

Convening for Action in British Columbia



## Living Water Smart & Building Greener Communities:

Implementing a 'regional team approach' in British Columbia

### The New Business As Usual:

Visualize What We Want British Columbia to Look Like in 50 years

#### *The Mission is to Create a Legacy*

- 1. Influence choices by individuals and organizations*
- 2. Use the term "sustainability" as a lens for considering approaches that influence choices*

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Water Bucket Web Story

## What is a 'Regional Team Approach'?

A **regional team approach** is founded on partnerships and collaboration; and seeks to align actions at three scales – provincial, regional and local. The key word is alignment: ***this is what we want to collectively achieve, and this is how we will work together to get there.*** Under the umbrella of the **Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia**:

- The 'regional team approach' had its genesis in the **2008 Vancouver Island Learning Lunch Seminar Series**, organized by Convening for Action on Vancouver Island (which is known by the acronym CAVI) in collaboration with Cowichan Valley and Comox Valley local governments.
- The 'regional team approach' was then introduced to the Metro Vancouver region at the **2009 Surrey Water Balance Model Forum**, organized by the Inter-Governmental Partnership in collaboration with the City of Surrey and the Green Infrastructure Partnership.
- The 'regional team approach' was subsequently showcased provincially at the **2009 Penticton Forum**, organized by the BCWWA Water Sustainability Committee in collaboration with the Okanagan Basin Water Board and three provincial Ministries (Community & Rural Development, Agriculture & Lands, and Environment).

"The shared vision is to control our destiny and create a legacy for our children and grandchildren," states **Kim Stephens, Program Coordinator** for the **Water Sustainability Action Plan**. "Having a shared vision means that we will visualize what the regions of British Columbia can look like in 50 years, and today we will set in motion actions that will ripple through time to produce that future."



## Ten Cascading Goals

The goals of the 'regional team approach' are cascading; and are synthesized from *high-level* to *ground-level* as follows:

1. Align local actions with policy goals in the Province's **Living Water Smart, BC's Water Plan** and **Green Communities Initiative**.
2. Integrate land and water resource management to balance settlement change and ecology, and to adapt to climate change.
3. Make green choices that are cumulative in creating liveable communities, reducing wasteful water use, and protecting stream health.
4. **Design with Nature** to influence the form and function of the human-altered environment.
5. Implement **Green Infrastructure** policies and practices that achieve **Water Sustainability** over time.
6. Establish consistent expectations as to what integrated green infrastructure solutions look like on the ground.
7. Move from pilot projects to a watersheds objectives approach to get to the big picture – that is, ***what our regions will look like in 50 years.***
8. Encourage **Green Value** development – that is, the right development in the right place at the right time.
9. Provide practitioners with the tools and experience to implement **An Integrated Watershed Approach to Settlement**.
10. Promote **Shared Responsibility** – all players work together more effectively, using law reform and/or other process changes as tools.

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“We are NOT saying that every community must follow the same formula; what we are saying is that everyone needs to agree on expectations and how all the players....regulators, developers, designers, etc....will work together, and after that



each community can reach its goals in its own way,” states **Eric Bonham, Chair** of the Highlands Stewardship Foundation and a founding member of the CAVI Leadership Team; and formerly a Director in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

## The Collaboration Challenge

The following challenge statement frames the learning outcomes for local governments when convening for action:

*“How do we simultaneously work together as staff within a municipality and as a region AND externally with the stewardship sector, developers and other private sector players, to ensure we implement sustainable approaches to development?”*

In rising to the foregoing challenge, the essence of the **regional team approach** is that all the players will set their sights on the *common good* and challenge the old barriers of jurisdictional interests. To achieve the *common good*, this ultimately requires bringing 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; and
- **The stewardship sector** – those who advocate conservation of resources.

Commencing in 2007, Vancouver Island has been the pilot region for regional team-building through collaboration and education. Living Water Smart and the Green Communities Initiative together provide the provincial context for curriculum development and learning outcomes.

## The New Business As Usual

“We are using the slogan **The New Business As Usual** to convey the message that, for change to really occur, practices that until now have been viewed as the exception must become the norm moving forward. We have to build regulatory models and develop models of practice and expertise to support *The New Business As Usual*,” stated **Dale Wall, Deputy Minister** (Community & Rural Development), at the Gaining Ground Summit in May 2008.

