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# Communication and collaboration key on Vancouver Island

Addressing the question “What do we want Vancouver Island to look like in 50 years” calls for partnerships and multi-disciplinary involvement that draws a wide range of players to work towards a collective vision. Given this challenge, Vancouver Island’s approach is proactive, directly engaging, informing and educating those who influence or impact how land is developed and water is used. Convening for Action on Vancouver Island (CAVI), brings together:

- **Local government** – those who plan and regulate land use;
- **Developers** – those who build;
- **The province** – those who provide the legislative framework;
- **Universities and colleges** – those who provide research;
- **Stewardship sector** – those who advocate conservation of resources; and
- **Agriculture sector** – those who support sustainable farming.

In 2008, CAVI partnered with the Capital Regional District to organize the Showcasing Innovation Series. The theme was Integration and Innovation at a Community Scale. Undertaken in collaboration with the Town of View Royal, the City of Langford and the University of Victoria/POLIS, each event included a field trip component to demonstrate the particular sustainability success stories on the ground.

*Living Water Smart*, BC’s Water Plan, provides the provincial policy context for the CAVI vision of moving Vancouver Island toward water sustainability, by implementing green infrastructure policies and practices. The bridge from theory to practice is essential to the CAVI

story and the Showcasing Innovation Series provided the catalyst and appropriate networking opportunities for the sharing of information between communities. CAVI defines *green infrastructure* in terms of a ‘design with nature’ approach to land development and climate change adaptation.

“What we want Vancouver Island to look like in 50 years” will be a result of collaboration of local communities and regional districts reaching beyond their own jurisdictional boundaries and responsibilities to embrace the ‘bigger picture’ of designing human settlement in harmony with nature. A progressive step towards this vision has been achieved through the implementation of the Learning Lunch Seminar Series. In 2008, successful series were held in both the Cowichan Valley and the Comox Valley, with broad and inclusive participation from Vancouver Island municipalities.

A tangible benefit of the Learning Lunch Seminar Series was the exchange of ideas, and the development of tools that supported the implementation of green infrastructure region-wide. The discussions advanced from inter-departmental to inter-governmental, with curriculum based upon a number of provincial guidance documents, ensuring consistency between regions. One of the major strengths of the series was the identification of local solutions. Awareness beyond jurisdictional boundaries was strongly encouraged to ensure that local planning integrated with the broader regional objectives.

In October 2008, the Cowichan Valley Regional District hosted a Water Balance Model Forum under the CAVI umbrella.

In June 2008, BCWWA members Glen Brown, Bob Smith and Eric Bonham participated as panel judges at the Camosun College Annual Sustainability Project Presentations. The objective of the technical presentations, held in public, was for students to demonstrate teamwork and to define issues and propose sustainable solutions to the challenges identified on their particular project. The winning team of Melissa Hennekes, Aryn Hutchinson, Matthew Lacarte and Kenny Scozzafava received the 2008 Award and \$500 from BCWWA for their presentation.

In January 2009, the BCWWA Vancouver Island Chapter coordinated a series of presentations by Eva Kras, a visiting scholar, traveler, visionary and author, who provided a trans-cultural perspective on ‘The Search for Sustainability’ in meetings with British Columbians. Eva critiqued conventional methods of management from the perspective of whether or not they were fully effective in reaching the goal of long-term sustainability. Referring to the wisdom of such visionaries as Willis Harman, E.F. Schumacher and Albert Einstein, and based upon her extensive experience in trans-cultural management, she suggested we have to seek and adopt deeper universal values as a basis of addressing conflict and establishing a culture of collaboration.

Eva Kras is president of the Canadian Chapter of the International Society of Ecological Economics (CANSEE). In Vancouver in October 2009, a CANSEE conference will be held in partnership with two other organizations, Gaining Ground and Smart Growth BC. The BCWWA Water Sustainability Committee will be providing a module at the CANSEE conference. 💧