supply sources and preventing rainwater runoff impacts in streams and rivers. It is therefore in the best interests of valley residents that the four local governments and the Comox Valley Land Trust collaborate to achieve an *integrated watershed approach to settlement*, which is the end goal of the Learning Lunch Series," adds **Michael Zbarsky, Engineering Analyst** with the Comox Valley Regional District.



Getting Ahead of the Wave: The New Business As Usual

*Change the Way We Develop Land to
Achieve Settlement in Balance with Ecology*

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Aligning Local Actions with Provincial Goals

Living Water Smart and the Green Communities Project are complementary initiatives, and together provide British Columbians with a vision of what the province can look like if local governments prepare communities for change, choose to be water smart, and strive to achieve settlement in balance with ecology – in other words, implement *The New Business As Usual*.

“The Province is providing communities with the tools to ensure the right development in the right place at the right time,” states **Laura Tate, Manager of Vancouver Island Growth Strategies** with the Ministry of Community & Rural Development, and principal author of **A Guide to Green Choices**.

Build a Vision, Create a Legacy

“To get to the big picture, it starts with the smallest pieces. The ultimate goal of the Living Water Smart and Green Communities initiatives is to establish expectations that will, in turn, influence the form and function of the built environment,” continues **Kim Stephens, Program Coordinator** for the Water Sustainability Action Plan. “CAVI is responding to the Province’s call to action by leading, informing, educating and inspiring land and water practitioners about how to create the change needed.”



Living Water Smart

Living Water Smart, BC’s Water Plan is a visionary document that provides a framework for province-wide action. Living Water Smart comprises 45 commitments, of which two are being championed by CAVI:

- *By 2012, all land and water managers will know what makes a stream healthy, and therefore be able to help land and water users factor in new approaches to securing stream health and the full range of stream benefits* (p 43 Living Water Smart)
- *Fifty percent of new municipal water needs will be acquired through conservation by 2020* (p 75 Living Water Smart)

“In 2008, the pilot **Vancouver Island Learning Lunch Seminar Series** successfully demonstrated how to inform, educate and inspire local government practitioners about making ‘green choices’ to create liveable communities and protect stream health,” reports **John Finnie, CAVI Chair** (and General Manager, Water & Wastewater Services, Regional District of Nanaimo).



“As an outcome of the 2009 Series, we want to get people thinking about how to **make real** the 2020 objective of supplying 50% of new water demand by using less. Getting there requires going well beyond the usual indoor water saving measures. It entails accelerating the current momentum for changing what we do on and to the land.”

‘Build a Vision, Create a Legacy’ means...

- Apply a science-based approach to create a shared vision of achievable goals
- Facilitate a **participatory decision process** to build stakeholder consensus and agree on expectations
- Obtain **commitment from everyone** to truly integrate water management with land development practices

LIVING WATER SMART



B.C.’s Plan to protect and preserve water resources through planning, regulatory change, education, and incentives such as economic instruments and rewards.

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The Goal: An Integrated Watershed Approach to Settlement

To help stakeholders conceptualize what a vision for balance and integration would look like, the Comox Valley Organizing Team has created the graphic below. This shows the elements that must ultimately be integrated to achieve the goal of **An Integrated Watershed Approach to Settlement**.

Looking ahead to 2010 and beyond, the ultimate goal of the regional team approach is to maximize the intersection of the elements. This means creating linkages among the different areas of action, thereby helping to create a stronger implementation plan – that is, *what all the plans will achieve*.

“To be successful, we all need to work outside our normal boundaries; and we need to proactively communicate and work with others,” states **Derek Richmond, Manager of Engineering** with the City of Courtenay. “We need to think of ourselves as a team, not as individuals within silos; getting there means we will have to break down



boundaries through **communication, collaboration, cooperation and coordination.**”



The 2009 Seminar Program

The 2009 Series comprises a set of three seminars. The learning process is cumulative: each seminar will build on the last and set the stage for the next. The scope of each is highlighted as follows:

□ Understand the Dynamics of Settlement Changes:

Session #1 will start where the 2008 Series ended by posing this question: *How will we implement a regional team approach in the Comox Valley, and how can this inform A Positive Settlement Strategy for Vancouver Island?* This question will provide a frame of reference for achieving ‘settlement in balance with ecology’.

□ Regional Plans –

Pathway to Water Sustainability:

Session #2 will introduce a **Water OUT = Water IN** framework for achieving water sustainability; coupled with a *design with nature* approach to climate change adaptation.

□ Commitment to the Regional Team Approach:

Session #3 will introduce integration: WHO will do it, and HOW it will be done. A desired outcome is that participants will COMMIT to a regional team approach which results in implementation of **An Integrated Watershed Approach to Settlement**.

“Our challenge is to work around and with boundaries. Through the 2009 Learning Lunch Series, we would like to shift the paradigm from **boundaries** to **areas of commonality**,” summarizes **Derek Richmond**.

“The desired outcomes will include inter-departmental collaboration, inter-municipal sharing, and regional alignment. A key message is to view ‘planning’ not as land-zoning function but as a multi-faceted and iterative process that embraces the concept of **truly integrated water-centric planning**.”

Nature Knows No Boundaries

Current Initiatives in the Comox Valley

