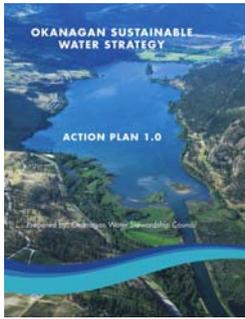


Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy

Completed in late 2008 by the Okanagan Watershed Stewardship Council, the **Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy** seeks to ensure



water resources are managed in a broader sustainability framework.

"The Sustainable Water Strategy is grounded in action. Twelve high-level Guiding Principles for water management and policy provide a framework for the Strategy. The key action

items were developed respecting these Guiding Principles," explains Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB).

"When Living Water Smart was released, we could not help but notice that it bore a remarkable resemblance to our Water Strategy!"

What 'Convening for Action' Means

"In the Okanagan, we are 'convening for action' at four levels to facilitate valley-wide change," continues Anna Warwick Sears. She identifies these levels as follows:

1. Inter-jurisdictional elected officials convening as OBWB directors.
2. Appointments of key partners to the Board – including First Nations and water suppliers.
3. The Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, a multi-stakeholder technical advisory group
4. The way the OBWB does business.

"The convening for action concept can be expanded to encompass all our activities. The Okanagan Basin Water Board is the hub for water science and policy. Our mandate is to communicate and coordinate. In the process, we are tapping into a huge reservoir of volunteers. This creates the energy and momentum for change."



Build a Vision, Create the Legacy

"The Stewardship Council developed the Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy over a 30-month period. It literally involved thousands of hours of effort on the part of Council members," reports Ted van der Gulik, who is Vice-Chair.

"The Council is a diverse group. We went through a process of informing and educating each other. We reached a common understanding and consensus on a shared vision for achieving settlement change in balance with ecology."

"The Council's Vision is that the Basin will have clean and healthy water in sufficient abundance to support the Okanagan's natural ecosystems, agricultural lands and high quality of life for perpetuity."

"Accurate, up-to-date water information and scientific knowledge will support community and regional planning. Water will be managed in a spirit of cooperation, and a valley-wide ethic of conservation will create a lasting legacy of sustainable water resources for future generations."

"The Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy starts the process and has been developed with input from many water professionals. To achieve fruition, the plan will need a coordinated effort from law makers and practitioners and buy in from residents to ensure that changes are made on the ground."

Collaborative Governance Explained: "The story of *Convening for Action in the Okanagan* is really about putting collaborative governance to work," reflects Anna Warwick Sears.

"Water stakeholders and citizens from many different parts of society contribute advice and ideas that influence the decision-making process. At all levels of convening, we are actively undertaking collaboration for action. In short, 'convening for action' reflects a synergy – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

"Everyone in the Okanagan agrees on the need to protect our quality of life in a healthy environment with a balanced use of water. The way the OBWB does business is collaborative. Through our grant programs, we are able to maximize partnerships; and in turn increase the convening of community by bringing together the resources to make things happen."

