

## South Okanagan Partnership

"In 2005, the Real Estate Foundation and the Water Sustainability Committee agreed to pilot a strategy emphasizing water-centric planning values in the context of several regional initiatives in the South Okanagan," states Tim Pringle. "The partners intended to use tools such as the Water Balance Model and relationships with regional stakeholder agencies as well as three Ministries (Agriculture, Community Services and Environment) to advance water sustainability in the planning." (Refer to pages 7 and 19)

"The initiative took on the name 'Convening for Action' and soon found itself contributing to the *Regional Growth Strategy* (RGS) process as well as *Smart Growth on the Ground* and the *Agricultural Area Plan*. The latter two projects pertained to Oliver & District and involved regional stakeholders as well as external participants."

## Changing Land Ethic

"The March 2010 *Okanagan Water Supply & Demand Project Phase 2* report (by a partnership led by the Okanagan Basin Water Board) sums up the changing ethic about water sustainability in the region. The report describes a modelling component that 'developed an Okanagan water budget .....the results of Phase 2 show a need for more careful management and choices on development, the future of agriculture, and environmental protection'.



This shows the increasing awareness of the relationship between land and water, and the impacts of choices."

According to Tim Pringle, "Convening for Action decided to move its work to Vancouver Island in 2006, rather than be another layer of consultation in the South Okanagan. Operating as CAVI, it has refined its educational and research services to continue to support water-centric planning in the local government context." (Refer to Chapter 5).

## South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program

A Convening for Action partner in 2005, the *South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program* (SOSCP), had a key stakeholder role in the RGS process (2005-2007). Bryn White, Program Manager, joined SOSCP in 2006 and noted its lead role on the Land Use Team, one of 6 teams contributing to the RGS process.

"We gained respect for our expertise about stewardship and conservation and helped form the five policies for the second goal of the RGS, 'Ensure the Health of Ecosystems'. SOSCP also assisted in developing the "performance indicators" needed to make these policies active," reports Bryn White.



"Convening for Action's influence was apparent in documentation (including graphics) and corporate knowledge used in producing the RGS plan. Several of my Board Directors asked me to pay attention to CAVI's ongoing work as a source of new practical ideas that could help SOSCP to devise and implement its strategy to enhance the capacity of local governments in the South Okanagan to implement RGS policies for protection of ecosystems."

"Currently, SOSCP is confirming funding for the second year of the *South Okanagan and Lower Similkameen Local Government Ecological Standards and Practices Capacity Building Initiative*. The budget of \$184,250 includes \$97,250 cash, of which 65% will be provided by local governments, SOSCP and the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance. The funding pays for the salary of an environmental planner and other support contractors shared by the three local governments committing funding. Not only does this initiative provide a round table for sharing issues and solutions, it offers a long-term commitment to the region's ecological well being."

SOSCP exchanges experiences with the Comox Valley Land Trust, whose Executive Director is a key player in CAVI's Learning Lunch Seminar Series. "CAVI is a real team of practitioners," concludes Bryn; "we want to create the same kind of learning environment in our valley."