



Nature Knows No Boundaries: Living Water Smart

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- Good policy is the key - it's like good driver training (look at the horizon)
- What happens when you have unclear or poorly conceived policy?? (video)

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Living Water Smart is the key provincial policy document

'As a finite resource, water's limits must be recognized, which means that the days of taking our "unlimited" supply of water for granted have passed.'...

'...we need to challenge ourselves and our businesses to think about how we can help protect our water and how the government can support these actions.'

Premier Gordon Campbell

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Provincial positions/statements such as:

- *“Shifting our focus to stream health...”*
- *“Stream health will be considered first so watersheds remain healthy and we reverse the decline evident in many of our rivers and streams.”*
- *“...a shift in thinking from taking our water for granted to designing our communities to live in harmony with water.”*

create the opportunity/potential for real dramatic change at a local level.

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A sample of Provincial **Living Water Smart** Policies:

- *(The Provincial) Government will support communities to do watershed management planning in priority years.*
- *50% of new municipal water needs will be acquired through conservation by 2020.*
- *Government will look at new ways to help promising water conservation technology succeed.*
- *By 2012, all land and water managers will know what makes a stream healthy, and therefore be able to help land and water users factor in new approaches to securing stream health and the full range of stream benefits.*

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So the province has some good policies – what does that mean to the Comox Valley and why do **WE** need to take action??

- Provincial policy is top-down (big picture – few details)
- Successful implementation and action relies on bottom up approach: senior management – council – provincial
- BC's population is predicted to grow by 1.4 million people over the next 25 years – somewhere around 35,000 of those 1.4 million people are expected to settle in the Comox Valley.
- Where will these people live??

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- What values/features of the Comox Valley do we need/want to protect, preserve and restore??
- How will we provide these people with water and sewer services??
- Comox Lake – the primary drinking water source for the Comox Valley is fully allocated – likely over-allocated during drought periods

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What actions are **WE** taking now?

- Sustainability Strategy
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Regional Water Strategy
- Regional Sewer Strategy
- Water Conservation - universal metering (paper example)
- Drinking water protection plan??
- Water management plan??

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What other actions can **WE** take??

- Success in the Comox Valley means a regional (cross-jurisdictional) approach to action – requires cooperation, collaboration, communication and coordination at staff and political levels
- Land/water managers must know what makes a stream healthy – requires improved/coordinated data, staff retraining
- Tangible targets (aligned with provincial policies) must be set and pursued in order to focus local actions
- Measure our successes/failures in meeting these targets

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- Expand regional based planning (i.e. integrated stormwater management planning at the watershed level, regional transportation, regional parks)
- Re-visit OCP policies and Zoning Bylaws to ensure alignment with provincial policies
- Update subdivision standards in support of local and provincial policies
- Expand development permit areas with more focused and tangible development permit guidelines based on local and provincial policies
- Consistent approach to development

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- Coordinate requests for provincial assistance/support
- Quantify local base-line conditions
- Demonstrate confident, coordinated and unified leadership in taking local action that is aligned with provincial policy aimed at improving our performance in meeting targets
- Collectively hold the provincial government accountable for support of local initiatives/leadership that is aligned with provincial policy
- Be transparent and accountable to our communities regarding our successes/failures in meeting these targets

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Questions??

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