

## Regional Growth Strategy: Moving Towards a Water Balance Way-of-Thinking and Acting in the South Okanagan

Meeting of RGS Steering Committee in Penticton  
On June 14, 2006

Meggin Messenger & Glen Brown  
Ministry of Community Services

in collaboration with

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Water Sustainability Committee of the BC Water & Waste Association

## Key Messages

- Start with a conversation
- Start with the site in mind
- How we develop land determines
  - ➔ how water is used
  - ➔ how water runs off the land

## Road Map

- Context for Growth Strategy
- Water for Life & Livelihoods



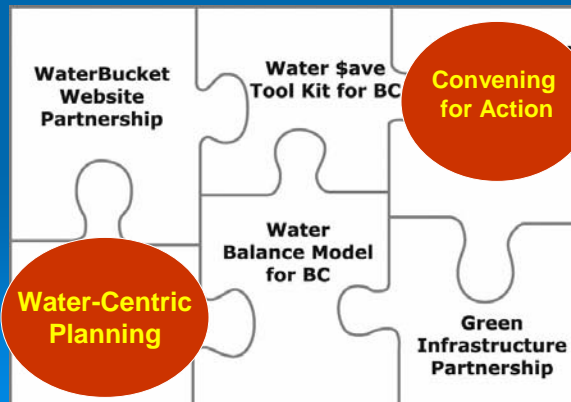
# The Water Sustainability Action Plan for BC....



... provides a partnership umbrella for an array of *on-the-ground* initiatives that promote a 'water-centric' approach to community planning



**and the Province are partnering to deliver the Water Sustainability Action Plan**



## Water-centric planning means...

- We will plan with a view to water – whether for a site, a region, or the province
- We will integrate missions, mandates and accountabilities
- We will move towards a water balance way-of-thinking and acting



Water OUT = Water IN

## When 'convening for action', we build capacity through a 3-step process:

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1. **Vision:** What do you want this place to look like in 20 years, 50 years?
2. **Starting Point:** What are you doing to achieve this?
3. **Strategy:** What are you going to do better or differently to get from here to there?

## Change is being advanced through these partnerships:



- Convening for Action
- Water Bucket Website Partnership
- Water Balance Model Partnership
- Green Infrastructure Partnership

"The water resources of the Okanagan will be totally allocated in less than 25 years."

--- Kelowna Conference, February 2005  
Canadian Water Resources Association

Water OUT = Water IN!  
What's the Balance?



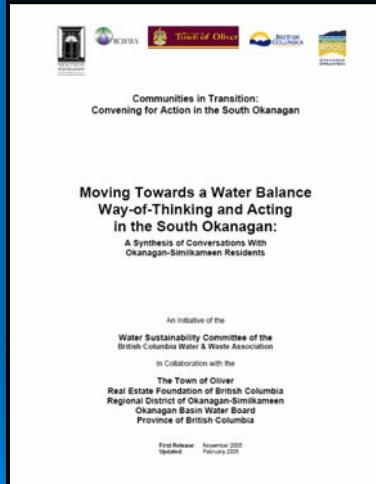
## Road Map

- **Context for Growth Strategy**
- **Water for Life & Livelihoods**

## Growth Strategy and Convening for Action

Growth Strategy and 'Convening for Action' work together to:

- **Build vision:** what will the South Okanagan look like in 20 years, 50 years?
- **Describe the starting point:** good practices, functioning relationships, gaps and challenges for water stewardship
- **Identify and propose strategies:** what will be done to get from here to there (e.g. water-centric planning, transferring and supporting success)



## South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy:

**A provincial pilot for the water balance way-of-thinking and acting**

## Building on Case Study Experience: Convening for Action in the South Okanagan

- Water-Centric Planning: A Guidebook for BC
- South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy
- Convening for Action in the South Okanagan
- Town of Oliver: Smart Growth on the Ground



## What we have learned through conversations in the South Okanagan:

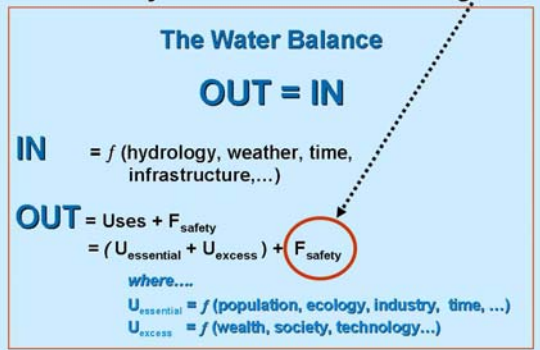
- Agricultural Legacy Defines Sense of Place
- Strengthening Communities is Key to Protecting Water



Water is the #1 concern of the public

## Convening for Action brings applied science to the conversation

Over time, the safety factor has been shrinking:



To ensure a safe & adequate water supply:

- Deal with uncertainty
- Manage risk



## We have been 'connecting the dots' in Oliver



The March 30<sup>th</sup> 2006 Working Session was the first step in a long-term educational process to change water-use habits, technologies and practices in Oliver



### Water-Centric Planning in Oliver: Dealing with Uncertainty & Managing Risk

A Synthesis of Outcomes  
Arising from a Working Session on March 30, 2006  
Organized By

Water Sustainability Committee of the  
British Columbia Water & Waste Association

In Collaboration With The

The Town of Oliver  
Province of British Columbia  
Oliver & District Community Economic Development Society  
Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia  
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen  
Okanagan Basin Water Board

First Release: April 2006

## Convening for Action in Oliver:

**The 'Oliver Process'  
demonstrates how to bring  
provincial programs and  
local needs into alignment**

## **Growth Strategy, Convening for Action, and the Implementation of Sustainable Infrastructure**

**RGS and 'Convening for Action' work together to support the implementation of sustainable infrastructure by:**

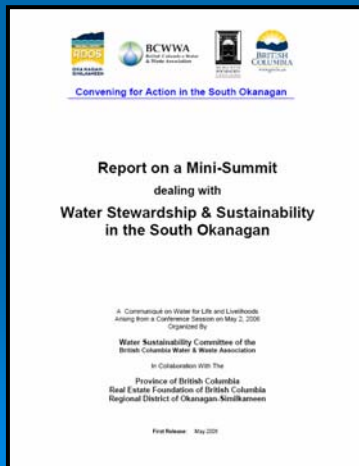
- Making the linkages between strategic vision/planning and 'on-the-ground' infrastructure;
- Providing 'real-life' examples of what that vision looks like;
- Achieving improved value regarding both capital and life-cycle costing for infrastructure investments (economic, social and environmental); and
- Supporting and promoting provincial programs/objectives.

**Promoting these Guiding Principles in the Regional Growth Strategy will *protect the agricultural legacy* and *strengthen communities*:**

- 1. Increase Agricultural Water Use Efficiency to Offset Climate Variability and / or Expand Irrigated Farmland**
- 2. Reduce Residential Water Use to Support Population Growth in Urban Centres**

# Water for Life and Livelihoods:

Protecting the Agricultural Legacy and Strengthening Communities



In May we held a 'Mini-Summit' at the BCWWA Conference in Whistler to "provincialize" the South Okanagan Case Study

**A Key Message:**  
Role of local government  
Is to lead by example

## Your motion creates the opportunity for the RDOS to lead by example:

THAT the RGS will work with the "Convening for Action" program through the British Columbia Water & Waste Association and Okanagan Water Stewardship Council for the purpose of developing education, and best use water practices management program for water in the South Okanagan

Motion by RGS Steering Committee  
May 18<sup>th</sup> 2006

## Leading by Example means...

- Real Estate Foundation seeded the first phase
- Ministry of Environment has funded the current phase
- The next phase would be a **water-centric outreach and continuing education program** sponsored by the RDOS to build regional capacity and understanding of what **Water OUT = Water IN** means in the context of the RGS and its goals

## In conclusion, 'Connect the Dots'

- **Start with a conversation**
- **Start with the site in mind**
- **How we develop land determines**
  - ➔ **how water is used**
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