

CONSERVATION COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

FEBRUARY 2012 MONTHLY UPDATE

PIA'S MESSAGE



Well winter sure hit the province hard in January with -30°C to -45°C temperatures being seen in northern communities. Now that is cold! I hope you are keeping warm by putting on a sweater instead of instantly turning up the heat on your thermostat. With National Sweater Day fast approaching on February 9, we'd love for you to tell us what is happening in your neck of the woods by **emailing me** your photos.

BC Hydro will be participating by hosting a "Sweater Contest" for the most outrageous and funny sweater worn that day—as well as turning down the temperature by two degrees at our major sites. People will be posting their pictures on the BC Hydro intranet and employees will vote for the winning sweaters. It's an example of one easy way to get involved.

Last month I touched on our plans for 2012 and the successes we have seen with this network—which are a direct result of everyone taking ownership and connecting. I would like to develop this further by establishing a Conservation Community of Practice *Advisory Committee*. This group will have quarterly conference calls to provide ongoing feedback to maximize online interactions amongst members:

- Propose webinar topics for the year;
- Recommend speakers who have wide appeal and will be a draw for members;
- Brainstorm content and discussion groups for our in-person workshops, and;
- Encourage online activity amongst members by posing online questions or discussion topics.

If this peaks your interest, please **email me** and we can discuss further.

Pina Nagpal

START PLANNING NOW FOR WWF'S EARTH HOUR 2012, SATURDAY, MARCH 31 AT 8:30 P.M.

More than 5,200 cities and towns in 135 countries worldwide switched off their lights for WWF's Earth Hour 2011, sending a powerful message for action on climate change. It also ushered in a new era with members going Beyond the Hour to commit to lasting action for the planet. Without a doubt, it's shown how great

things can be achieved when people come together for a common cause.

On Saturday, March 31 between 8:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. join millions of voices who will again come together and switch off.

Earth Hour is a unique opportunity for you to take action within your community. It's been the source of inspiration for millions of people taking steps towards a cleaner, safer future. It's not just about saving energy for one hour, it's about going Beyond the Hour with lasting, behaviour-changing actions for a sustainable planet.

You're sure to find some inspiration on WWF's website—check out their tools and downloads available.



BC Hydro 
powersmart

CONNECTING WATER, LAND... AND PEOPLE



It falls freely from the sky. It runs across the land, soaks into any open crack. It even flows right through our bodies. Water connects communities to landscape, people to each other.

But in the development of communities, we've come to view water as a distinct resource management issue. Which is a problem, according to Kim Stephens. In his quest to improve water management and conservation, he's learned that connecting people is key.

"I'm a water guy, in terms of my professional training," says Kim, a water resources engineer-planner and now the Executive Director of the **Partnership for Water Sustainability in B.C. (PWS)**. "And you always see this tendency to silo the two: land and water. But it's your land ethic that determines what happens in the condition of your water."

Kim's solution is to draw people together to collaborate—and get them out of the usual conversation frame. "We don't talk only about water," he says. "We challenge our audiences, 'What do we want this place to look like in 50 years?' Because the decisions we make now about land development will ripple through time. For example, if you strip off the soil, you'll end up pouring a lot more water on your gardens. If your water requires energy to pump, that means using more energy."

The PWS has successfully engaged communities in water-related initiatives on Vancouver Island, in Metro Vancouver, and in the South Okanagan. The group focuses on how to move people from awareness to action to achieve water sustainability through implementation of green infrastructure policies and practices. BC Hydro supported the group in 2011 with seed funding to extend its reach into the Thompson Rivers Region, recognizing that water conservation supports energy conservation progress as well.



Kim Stephens
Executive Director, Partnership for
Water Sustainability in BC

Kim has learned from experience what works best to promote community conservation. First is credibility. The credibility of the individuals involved in PWS has helped it engage the attention of busy municipal staff, and becoming established as a stand-alone non-profit in 2010 has helped attract funding.

Next is drawing the right people into the discussion. "You have to create forums for the conversations that otherwise would not happen," he says. "You can call a meeting and have people sit around the table, but if they've all got their official hats on, you don't get very far. Creating a situation where you can have a candid conversation is important."

Which leads to a third key point. "Municipal staff are often overworked, they find it hard to move forward on these issues," says Kim. "Working with them to find ways to help them, to offer solutions, is how we try to operate."

Finally, the PWS focuses at a regional level to connect local developers, stewardship groups, and municipal staff, bringing disparate interests to a common table. "If you want to make change it requires collaboration of those within government, as well as those who are the community advocates. I had an epiphany when I realized that community folks can say things to politicians that staff can't. Getting alignment with local government is key, because that's where decisions that reflect the land ethic lie."

The PWS has developed several tools, such as the **Water Balance Model** and the **Water Bucket website**, towards its goal of moving from theory into action. A new initiative is to develop a collaborative education initiative across the Cowichan, Capital, Nanaimo and Comox regional districts.

Which brings up a final tip from Kim: "It was total serendipity when my colleagues and I stumbled on this. Going back decades to when I was in university we talked all the time about having a regional approach. But it was when we inserted the word 'team'—as in, a regional team approach—we experienced how it changes the dynamic and how everyone thinks."

TIPS TO KEEP WARM AND SAVE MONEY THIS WINTER

In winter, our electricity bills can almost double as heat is turned up and lights and electronics are left on longer. Space heating alone can account for 40–50 per cent of our electricity bills. Here are a few tips for keeping warm while saving money this winter:

- **Draft-proof your home**—Sealing the gaps and cracks with caulking and weather stripping is one of the most cost-effective steps you can take to keep the heat inside your home, reducing heat loss by up to 10 per cent.
- **Manage your thermostat**—Install a programmable thermostat. Most people are comfortable sitting reading or watching TV at 21°C, working around the house at 20°C, and sleeping at 16°C. Heating costs rise about 5 per cent for every degree above 20°C that you set your thermostat.

Visit [BC Hydro's blog](#) for more energy saving tips and ideas on how to stay warm this winter.