

# CAVI

Leadership in Water Sustainability



## **Convening for Action on Vancouver Island:**

**It started with an idea and a conversation.**

**It is about sharing knowledge and ideas.**

**It is about creating partnerships.**

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# Convening for Action to Change the Way Land is Developed on Vancouver Island:

What the cell is to the body, the site is to the region



## Introduction:

The projected growth of Vancouver Island and resulting cumulative impacts are drivers for reassessing where and how land is developed, and water is used. To promote a new way-of-thinking related to infrastructure policies and practices, [Convening for Action on Vancouver Island \(CAVI\)](#)<sup>1</sup> organized [Showcasing Green Infrastructure Innovation on Vancouver Island: The 2007 Series](#)<sup>2</sup> in partnership with three regional districts and a number of their member municipalities.

## Showcasing Green Infrastructure Innovation on Vancouver Island: The 2007 Series

- ☑ **September 14 – Nanaimo Region**  
'Designing with Nature'
- ☑ **September 28 – Cowichan Basin**  
'Partnerships & Collaboration –  
Moving from Concept to Reality'
- ☑ **October 12 – Comox Valley**  
'Connecting to Sustainability'

At the [Comox Valley](#)<sup>3</sup> event, **Eric Bonham** - a founding member of CAVI who is described as the 'heart and soul' of CAVI - told the story behind CAVI and highlighted how the CAVI Partnership is translating a shared vision into action that is resulting in an expanding and inclusive partnership. To download a copy of his PowerPoint presentation, please click on the link below to [Creating Our Future: Convening for Action on Vancouver Island](#)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/gi/index.asp?sid=55&id=174&type=single>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/index.asp?sid=22&id=150&type=single>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/gi/index.asp?sid=89&id=272&type=single>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/sites/wbccfa/documents/media/82.pdf>



## Creating Our Future

“This all started in 2002 when I was still with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and a Director of BCWWA,” Eric Bonham told his audience, “I had the opportunity to travel the length and breadth of Vancouver Island and talk to people about the issues of concern to them. I would ask ...**where are we going on Vancouver Island.**”

Eric elaborated on how it became clear through all these conversations that there was a shared concern: there was no forum for discussing the future of Vancouver Island. Filling this vacuum provided the impetus for CAVI.



To provide context for the Showcasing Innovation Series, Eric referred to a quote from Patrick Condon: **What the cell is to the body, the site is to the region.** “If we are to have a healthy Vancouver Island region, then every site needs to be developed in a manner that sustains the health of the region,” Eric postulated.

## Meeting of the Minds

According to Eric Bonham, the first step in filling the need for a regional forum was to establish a networking system. “We called it Meeting of the Minds<sup>5</sup>,” Eric stated, “We convened a focus group of 40 people. It was a diverse group. That was deliberate.”

Eric noted that the session was facilitated by **Kerry Elfstrom** who asked the question: “What are the issues?”

“We conducted the session very much as a listening post,” Eric continued, “It was astounding what came out of it as a result of the incredible enthusiasm. We filtered the input into five themes: education, growth management, sustainability, governance and funding.”

The genesis for CAVI was  
**‘Meeting of the Minds’, a grass-roots initiative  
that started as a communications network**



The first Meeting of the Minds workshop was held in Parksville in September 2005. The second in the series was held in May 2006, again in Parksville. For the complete story on the 2005 and 2006 events, please [click here](http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/index.asp?sid=27&id=49&type=single)<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/index.asp?sid=27&id=49&type=single>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/index.asp?sid=27&id=49&type=single>



## What Does CAVI Do?

The purpose of CAVI is to provide leadership, coordination, research and education for practitioners (primarily local government administrators, engineers, planners and elected persons) to plan for management of sustainable water resources in the context of burgeoning settlement activity.

“You will not find CAVI listed in the Yellow Pages,” joked Eric Bonham, “CAVI is a process, CAVI is a vision, CAVI is you and me and everyone else. That is the strength of this grass-roots initiative.” He continued: “We are not government, but government is involved. We are not the private sector, but the private sector is part of CAVI. We are not academia, but academia is also under the umbrella. It is a collective effort to see where we can go on Vancouver Island, and do it in a way that is a little bit different. We are doing it as a genuine team.”

“The big issues are settlement and ecology,” Eric emphasized, “As Mayor Winchester said, it is precious what we have and unless we have a vision now, 50 years down the road we will end up where we don’t want to be.”

“Continued settlement is a given on Vancouver Island,” he added, “But ecology is taking a beating. So together let’s turn it around. Can we do it properly? Can we develop sustainably, protecting ecology in the process?”

# What Does CAVI do?

- Leadership
- Coordination
- Education
- Opportunity



**Settlement** is human activity of any kind upon the land. It is habitation. **Habitation** is layered systems.

**Ecology** is natural systems. It is water, climate, flora and fauna, and their relationships.

**Planning for sustainable water resources  
in the context of burgeoning settlement activity**



## It's 2009 in 2007

The [Meeting of the Minds](#)<sup>7</sup> series comprised two events, both of which were held in Parksville. The first was in September 2005; and the second was in May 2006. The momentum built quickly.

"It was after the May 2006 gathering that we decided to make the quantum leap," reported Eric, "We said...okay, this has to go beyond the Meeting of the Minds concept. And so, at the **Water in the City Conference** we launched the idea of *Convening for Action on Vancouver Island*....CAVI." As a shoulder event to the **Gaining Ground Summit Conference** in Victoria in June, CAVI held a consultation workshop titled [Creating Our Future: What will Vancouver Island look like in 50 Years?](#)<sup>8</sup> This provided the springboard for launching the *Showcasing Innovation Series*.

Held on a Sunday, the workshop was by invitation. Attendance was capped at 50. The event attracted elected officials and senior managers from 19 local governments; and a balanced mix of representatives from provincial ministries, First Nations, the private sector, the real estate industry and academia.

## Progress Check: CAVI is gaining mass and building momentum

- 2005: first *Meeting of the Minds* focus group workshop in Parksville
- 2006: formal launch of CAVI at the

### WATER IN THE CITY CONFERENCE

September 17 - 20, 2006  
Victoria, British Columbia



- Today: It's 2009 in 2007!

"When we say today is 2009 in 2007, we simply mean that CAVI has been progressing very fast," commented Eric, "The vision for creating our future together is capturing the attention of, and energizing, an ever expanding group of people."

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/index.asp?sid=27&id=49&type=single>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/index.asp?sid=27&id=119&type=single>



## The CAVI Network

According to Eric Bonham, the strength of the CAVI approach on Vancouver Island is the engagement of its partners on a one on one basis who “buy in” to the vision of water-centric planning. The process is accumulative, as others from diverse backgrounds are drawn to the common goal of achieving water sustainability.

Each progressive step builds upon the previous success story, with the recognition that eventually all the players must be at the table including government, business, developers, consultants, First Nations, academics and citizens. Only through such an inclusive partnership will the fundamental shift towards integrated ‘design with nature’ water-centric land use planning on Vancouver Island become firmly established and practiced.

### The CAVI Network is inclusive and expanding:

- Local Governments
- Senior Governments
- First Nations
- Development Community
- Academia
- Consulting Community
- Non-Government Organizations
- Public

## What is CAVI Doing?

Building on the momentum generated by the Creating Our Future Workshop, CAVI has partnered with three regional districts and their member municipalities to successfully implement the **Showcasing Green Infrastructure Innovation Series** in September/October.

### What is coming up next?

- On December 3, it will be “Lead the Leaders”....  
**Green Infrastructure Leadership Forum**  
in partnership with AVICC
- Then, in February 2008 it will be....  
**Cowichan Valley Water Balance Model Training Workshop**
- Followed by much, much more....stay tuned for other events and workshops being planned for 2008

CAVI is also partnering with the [Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities](#)<sup>9</sup> to hold a **Green Infrastructure Leadership Forum** in December.

The focus of the Leadership Forum will be on **A Positive Settlement Strategy for Vancouver Island** that identifies the necessary link between accommodating settlement growth while protecting the ecological systems upon which community well being depends.

According to Eric Bonham, “The *Green Infrastructure Leadership Forum* will take us to the next level of awareness. We will be

encouraging participants to look outside the box and stretch their minds to look at Vancouver Island as a whole. It is possible. The only thing potentially stopping us is a limited vision in continuing to think inside the box. We certainly look to the Leadership Forum as the next leap forward for CAVI.”

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.avicc.ca/>



## Keys to Success

Four operating principles are guiding the actions and activities of CAVI. "We try our best not to preach," stated Eric Bonham, "At the same time, we certainly believe in the CAVI vision and are passionate when we ask the question: what will this place look like in 50 years? It is our passion that is infectious."

"The success of the *Showcasing Innovation Series* is an indicator of how the CAVI approach is resonating," added Eric.

### The keys to the success of CAVI are...

- We don't preach
- We create learning and networking opportunities
- We focus on the relationship between land and water: high profile, public priority, political support
- We promote sharing of ideas and experience

## CAVI Mission



According to Eric Bonham, "The operative words are **vision, partnerships, communications, ecological integrity, human well-being, sustainability, water-centric...and simply put ...a desire to work together for Vancouver Island.**"

In concluding his overview, Eric quoted from **Margaret Mead**: "Never doubt that a group of concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever does. And that is where we are today with CAVI."

### The CAVI mission is to....

- Provide leadership
- Integrate with other groups
- Bring together local government and the development community
- Provide access to expertise
- Encourage introduction of a 'design with nature' way-of-thinking in local government decision processes
- Celebrate examples of green infrastructure that achieve 'design with nature' outcomes
- Evolve a framework for water-centric planning that is keyed to accepting and managing risk, learning by doing, and rewarding innovation



## Green Vocabulary

To help advance a new way-of-thinking about land development, CAVI has developed and is promoting use of the following hierarchy of 'green' vocabulary:

- **Green Value** means land use strategies will accommodate settlement needs in practical ways while protecting the ecological resources upon which communities depend. At the heart of a *Green Value* approach is the valuation methodology that provides the business case for reconciliation of short-term versus long-term thinking related to risk and profit.
- **Design with Nature** is one approach to achieve *Green Value*, and is supportive of community goals that relate to building social capacity.
- **Green Infrastructure** is the on-the-ground application of *Design with Nature* standards and practices.
- **Water Sustainability** is achieved through *Green Infrastructure* practices that reflect a full and proper understanding of the relationship between land and water.

### A 'Design with Nature' approach to community design means...



- Develop compact, complete communities
- Increase transportation options
- Reduce the loads on water, waste and energy systems
- Protect and restore urban 'green' space
- Strive for a lighter 'hydrologic footprint'
- Achieve higher levels of stream, wetland and lake protection

This cascading vocabulary was unveiled at the [Creating Our Future Workshop](#) that was held in conjunction with the *Gaining Ground Summit* in Victoria in June 2007. The Creating Our Future Workshop was a consultation opportunity for Vancouver Island local governments that are interested in implementing infrastructure practices and regulation that result in **green value**.

### Green Infrastructure Explained:

Green infrastructure is associated with the management of water that runs off the land and how water runoff impacts on the **sustainability of both terrestrial and aquatic habitat and resources**.

Green infrastructure is also associated with how water is used and how water use impacts on the **sustainability of water supply**.

Desired outcomes for **water sustainability** and **green infrastructure** can be achieved through infrastructure standards that reflect a full and proper understanding of the relationship between land and water.

### What could Vancouver Island look like in 50 years with a new way-of-thinking?

Where and how land is developed determines how water is used => *sustainability of supply*, and how water runs off the land => *sustainability of terrestrial & aquatic habitat*

## Who is CAVI?

The CAVI Partnership comprises the [British Columbia Water & Waste Association](#)<sup>10</sup>, the [Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia](#)<sup>11</sup>, the provincial Ministries of Environment and Community Services, and the [Green Infrastructure Partnership](#)<sup>12</sup>.

CAVI is co-funded by the Province and the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia. The Water Sustainability Committee of the BCWWA is the managing partner and is providing program delivery. For more information about the CAVI Partnership and what it wants to do, please click on the [link below](#)<sup>13</sup>.



## What is the Water Sustainability Action Plan?

Released in 2004, the [Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia](#)<sup>14</sup> is sponsored by the Province of British Columbia, and the Action Plan elements are being delivered through partnerships and regional pilot projects and programs, including CAVI. To view a story that elaborates on this document, please click on the [link below](#)<sup>15</sup>.

The Action Plan is a partnership umbrella for an array of on-the-ground initiatives that promote a 'water-centric' approach to community planning and development. The Action Plan comprises inter-connected program elements that give local governments and practitioners the tools and experience to better manage land and water resources.

Through outreach and education, the guiding vision is to influence land and water practitioners to learn about and use practices that better balance the necessary relationships of settlement activity and ecological assets in local and regional landscapes.



Under the Action Plan umbrella, the [Water Sustainability Committee](#)<sup>16</sup> of the **BC Water & Waste Association** is the managing partner and is responsible for providing leadership, facilitation and organizational services for program delivery. The Water Sustainability Committee is a roundtable of organizations that have a specific interest or mission in implementing the Action Plan.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bcwwa.org/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.realestatefoundation.com/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/gi/index.asp?sid=5&id=13&type=single>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/index.asp?sid=13&id=124&type=single>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/sites/wbccfa/documents/media/81.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/index.asp?sid=4&id=1&type=single>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.waterbucket.ca/wsc/>